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The Afro-brazilian Martial Art of Capoeira: Cultural Healing and Identity

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THE AFRO-BRAZILIAN MARTIAL ART OF *CAPOEIRA*:
CULTURAL HEALING AND IDENTITY

by

Lauren Mascari

A Dissertation Submitted in
Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy
in Educational Psychology

at

The University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee

August 2021

ABSTRACT

THE AFRO-BRAZILIAN MARTIAL ART OF *CAPOEIRA*: CULTURAL HEALING AND IDENTITY

by

Lauren Mascari

The University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee, 2021
Under the Supervision of Professor Nadya Fouad, PhD, ABPP

By the year 2050, racial and ethnic minorities are projected to become the rising majority accounting for more than 50% of the population in the United States, however minorities are consistently at greater risk for poorer health outcomes and at higher risk for trauma-related symptoms than their White counterparts. Although some individuals seek and access traditional mental health services, more than half of the individuals who have diagnosable conditions never obtain formal treatment. Within the past two decades, the American Psychological Association delineated Multicultural Guidelines that describe the need for interventions to not only adapt to culture, but to be congruent. Through the lens of Vélez-Agosto and colleagues Microcultural framework (2017), the Afro-Brazilian martial art of *capoeira* is explored to better understand the meaningful cultural traditions therein, therapeutic and or healing aspects of the culturally-centered art, and salient aspects of identity for *capoeiristas*, or *capoeira* practitioners. Narrative qualitative inquiry was utilized to interview *capoeiristas* from eight different groups, consisting of fifteen *capoeira* group leaders and twelve *capoeira* group members, for a total of 27 participants.

Keywords: *capoeira*, cultural identity, cultural healing, cultural interventions, cultural therapy

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em gratidão:

*eu ache de longe, eu fui trazado atravez do mar para uma nova terra
embora minha vida tenha desafios, eu sempre vou encontrar el sol
eu trabalho duro e nunca irie parar para melhoria do nosso povo
eu agradeçu por toda lição de capoeira e todo ancestral*

iê vive meu deus

iê vive meu mestre

iê vive Ramona Harris

iê vive Virginia Huljak

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iê vive Carol Miller

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iê vive Jadelynn C. Davis

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iê vive Paul Delacruz Megia

iê vive Taptejdeep Singh

iê vive Adrian Balleza

iê vive Jose Dejesus Hernandez III

iê vive Timothy Michael Romo

iê vive Michael Joseph Rudometkin

iê vive Abdolvahab Alaghmandan

iê vive Lars Kepler Lane
iê vive Alex Ward Fritch
iê vive Daunte Wright
iê vive Yong Ae Yue
iê vive Suncha Kim
iê vive Soon Chung Park
iê vive Hyun Jung Grant
iê vive Elcias Hernandez-Ortiz
iê vive Paul Andre Michels
iê vive Dayou Feng
iê vive Xiaojie Tan
iê vive Delaina Ashley Yuan
iê vive Jacob Blake
iê vive George Floyd
iê vive Breonna Taylor
iê vive Ahmaud Arbery
iê vive Andrew Kearsse
iê vive Daniel Prude
iê vive Alvin Cole
iê vive Dontre Hamilton
iê vive Tony McDade
iê vive Trayvon Martin
iê vive Michael Lorenzo Dean

iê vive Eric Reason
iê vive Christopher McCorvey
iê vive Christopher Whitfield
iê vive Atatiana Jefferson
iê vive Dominique Clatyon
iê vive Pamela Turner
iê vive Botham Jean
iê vive Antwon Rose II
iê vive Stephon Clark
iê vive Ronell Foster
iê vive Aaron Bailey
iê vive Jordan Edwards
iê vive Alteria Woods
iê vive Paul O'Neal
iê vive Terence Crutcher
iê vive Philando Castile
iê vive Alton Sterling
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iê vive Terrill Thomas
iê vive Willie Tillman
iê vive Demarcus Semer
iê vive Mary Truxillo
iê vive Kevin Hicks

iê vive Darius Robinson
iê vive Torrey Robinson
iê vive Peter Gaines
iê vive Marco Loud
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iê vive Nathaniel Harris Pickett
iê vive Richard Perkins
iê vive Jamar Clark
iê vive Michael Lee Marshall

iê vive La'vante Biggs
iê vive India Kager
iê vive Tyree Crawford
iê vive Alonzo Smith
iê vive Anthony Ashford
iê vive Dominic Hutchinson
iê vive Paterson Brown
iê vive Lamontez Jones
iê vive Junior Prosper
iê vive Keith Harrison McLeod
iê vive Felix Kumi
iê vive Asshams Pharoah Hamley
iê vive Troy Robinson
iê vive Christian Taylor
iê vive Brian Keith Day
iê vive Michael Sabbie
iê vive Samuel Dubose
iê vive Billy Ray Davis
iê vive Darrius Stewart
iê vive Albert Joseph Davis
iê vive Sandra Bland
iê vive Salvado Ellswood
iê vive Joseph Mann

iê vive Freddie Gray
iê vive Jonathan Sanders
iê vive Victor Manuel LaRosa
iê vive Brendon Glenn
iê vive Alexia Christian
iê vive William Chapman II
iê vive Walter Scott
iê vive Eric Harris
iê vive Phillip White
iê vive Mya Hill
iê vive Anthony Hill
iê vive Tony Robinson
iê vive Natasha McKenna
iê vive Frank Smart
iê vive Matthew Ajibade
iê vive George Mann
iê vive Jerame Reid
iê vive Romain Brisbon
iê vive Tamir Rice
iê vive Akai Gurley
iê vive Tanisha Anderson
iê vive Laquan McDonald
iê vive Michelle Cusseaux

iê vive Dante Parker

iê vive Ezell Ford

iê vive Michael Brown

iê vive John Crawford III

iê vive Eric Garner

iê vive Emmett Till

To our ancestors and all who are fighting for freedom: past, present, and future.

Black, Indigenous, First Nation, Asian and Pacific Islander, Latinx,

Lesbian, Gay, Transgender, Non-binary, Queer, People of Color –

Our Lives Matter.

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LIST OF NOMENCLATURE

<i>Angoleiro</i>	a person who practices the Angola style of <i>capoeira</i>
<i>Apelido</i>	a <i>capoeirista</i> 's given name in <i>capoeira</i> , also known as <i>nome de guerra</i>
<i>Agôgô</i>	a small hand-held percussive instrument, the Yorùbá word for bell
<i>Aú</i>	cartwheel
<i>Ase</i>	affirmation, akin to 'amen' or 'amin'
<i>Atabaque</i>	drum
<i>Axê</i>	referring to energy, often a positive connotation
<i>Ase</i>	an affirmation, similar to the word 'amen' or 'amiin'
<i>Balança</i>	movement based in a squat with wide stance while upper body moves back and forth
<i>Bananeira</i>	handstand, resembling a Banana tree
<i>Bantu</i>	group of Niger-Congo languages spoken in Southern and Central Africa
<i>Bateria</i>	portion of the <i>roda</i> consisting of <i>capoeiristas</i> playing the instruments often including at least two <i>berimbaus</i> , <i>atabaque</i> , <i>pandeiro</i> , and sometimes including <i>reco-reco</i> , <i>agôgô</i> and other instruments, literally translated to "drum kit" in Português
<i>Batizado</i>	annual ceremony in which <i>capoeiristas</i> earn their next ranking and celebrate accomplishments
<i>Benção</i>	straight kick forward, pushing with the heel of the foot, Portuguese for "blessing"
<i>Berimbau</i>	percussive instrument that is integral to playing <i>capoeira</i> , consisting of the <i>verga</i> (piece of wood/rod), <i>arame</i> (wire), <i>cabaça</i> (gourd used to amplify sound), <i>caxixi</i> (shaker), <i>dobrão</i> (rock/coin used to push against arame), and <i>bagueta</i> (small stick to hit arame)
<i>BIPOC</i>	<i>A person who identifies as a member of Black, Indigenous, and/or other Person of Color communities</i>
<i>Candomblé</i>	spiritual practice including aspects of Yorùbá tradition and Christianity, meaning "dance in honor of the Gods"
<i>capoeira</i>	art form developed by enslaved Africans in Brazil, often described as a fight dance, and played to music
<i>Capoeirista</i>	a person who practices <i>capoeira</i>

<i>Cocarinho</i>	squatting position with both legs bent, often one hand is supporting the body for balance and the other arm is used to protect the head
<i>Floreiro</i>	fancy acrobatic movement in <i>capoeira</i> meaning “flourish,” but literally translated in Português meaning “florist”
<i>Ginga</i>	the basic movement wherein the body moves back and forth by stepping from one side to another, used to move around the <i>roda</i> , meaning “to sway”
<i>Iemanjá/Yemanjá</i>	Orixá or Goddess in Yorùbá tradition who is associated the moon, childbearing, and healing (Wikipedia, 2020)
<i>Ifá</i>	religious practices and beliefs originating in Yorùbá tradition
<i>Jogar</i>	meaning “to play” in Português
<i>Juneteeth,/ Día de Liberação</i>	day of Liberation, commemorating and celebrating when enslaved individuals gained legal freedom in the United States
<i>Kru</i>	Muay Thai coach, meaning “teacher” in Thai
<i>MA</i>	<i>martial arts</i>
<i>Macaco</i>	backhandspring movement in <i>capoeira</i> , but literally translated to “monkey” in Português
<i>Machismo</i>	concept referring to masculine pride, of discussed as a consideration of Latinx culture
<i>Maculêlê</i>	a fighting dance using sticks, attributed to enslaved Africans in Brazil who cut down sugar cane fields (Batalla Washington, 2018)
<i>Mandinga</i>	a persons ability to cleverly deceive or trick another player
<i>Mandingeiro</i>	a person who practices <i>mandinga</i> , or trickery
<i>Mea lua de compasso</i>	one leg kicks as the foot makes a half moon shape as the body turns as the top half of a <i>capoeirista</i> ’s body comes down
<i>Mea lua de frente</i>	half-moon kick to the front, in a standing position
<i>Mestre</i>	Master of <i>capoeira</i>
<i>Mestra</i>	Female Master of <i>capoeira</i>
<i>MMA</i>	<i>mixed martial arts</i>

<i>Na roda, na vida</i>	concept referring to the way the <i>capoeira</i> and life and interrelated, literally translated in Português meaning “in the roda, in life”
<i>Negaça</i>	movement used to bait or deceive when playing <i>capoeira</i> , literally translated in Português meaning “negate” or “deny” (United Capoeira Association, 2013)
<i>Negativa</i>	squatting movement extending one leg, with one arm protecting the face/head and the other arm used to help balance by touching the ground
<i>Oxúm</i>	Orixa or Goddess in Yorùbá tradition who is associated with divinity, fertility, love, purity, and sensuality
<i>Palmares</i>	name of famous Quilombo, wherein enslaved Africans were self-sufficient and gained independence for over 100 years (Anderson, 1996; Blaire, 2019)
<i>Pandeiro</i>	hand drum resembling a tambourine, traditionally made out of the hide from an animal (de Douvan, 2013)
<i>Quilombo</i>	self-sufficient community of formerly enslaved Africans in Brazil
<i>Rasteira</i>	sweeping movement using one foot to pull another player’s leg out from under them
<i>Reco reco</i>	percussive instrument wherein a stick or piece of metal is scraped over a ridged gourd or bamboo (Fryer, 2000)
<i>Roda</i>	circle in which the game of <i>capoeira</i> is played, including the <i>bateria</i>
<i>Role</i>	movement starting from a squatting position wherein a capoeirista turns and is able to stand up
<i>Puxada de rede</i>	traditional dance representing the relationship between a fisherman and the sea, in reverence for Iemanjá, the Goddess of the Sea (Filhos de Bimba, 2013)
<i>Quexada</i>	kick in which one foot steps behind the other, followed by the front leg passing in front of the <i>capoeirista</i> ’s body
<i>Quilombo</i>	self-sufficient communities established by formerly enslaved individuals, the most famous of which is called Palmares
<i>Santeria</i>	combination of Christianity and spirituality practiced by enslaved Africans residing in Cuba, also referred to as <i>Lukumí</i> or <i>Regla de Ocha</i> (Christenson, 2006)
<i>São bento</i>	a rhythm played on the berimbau typically used with the Angola style of play

<i>Sequencia</i>	sequence of <i>capoeira</i> movements
<i>Sifu</i>	Master of martial arts
<i>Tupí-Guaraní</i>	Indigenous people of South American origin, wherein Tupí inhabited the majority of Brazil's coast prior to Portuguese colonization (Wikipedia, 2020) and Guaraní people were traditionally in Southern Brazil (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2020; Wikipedia, 2020)
<i>Xingu people</i>	ethnic group of Indigenous people who live near the Xingu River (Wikipedia, 2020)

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“it’s not about you or me, it’s about what we leave behind”

- Contra Mestre Dentista

iê vive capoeira!

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Problem Statement

The United States population is projected to consist of more than 50% racial and ethnic minorities by the year 2050 (Colby & Ortman, 2015), yet minorities are continually at greater risk for poorer health outcomes and at higher risk for trauma-related symptoms than their White counterparts (Alegría et al., 2016; Alegría et al., 2013; Baker & Fishbein, 1998; Barret & Logan, 2002; Barry & Grillo, 2003; Brondolo et al., 2003; Cadinu et al., 2005; Frederickson & Roberts, 1997; Hamelsky & Lipton, 2006; Herek, Gillis, & Coogan, 2009; Odafe et al., 2016; Utsey et al., 2002; Haslan et al., 2014; Greif & Greif, 2004; Tucker et al., 2010). While some individuals access mental health treatment through emergency services, providers covered by insurance networks, and participation in research studies or clinical trials, an estimated 56% of individuals who have a diagnosable mental health condition never obtain formal treatment (Leong & Kalibatseva, 2011; mentalhealth.gov, 2018).

Barriers: Self, Provider, Systems

Access and utilization of mental health services for racial and ethnic minorities remains disproportionately lower when compared to White individuals, despite national efforts to close the gap (Turner et al., 2016; Urbanoski et al., 2015; Leong & Kalibatseva, 2011; Gómez, 2015; Safran et al., 2009; Adtjian & Vega, 2005; Bashir, 2000; Cai & Robst, 2016; USDHHS, 1999a, 1999b, 2001; Mays & Albee, 1992). Challenges to accessing treatment have been conceptualized at various levels, including the self, the provider, and health care systems overall (Scheppers et al., 2006). At an individual level, a person's level of comfort, language barriers and cultural beliefs have been found to interfere with help-seeking behavior (Adtjian & Vega, 2005). At the

level of the provider, assessment tools, stereotypification, implicit bias and ignorance to historical factors can be problematic (Adtjian & Vega, 2005). At a systems-level, inadequate training, White-washed curriculum, and discriminatory policies contribute to reasons why an ethnic minority is not able to receive proper mental health care (Adtjian & Vega, 2005).

Historical Challenges

In consideration of U.S.'s history of colonization (Brayboy, 2006), discriminatory legislation (Drexler, 2019; Hong et al., 2007; Gandhi, 2013), and an “us versus them” mentality (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), it comes as no surprise that minorities are more apt to experience compromised mental and physical health, while supremacy of the dominant group is proliferated (Swartz, 2004; Brayboy, 2001; Espinoza & Harris, 1998; Freire, 1998; Rogoff, 2003).

Furthermore, the perspective of White, heterosexual, middle class, cisgender male has been privileged within the field of psychology (Guthrie, 1998; Pérez-Gualdrón & Yeh, 2014; Schultz & Schultz, 2011). As a result, verbal emotional expression, autonomy, and problem solving have been valued as the primary modalities of therapy (Hagedorn & Hirschorn, 2009), however these methods are often contradictory to the values and worldviews held by racial and ethnic minority group members (Ault-Brutus & Alegría, 2018; Pérez-Gualdrón & Yeh, 2014). Consequently, marginalized groups are at greater risk of being stereotyped, alienated, pathologized, and misrepresented in therapy and society at large (Herek, 2010; Opler, 1968; McWhirter, 1994; Yeh et al., 2004). In January of 2021, the American Psychiatric Association delineated an apology to Black, Indigenous, and People of Color due to historical ways in which systemic racism pervaded the field of psychiatry (American Psychiatric Association, 2021). The apology noted the importance of reversing “the persistent tone of privilege built upon the inhumanity of past

events,” such as “inequities in access to quality psychiatric care, research opportunities, education/training, and representation in leadership” (American Psychiatric Association, 2021).

Multicultural Guidelines

Within the past two decades, however, the American Psychological Association [APA] has made concerted efforts to address these historical issues (APA, 2014). In 2002, the American Psychological Association [APA] delineated Guidelines on Multicultural Education, Training, Research, and Organizational Change for Psychologists in an effort to address the needs of culturally diverse and marginalized groups. Since then, counseling psychologists have articulated the importance of identifying and developing interventions that are not only cultural *adaptations*, rather, are culturally *congruent*, or culturally *centered* (Bernal & Rodriguez, 2012; Smith, 2010; Sue, 2003; Burt, 2015; Burt & Butler, 2011; Arredondo & Toporek, 2004; Pederson, 1990 as seen in Smith, 2010; Roysircar, 2009; Alexander & Sussman, 1995; Fukuyama & Sevig, 1999; Ridley, 1995; Santiago-Rivera et al., 2002; Sciarra, 1999; Society for the Psychological Study of Ethnic Minority Issues, Division 45 of the American Psychological Association & Microtraining Associates, Inc., 2000; Sue et al., 1998; Sue & Sue, 1999). Culturally congruent interventions have been found to be more effective with individuals from marginalized groups when compared to interventions that do not incorporate culture (Burt, 2013; Smith, 2010). Subsequently, the Multicultural Guidelines were updated to incorporate an ecological approach including the consideration of context, identity, and intersectionality, which is discussed herein (APA, 2017).

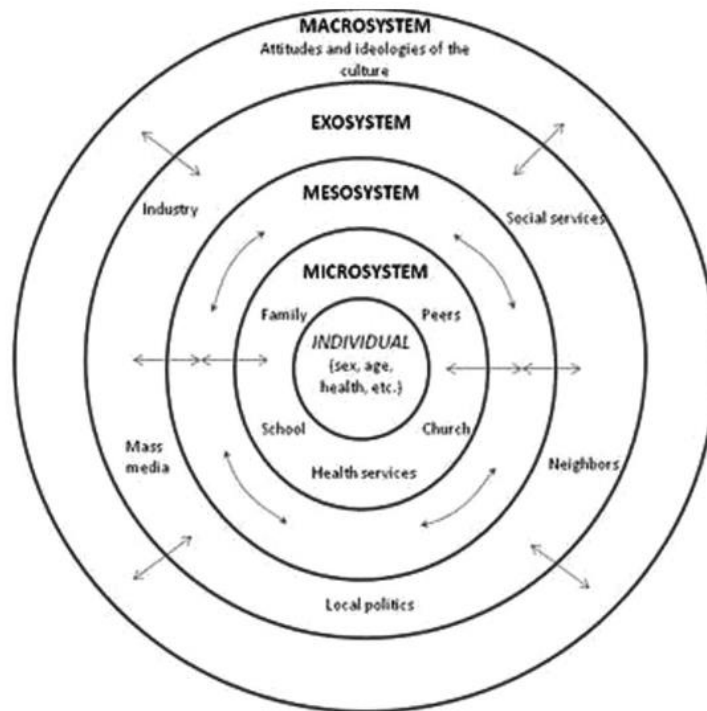
Ecology. As social justice is emphasized by the field of counseling psychology (American Psychological Association, 2019), the consideration of historical context and multiple systems in which a person functions is paramount (Nadal, 2017; Pérez-Gauldron & Yeh, 2014;

Williams, Teggelove & Day, 2014; Toporek et al., 2010; O’Grady & McFerran, 2007; Toporek et al., 2006; Fassinger, n.d.; Pavlicevic, 2006; Martín-Baró, 1996; Ansdell, 2012). It is important to review Bronfenbrenner’s (1979) Ecological Systems Theory, which originally included four interrelated systems including: (1) the *microsystem*, (2) the *mesosystem*, (3) the *exosystem*, and (4) the *macrosystem* (Vest Ettekal & Mahoney, 2017; Yarrow, 1981; Bronfenbrenner, 1979). At times a fifth system, the *chronosystem*, includes overarching societal values (Ponterotto et al., 2014).

The multiple systems have been conceptualized as concentric circles, ranging from the most proximal influences being closer to the individual, and more distal influences farther away (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). The *microsystem* includes the activities and various roles that occur on a regular basis, often including the home, family, school, teachers, and peers or co-workers (Yarrow, 1981; Bronfenbrenner, 1979). The *mesosystem* includes the interactions between the various microsystems, again encompassing home, school, and work environments (Yarrow, 1981; Bronfenbrenner, 1979). The *exosystem* includes the settings that a person does not directly interact with, but influence interactions among the micro- and meso-systems (Yarrow, 1981; Bronfenbrenner, 1979). The *macrosystem* includes social and cultural values, while the *chronosystem* is characterized by changes over time (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Virile et al., 2019).

Figure 1.

Bronfenbrenner's (1970) ecological model.



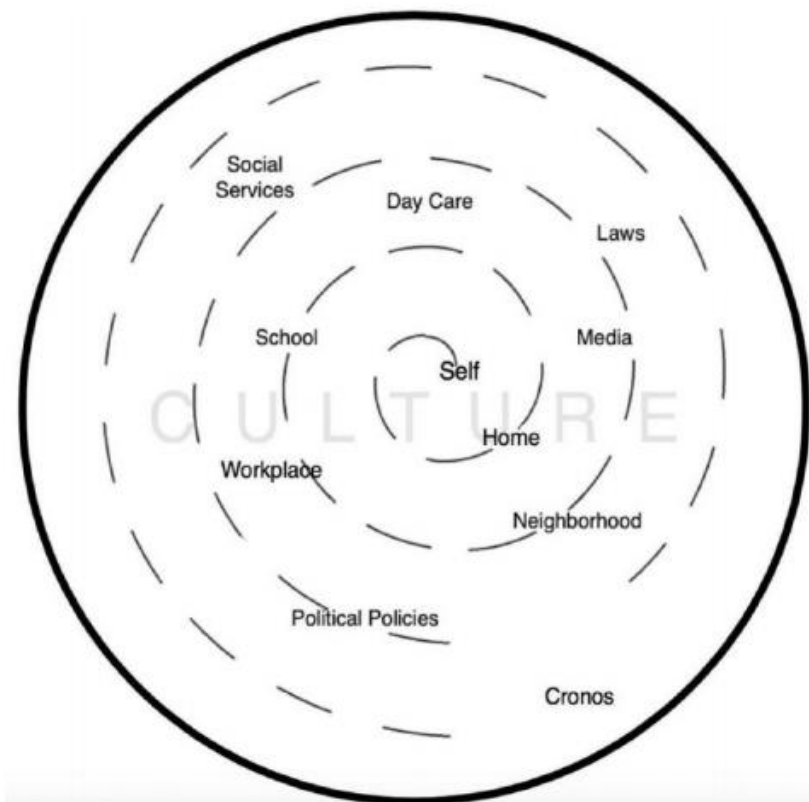
Cultural Microsystemic Model. Recently, Vélez-Agosto and colleagues (2017) reconceptualized Bronfenbrenner's (1979) Ecological Theory and instead posited that culture is a part of the microsystem rather than the macrosystem. In their Cultural Microsystemic Model, the authors draw from Vygotsky's (1978) idea of cultural mediation, and Weisner's (2002) and Rogoff's (2007) descriptions of cultural pathways, also known as daily practices and routines (Vélez-Agosto et al., 2017). As culture is not only a force that permeates lower-level systems, cultural practices exist across the spectrum of proximal and distal levels, wherein the individual and systems are mutually defined rather than hierarchical (Vélez-Agosto et al., 2017).

Rather than depicting the levels as concentric circles, Vélez-Agosto and colleagues (2017) represent their visual model with a spiral. Elements of Bronfenbrenner's (1979) model are still present, including the *cronos*, or changes over time, which is distally positioned. Aspects of the macrosystem including social and cultural values are not specifically named on Vélez-Agosto

and colleagues (2017) model, as they are instead posited as central to all other elements of existence including political policies, social services, laws, and media. Various settings are described as venues for cultural practices, or pathways, in which an individual engages with settings, in which the person and place are mutually constructed (Vélez-Agosto et al., 2017). Specific settings such as the neighborhood, workplace, school, day care, and home are named on their model, which features ‘self’ at the center of the spiral (Vélez-Agosto et al., 2017). As the self is central to the Cultural Microsystemic Model (Vélez-Agosto et al., 2017), it is important to consider protective aspects of the self, such as identity (Sue, 2010).

Figure 2

Vélez-Agosto et al.'s (2017) Bronfenbrenner's bioecological theory revision: Moving culture from the macro into the micro



Identity. As noted by Kimura (1988), “to live as an individual is to live with all the connections to the lives of others and their surroundings” (as seen in Sukiyama & Koch, 2003, p. 82). According to Social Identity Theory (Tajfel, 1974), individuals strive to achieve satisfactory concepts, or images, of themselves in reference to their social group. Group membership is important, as the experience of care and a sense of belonging are fundamental to humans (Jones et al., 2014; Sue, 2010; Brewer, 1991; Hill, 2005; Sherif, 1957). Social identity offers an explanation as to how and why individuals behave and interact, especially when considering ‘in’ and ‘out’ group members (Tajfel & Turner, 1977; Sherif, 1957). In congruence with Vélez-Agosto and colleagues’ Cultural Microsystemic Model, a person’s social relationships reciprocally contribute to the self-concept, as an individual is shaped by interpersonal relationships, exchanges, and interpretations within a given environment (Anderson, 2011; Archer, 1992; Bandura, 1978, 2012; Darling, 2007; Forgas & Williams, 2002; Health & McLaughlin, 1993; Vélez-Agosto et al., 2017; Wood et al., 2008).

Conventional categories of identity include race, gender identity and role, political ideology, ethnicity, and religious or spiritual beliefs (Cooper & Denner, 1998). Several stage models have been developed with regard to racial identity (Erikson, 1986; Helms, 1990; Cross, 1995; Cokely & Vandiver, 2012), however updated conceptualizations of identity development acknowledge the fluidity and dynamic nature of a person’s identity (APA, 2017b; Cho et al., 2013; Ferguson et al., 2017). As a result, a person’s identity salience can vary depending upon the context, as this facilitates optimal navigation and integration of emotional, social, and political factors (Hong et al., 2007; Jones et al., 2014; Yakushko et al., 2009; Coleman et al., 2003; Coleman, 1995; Ferguson et al., 2017; Makshima, 1996; Rockquemore & Brunzma, 2002).

The idea of *cultural identity* encompasses the multiple social identities within a myriad of social contexts (Coleman et al., 2003), wherein a person's 'core identity' may not revolve around race or other disparate categories (Thornton, 1996). Cultural context provides the landscape for identity development, wherein both are dynamic by nature (McLean et al., 2017). Mclean and colleagues (2017) discuss the idea of 'master narratives which are "culturally shared stories that provide frameworks within which individuals can locate and story their own experiences" (p. 7). When individuals deviate from the 'master narratives' within their given cultural context, they are said to have 'alternative narratives' (McLean et al., 2017). When individuals do not encompass the 'master narrative' and instead endorse an 'alternative narrative', individuals demonstrate greater engagement with identity processes and the development of agency (McLean et al., 2016). For individuals who belong to marginalized groups, relationships and social connections are especially imperative, as "we cannot be fully defined without a group" (McLean et al., 2017, p. 31). McAdams and colleagues (2006) described the importance self-definition via constructed narratives, as they "are the stories we live by" (p. 4).

Ethnic identity refers to an individual's connection to their respective ethnic group (Jones et al., 2014; McLean et al., 2017), which is an imperative aspect of healthy identity (McLean et al., 2017). The ability for groups to self-define is a critical component of social change (Frost, 2015; Hammack, 2010), wherein resistance can be agentic as one gains empowerment and resilience (McLean et al., 2017). Some examples that extend the concept of ethnic identity to self-defined cultural groups include the 'tomboy' for lesbian women (Craig & LaCroix, 2011), and 'metalheads' (Howe et al., 2015), wherein the collectivistic sense of group identity is a protective factor against the deleterious impacts of systemic oppression (Sue, 2010).

Intersectionality. Intersectionality further considers the numerous contextual factors pertaining to an individual’s identity (Cole, 2009; Howard & Renfrow, 2014). Intersectionality is “shaped by the multiplicity of an individual’s social context” (APA, 2017b, p. 3) including culture, language, race, gender identity, ethnicity, ability, sexual orientation, age, socioeconomic status, religious and spiritual affiliation and practices, immigration status, educational attainment, and employment or lack thereof, in addition to many others (APA, 2002). When aspects of identity are considered in isolation from each other, a person is at risk of experiencing ‘intersectional invisibility’ (Purdie-Vaughns & Eibach, 2008), due to the empirical challenges of measuring inseparable parts of an individual (McLean et al., 2017). A person may further feel ‘unresolved’ when they do not encompass ‘master narratives’, thus identity resolution and meaning via a new reference group is particularly important (McLean et al., 2017). Rather than conceptualizing identity as linear or discrete (Bowleg, 2008), intersectionality acknowledges within-group intricacies and better serves to inform strategies that work toward dismantling and eradicating oppressive systems and hegemonic power (APA, 2017b; Brayboy, 2005; Shin, 2015; Bowleg, 2008; Clough & Fine, 2007; McLean et al., 2017).

Additionally, intersectionality also requires reflective practice on behalf of the practitioner, in order to examine the power dynamics between the provider and client, and in relation to larger systems (Nadal, 2017; Clough & Fine, 2007). Research regarding intersectionality involves an investigation of meaningful constructs, such as voluntary integration of diverse groups (Grzanka, 2014), mutually constructed relationships (Crenshaw, 1989; Greene, 2013; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016), and multidimensional aspects of identity (APA, 2017b; Smith & Silva, 2011; Miller, 1992; Root, 1990). As individuals develop within sociohistorical

and cultural contexts, it is important to consider community (Rogoff, 2017; López et al., 2012; Jones et al., 2014; Vélez-Agosto et al., 2017).

Community. Community is described as inclusive of one's family, friends, and geographic region, wherein opportunities can be both presented and precluded (Phillips Bingham, 2010). In consideration of intersectionality, the racial and educational makeup of an individual's neighborhood is said to influence a person's expression of identity, especially for multiracial individuals (Choi-Misailidis, 2010). Culturally informed community engagement is at the crux of building alliances through collaboration (Toporek et al., 2010), through which an individual's life and be contextualized and understood (Phillips Bingham, 2010). Freire (2000) purported that "revolutionary leaders must avoid organizing themselves apart from the people" (p. 163), rather the ideal avenue of resolution is *cultural synthesis*, the integration of oppressor and oppressed through which culture can be confronted. As such, psychologists are encouraged to collaborate with communities who experience profound marginalization in order increase collective power (Prilleltensky, 1997) to address systemic barriers and work toward social justice (Toporek et al., 2010).

Kretzman and McKnight (1993) discussed the idea of 'asset-based community development' in contrast to stereotypic negativity associated with low-income communities. About 12% of the U.S. population, or about 39.7 million people, are afflicted by poverty in the United States, with Black and Hispanic individuals earning considerably less (nearly half) of their White or Asian counterparts (Fontenot et al., 2018). While individuals within these liminal spaces may depend upon accessing services as a client to improve well-being, Kretzman and McKnight (1993) instead purport that capacities, assets and skills that individuals already possess better guide the development of low-income communities. As such, change must begin

from within, rather than from a top-down approach, if lasting social reform is to occur (Kreztman & McKnight, 1993).

López and colleagues (2012) discussed the idea of collaboration and helpfulness, especially among Indigenous and Indigenous-heritage communities of Mexico, which emphasize the importance of the community as a whole. Individual contributions toward the benefit of the community are ways that community members demonstrate prosocial skills, in congruence with community values (López et al., 2012).

Cultural Interventions. Over the past two decades, psychologists have called for culturally responsive interventions for marginalized individuals (Bernal-Rodriguez, 2012; Jones, et al. 2014; Pérez-Gualdron & Yeh, 2014; Smith, 2010). Culture is a social reality that refers to important values, beliefs, rituals, symbols, and means of communication for a particular group (Smith, 2010; Jones et al., 2014). Culture is learned through intentional teaching and secondary learning, which informs group members of social etiquette and behavioral expectations via rituals, practices and customs within the community (Jones et al., 2014; Brayboy, 2006; Delgado-Gaitan, 2001; Yosso, 2005; Appadurai, 1996). While culture is rooted to physical lands and in ancestral practices (Brayboy, 2006; Merrell, 2005), culture is dynamic and evolves over time (Gómez-Guiñones, 1997; Oleneck, 2000), in which change is the only constant (Singer, 2018; Mark, 2010). Culture is also described as an external expression of shared values (Jacobson-Widding, 1983).

A related term is *cultural diversity*, which refers to the idea that different cultures possess a variety of worldviews, which can lead to different judgments and notions of reality (Jones et al., 2014; Thomas, 2000; Coon & Kimmelmeier, 2001; Ibrahim, 1999). Hofstede (2001) discussed an important cultural difference between individualism and collectivism, wherein

Western-European cultures value the individual and autonomy, while East Asian cultures are generally more oriented toward the group (Brewer & Chen, 2007; Masuda et al., 2008). Another important difference between collective and individualistic orientations for diverse racial and ethnic groups is the idea of holistic healing, which incorporates the mind, body and spirituality (Pérez-Gualdron & Yeh, 2014; Holden et al., 2014; Meekums, 2008; Merrell, 2005; Guthrie, 1995, 1997; Wall, 2005; Sibinga et al., 2011). As verbal methods of psychotherapeutic intervention were previously favored, much work remains to be done regarding culturally centered psychological methods of healing (Bernal-Rodriguez, 2012).

The term ‘culturally different’ was historically a misnomer for ‘culturally deficient’, wherein marginalized groups have been treated as ‘lesser than’ in comparison to the majority group ‘norms’ (Herek, 2010; Foley, 1997; Bloom, Davis, & Hess, 1965 as seen in Banks, 2006). Given the omission of culturally diverse values within traditional talk therapy services (Pérez-Gualdron & Yeh, 2014; Guthrie, 1998; Grief & Grief, 2004; Leong et al., 2012), it is not surprising that racial and ethnic minorities prematurely terminate or refrain from seeking mental health services (Leong & Kalibatseva, 2011). Sue (2015) cited cultural oppression as “the most harmful act committed toward people of color and other marginalized groups in psychotherapy” (as seen in Nadal, 2017, p. 941), wherein the integration of multiculturalism is, at minimum, an ethical obligation (Nadal, 2017).

Movement, Music, and Group Therapy

In order to adequately address the needs for culturally congruent practice, Alegría, Alvarez and colleagues (2016) recommended the development of innovative practices and interventions. Cultural differences impact the way that mental health conditions are conceptualized and the subsequent services that are sought (Ault-Brutus, & Alegría, 2018; Cai &

Robst, 2016), thus access to appropriate care is even more critical (Alegria et al., 2016). Collaboration with community members and organizations (Barksdale et al., 2014; López et al., 2012), as well as implementing service delivery in the vicinity of service recipients, rather than formalized settings, is also one way to center practices around individuals who may struggle with adequate transportation, or time needed to attend an appointment (Leong & Kalibatseva, 2011).

Capoeira

As therapeutic aspects of movement, music, dance, and groups were previously described, it is important to delineate how *capoeira* is similar, and yet a unique endeavor. *capoeira* is described as a dance, fight, and game, which all occur simultaneously (Capoeira, 2006). Furthermore, *capoeira* is described as a “scrappy, ritualized ballet, an embattling challenge of physical ability and mental agility practiced to the rhythm of instruments and chants” (Merrell, 2005). *capoeira* has been cited as “life itself” (Merrell, 2005) and knowledge that is carried at all times (Almeida, 1986). On-going debates discuss various origins of the word *capoeira*, including the Amerindian language Tupi-Guarani (Capoeira, 2006; Merrell, 2005), and Latin. The Tupian word *caa* refers to the forest or woods, while *puera* means ‘extinct’ (Rego, 1968 as seen in Lewis, 1992). The Portuguese derivation from *capao*, or ‘capon’ refers to a castrated cock, or a cage for chickens (Lewis, 1992). In the Congolese language of Kikongo, the word “kipura” means ‘sweeping ground movements’ (Beras, 2016).

A Brief History of capoeira

capoeira was first documented in Brazil during the 16th century, wherein enslaved Africans disguised physical fighting techniques as merriment and jubilation in dance an effort to transcend oppression and have the skills to literally fight for their freedom (Almeida, 1986; Anderson, 1996; Capoeira, 2006; Lewis, 1992; Merrell, 2005; Downey, 2008). The practice of

capoeira, or *capoeiragem*, was criminalized until 1886 and affiliated with the “the lower classes’ something that belonged to blacks and mulattos” (Capoeira, 2006, p. 336). *capoeira* practitioners, better known as *capoeiristas*, were initially associated with lower social classes and criminal activity, akin to stereotypes about marginalized individuals in our current society (Rosa, 2012; Head & Gravina, 2012; Jones de Almeida, 2003; Merrell, 2005; Lewis, 1992; Capoeira, 2006; Almeida, 1986). *Capoeiristas* were characterized as *malandros* (Lewis, 1992; Merrell, 2005), who were known to embody *malícia*, or deceit and trickery (Capoeira, 2006; Lewis, 1992; Merrell, 2005).

Vincent Ferrerira Pastinha, *Mestre Pastinha*, dedicated his life work to preserving the *Angolan* ways of playing (Lewis, 1992). The Angola style of *capoeira* is characterized by movements that are close to the ground as a means of connecting to the earth (Joseph, 2008). Contrarily, *Mestre Bimba*, Manoel dos Reis Machado created a “modern” version of *capoeira* known as *Regional*, which is characterized by more upright movements and a combative style. Due to *Mestre Bimba*’s efforts to formalize training in academy settings, *capoeira* became a legitimized national sport in 1937 as recognized by Brazil’s Ministry of Education (Almeida, 1986; Lewis, 1992; Merrell, 2005). *Mestre Bimba* incited the transition of *capoeira* from the streets and lower classes to the middle and upper classes in which students began paying to participate in the organized sport.

It is important to note that there are many many other *mestres* who have taught other styles of *capoeira* that are not categorized as *Angola* or *Regional*, such as *Santista* which is characterized by the utility of movement rather than aesthetics (Young, personal communication, July 2019). Additional history is available in *capoeira* (2006; see also Assunção, 2005; Capoeira, 2006; Downey, 2005; Lewis, 1992; Merrell, 2005; Talmon-Chavicer, 2008).

capoeira Research

Within the past decade, *capoeira* has been investigated in psychological literature due to numerous therapeutic benefits for participants including a sense of belonging, empowerment, increased self-efficacy, creative expression and identity development (Burt & Butler, 2011; Lopez & Burt, 2013; Burt, 2015; De Martini Ugolotti, 2014; Kugel, 2014). Ethnographic studies have highlighted the depth of *capoeira*'s cultural practices and traditions as a means of combating systemic oppression through the instillation of protective factors (Downey et al., 2015; Joseph, 2008, 2012; Almeida, 1986; Merrell, 2005; Lewis, 1992, Hedgard, 2012; De Martini Ugolotti, 2014; Delamont, 2005, 2006; González Varela, 2013, 2017). Additionally, *capoeira* has been investigated through an anthropological lens to explore the idea of legitimacy for individuals who travel to Brazil to train (Miller Griffith, 2016). *capoeira* was also utilized as a tool for social justice with Black Males in an elementary school to develop meaningful pedagogical approaches as well as critical discussion (Lindsay, 2019).

In congruence with the updated multicultural guidelines (APA, 2017b), *capoeira* is a culturally centered practice that integrates an ecological perspective (Downey, 2008; Capoeira, 2006; Prytherch & Kraft, 2015), identity development (De Martini Ugolotti, 2014; Robitaille, 2014; Burt & Butler, 2011), and intersectionality (Downey, 2008).

Narratives in capoeira

As *capoeiristas* were traditionally restricted from accessing literacy through formal education due to their status as enslaved people (Capoeira, 2006; Almeida, 1986; Merrell, 2005; Lewis, 1992), knowledge and cultural transmission occurred verbally through song, story, and movement (Capoeira, 2006) as 'embodied collective' (Narváez, 2013). Debret (1834) noted that

“often one of the slaves, missing his homeland, let out his voice and sang in the public squares” (as seen in Capoeira, 2006, p. 117). Oral tradition is central to *capoeira*, as a *ladainha*, or litany, is used to begin the *roda* and typically teaches a lesson about *capoeira*’s history, while asking ancestors for blessings. As storytelling is an embedded practice within *capoeira* (Capoeira, 2006; Merrell, 2005), narrative inquiry will be utilized for the proposed study.

Narrative Inquiry

Narrative inquiry is utilized to explore both intra- and inter-personal experiences through which the human condition can be understood (Merriam & Tisdale, 2006; Saldaña, 2016). Not only is narration a natural element of cultural transmission (Cavalli-Sforza, Feldman, Chen, & Dornbusch, 1982), but it also is a justified and legitimate way of knowing (Anzaldúa, 1990; Brayboy, 2006; Courlander, 1976; Olivas, 1990; Yosso, 2005). Furthermore, storytelling is a pedagogical tool utilized for remembering, witnessing spirituality, and acquiring and transforming culture (Iseke, 2013 as seen in Saldaña, 2016; Weisner, 2009). Although narratives are told by individuals, they are also inherently social by default due to the context in which an individual describes their story (Kim, 2016; Weisner, 2009), in accordance with mutually determined relationships between self and others (Coleman, Norton, Miranda, & McCubbin, 2003; Gómez-Guiñones, 1997; Jones et al., 2014; Markus & Kitayama, 2009; Oberman & Ramachandran, 2007; Rice & Dolgin, 2005; Vélez-Agosto et al., 2017; Smith, 2010).

Research Questions

Given that cultural identity and cohesion among group members is a protective factor for marginalized individuals (Sue, 2010; Yalom, 2008), it is particularly important to gain a better understanding of this process from the perspectives of *capoeira* practitioners, also known as *capoeiristas*, themselves. (Coleman et al., 2003). A handful of the studies about *capoeira*

focused on the self-concept and identity within the group (de Campos Rosario et al., 2015; Payne & Rufino, 1995; Stephens & Delamont, 2009), including De Martini Ugolotti (2014) who spoke with immigrant youth in Italy to gain their perspectives. Prytherch and Kraft (2015) also shared participant perspectives from seven youth and six trainers, however their discussion focused on sociopolitical factors in the Middle East. Burt and Butler (2011) discussed the use of *capoeira* in decreasing aggression among youth, however youth perspectives are omitted. Additionally, the majority of investigations regarding *capoeira* focused on the perspective of the researcher's experiences through ethnographic inquiry, or pedagogical approaches to facilitate cohesion and knowledge, rather than the lived experiences of *capoeiristas* and cultural identity in reference to the *capoeira* group.

From an ecological perspective, identity can be conceptualized as “simultaneously socially constructed and structurally imposed” (Coleman et al., 2003, p. 53). Through a critical lens, it is important to understand the impacts of subordination and systemic oppression through the experiential knowledge of People of Color (Ladson-Billings, 2000), which is not only legitimate, but a valuable source of data (Brayboy, 2006; Delgado Bernal, 2002; Delgado Bernal & Villalpando, 2002). In order to illuminate perspectives that are otherwise omitted from ‘mainstream’ narratives, it is imperative that counter-stories are voiced and shared (McLean et al., 2017; Brayboy, 2006).

Therefore, the following questions will be explored through narrative inquiry:

- 1) What aspects of identity are most important for *capoeiristas*?
- 2) What meaningful cultural traditions or routines are practiced by *capoeiristas*?
- 3) What aspects of *capoeira* are therapeutic, or healing, over time?

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

As previously noted, the American Psychological Association (2002) acknowledges that “culture-specific therapy (individual, family, and group) may require non-traditional interventions” (Alexander & Sussman, 1995; Fukuyama & Sevig, 1999; Ridley, 1995; Santiago-Rivera et al., 2002; Sciarra, 1999; Society for the Psychological Study of Ethnic Minority Issues, Division 45 of the American Psychological Association & Microtraining Associates, Inc., 2000; Sue et al., 1998; Sue & Sue, 1999). As such, it is important to review the benefits of participation in non-traditional modes of service delivery, including group and experiential therapy, movement-based interventions, music therapy and the culturally rooted practices such as *capoeira*.

Group Therapy

Group therapy often parallels experiences that individuals experience in their daily lives (Corey, 2012; Gladding, 2012; Yalom & Leszcz, 2005; Whitaker, 2001) and offers the opportunity for corrective emotional experiences, universality, socialization, interpersonal learning, and cohesion (Yalom & Leszcz, 2005). Previously investigated areas include group and experiential therapy (Hagedorn & Hirshhorn, 2009), the integration of mind and body through movement healing (Guthrie, 1997; Oulanova, 2009), and holistic integrative care (Holden et al., 2014; Causadias, 2013).

Group cohesion (Brewer & Chen, 2007; Burt & Butler, 2011; Burt, 2015; Cole, 2009; de Campos Rosario, Stephens, & Delamont, 2011; Sue, 2010), ethnic identity (Cole, 2009; Gains et al., 1997; Jones, Dovidio, & Vietze; Sue, 2010; Smith & Silva, 2011; Kim-Ju & Liem, 2003), and the proliferation of traditional practices such as storytelling were identified as protective factors for ethnic minorities (Brayboy, 2006; Rutman, Loughran, Tanner, & Randall, 2016;

Yosso, 2005; Battiste, 2002). Furthermore, individuals can access intergenerational historical connectedness through culturally rooted traditional practices, such as martial arts (Twemlow & Sacco, 1998).

Experiential Therapy.

Experiential therapy relies upon engaging with an activity that allows an individual to draw connections between the activity and presenting problem (Greenberg et al., 1998), often drawing upon principles of person-centered treatment (Rogers, 1979) to identify solutions and healthy coping strategies (Wilkins, 2016). In addition to experiential therapy, individuals can benefit from engaging in movement such as dance and martial arts as they incorporate both the body and the mind.

Fuchs (2009) purported that the mind does not exist solely in the brain, rather the mind exists in the brain, the physical body, and the surrounding environment. Twemlow and Sacco (1998) discussed the importance of balancing physical and mental training, with an emphasis on mindfulness through which movement would become effortless. Ravelin and colleagues (2006) further recommended use of dance movement therapy in nursing settings due to the connection between the mind and body.

Music therapy is another means of strengthening the mind-body connection. Although music therapy is a relatively young field (Loewy, 2001), music has been employed as a healing method for many, many centuries across numerous cultural groups and geographic regions (Hadley et al., 2001; Boso et al., 2006). Similar to dance and movement therapy, the goal of music therapy is to help clients achieve physical, emotional, cognitive, and social goals, but instead of using movement, music is the primary method of intervention (AMTA, 2019). Music therapists focus on listening, improvisation, lyric discussion, composition, imagery, and

performance with individuals and groups (AMTA, 2019). Music therapy can be used to address mental health and developmental needs for youth, adults, and elderly people (AMTA, 2019). Additionally, specific conditions such as brain injuries, substance use, chronic and recurrent pain, and in particular, physical disabilities can be address through music therapy (AMTA, 2019).

Dance Therapy

The American Dance Therapy Association (ADTA) regulates Dance and Movement Therapy [DMT], which is defined as the “psychotherapeutic use of movement to promote emotional, social, cognitive, and physical integration of the individual ... [to] improve health and well-being” (ADTA, 2014). According to ADTA, dance movement therapy became a formalized field around the 1940s, as dancers began to identify psychotherapeutic benefits of their participation in dance and movement (ADTA, 2014).

The foundation of DMT relies upon the idea that the mind and body, and spirit are integrated, inseparable components of an individual wherein movement is the language of communication, rather than the spoken word (ADTA, 2014). Movement is conceptualized as expressive, developmental, communicative, and functional, and serves as the primary means of intervention. While movement can be used for assessment, individuals and groups utilize their bodies and non-verbal interactions to work toward treatment goals (Welling, 2015). DMT can be used with all ages, and to address a vast array of concerns such as mental health issues, physical conditions such as fibromyalgia, spinal cord injuries, traumatic brain injuries, neurological disorders, degenerative diseases such as multiple sclerosis and Parkinson’s, cancer, and chronic pain (Welling, 2015).

Dance and movement therapy was first employed with youth in a psychiatric hospital (Gaetner, 1978) through use of object relations therapy, Gestalt therapy, Jungian therapy, and tenants of classical and modern dance (Payne, 1992). Similarly, music therapy was first employed in hospital settings, but with veterans returning from war who reported that physical and emotional symptoms of trauma improved (AMTA, 2019). While formal treatment has established numerous benefits, the benefits are irrelevant when individuals are not receiving or seeking services (Leong & Kalibatseva, 2011). As an alternative to formal treatment, activities in the community setting offer another avenue through which healing can occur, such as parkour, *capoeira* (De Martini Ugolotti, 2014; Lopez & Burt, 2013; Burt & Bulter, 2011) and martial arts (Guthrie, 1997; Twemlow & Sacco, 1998).

Research regarding dance and culture has investigated the influence of cultural background and the process of talent development among those who could afford it (Sanchez et al., 2013). The authors found that social environments positively influenced psychological well-being, and self-esteem as reported by the dancers in the study (Sanchez et al., 2013). Additional benefits included social supports, learning and persistence through challenges during training. Sanchez and colleagues (2013) also found that dancers stated the importance of economic stability so they could pursue dance opportunities, have adequate transportation, and access to physiotherapy.

Block (2001) described a theoretical model for a cultural relational framework when implementing a DMT group with youth in rural Georgia. Block (2001) delineated four components of the theory including: education, exploration, transformation, and creation with the intent of strengthening interpersonal dynamics within the group. Siljamäki et al. (2014) discussed dance pedagogy in Finland, as multicultural education is a developing area of dance. Teachers'

experiences were vehicles of personal expression, identity as a woman, and the collective orientation of dance (Siljamäki et al., 2014).

Martial Arts

Martial arts include many different forms including Karate, Jiu jit-su, aikido, krav ma ga, and many others that are practiced not only in the country of origin, but globally as well (Demorest & Koutures, 2016). Some of the greatest risks of participating in martial arts include physical injury, however recommendations about injury prevention include limited contact, or no contact with a person's head (Demorest & Koutures, 2016). While some martial artists focus on power, strength, or agility, others focus on self-discipline, inner peace, and control (Wall, 2005). Specifically, martial arts interventions rooted in 'Eastern traditions', such as tai chi and hapkido, focus on increasing the connection between the mind and body, with an emphasis on awareness of self and others (Burt & Butler, 2011; Guthrie, 1997; Twemlow et al., 1997; Wall, 2005).

Traditionally-based martial arts have been found to contribute to positive self-esteem (Berry, 1990; Bester, 1984; Boudreau et al., 1992; Egan, 1993; Finkenberg, 1990 as seen in Guthrie, 1997), decreased aggressive behaviors among adolescents (Twemlow et al., 1997), decreased biophysiological symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (Arch and Craske 2006; Birdee et al. 2009; Brown and Gerbarg 2009; Marmar et al. 1994; Salmon et al. 2009 as seen in Waechter & Werkele, 2015), and increased resilience (Waechter & Werkele, 2015). Twemlow and Sacco (1998) discussed the importance of teaching philosophy in the vein of traditional martial arts, with an emphasis upon self-discipline and self-control rather than aggression and power (Twemlow & Sacco, 1998).

Music

As with dance, music is considered to be a form of human expression (Jones et al., 2004; Rankin, 1999; AMTA, 2019), and pervades numerous aspects of society as a cultural medium (Wigram, 2003). Both music and dance are cited as powerful tools that can have a visceral impact upon the performers and witnesses (Bolger, 2012; Jones et al., 2004) as means through which harmony and health can be restored (Solomon & Heller, 1982).

When working with children, Bunt (2003) has noted the importance of operating from a child-centered approach with an emphasis on social and emotional development. Bunt (2003) also discussed the distinction between music education and music therapy, wherein therapy focuses on well-being, while education focuses on mastery of knowledge and skills (Ockelford, 2000).

Several researchers (Kennedy & Scott, 2005; Fisher, 2001, Schunk, 1999; Ray, 1997) have investigated the use of music therapy in conjunction with elementary- and middle-school-aged students learning English as a Second Language. Ray (1997), sought to understand development for fourteen students ranging from pre-kindergarten to second grade, who received music instruction for 30 minutes in English. Findings indicated that students were able to clearly pronounce words in English as time progressed (Ray, 1997). Another study conducted by Colwell and Murless (2002) found that music therapy helped students learn verbal language skills, however reading abilities did not significantly improve. In a quasi-randomized study conducted by Fisher (2001), 160 low-income kindergarten students were randomly assigned to the music therapy group, or no music therapy group. Of the 80 students who were in the music therapy group, 20 were able to read at grade level, as opposed to one of the 80 students in the non-music therapy condition (Fisher, 2001).

Although Fisher (2001) concluded that music therapy was an important addition in the classroom for learning objectives related to standardized tests, it was unclear what type of music was employed (e.g., English or Spanish), and how it was used (e.g., frequency, duration). Schwantes (2009) described case studies with four kindergarteners and two middle-schoolers over the course of the academic year. Schwantes (2009) discussed the case studies through use of pseudonyms, however it was unclear if the pseudonyms were self-selected or assigned by the researcher. Overall, studies involving use of music therapy contribute to students' abilities to learn English as a Second Language, however there is still much to be discovered regarding this topic.

Expression. Music therapy has contributed to the ability to re-establish self-concept after enduring physical and psychological crisis (Guerrero et al., 2014). Through participating in music therapy with small groups, stroke survivors were able to extend trust to group members, acknowledging their need and desire for help (Guerrero et al., 2014). Individuals can represent identity through meaningful melodic expression (Aldridge & Aldridge, 2008). Through the improvisational expression of cultural identity, which coincides with individual identity, one can feel empowered and agentic within their respective context (Aldridge & Aldridge, 2008).

Gilboa and Salman (2018) utilized music therapy with a group of Arab and Jewish students with the initial goal of facilitating improved communication. Feedback provided by students indicated that the music therapy group helped them develop musical skills, express feelings, develop group cohesion, get to know “the other”, discuss political issues, and create distraction from uncomfortable political conversation (Gilboa & Salman, 2018). Additionally, music was a tool of expression for individual identity, as well as political and national identity (Gilboa & Salman, 2018).

Self-development. When performed, music can foster a sense of ownership among participants (Aigen, 2004; Soshensky, 2011), as well as increased self-esteem (Bunt, 2003; Hadley, Hadley, Dickens, & Jordan, 2001), confidence (Eley, Gorman & Gately, 2010; Eley & Norman, 2010), motivation (Bolger, 2012), and motor control (Bunt, 2003; Hadley et al., 2001). A short-term music therapy group was implemented in Lebanon in an effort to promote self-identity, belonging, and personal growth for Palestinian youth at the refugee camp (Storsve, Westby, & Ruud, 2010 as seen in Bolger, 2012).

Not only do relationships form with peers and the music therapist, but relationships extend to the instruments themselves, the musical piece being performed or explored, and the relationship between a person and their own identity (Bunt, 2003). Aldridge and Aldridge (2008) add “To understand what it is to be human, then make music,” (p. 325), which speaks to the chronosystemic level of the human experience over time (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). As with language, trends, slang, and vernacular of groups change over time (Hammerström, 2017).

Culturally rooted practices

Cultural engagement through the visual arts and social dancing has been found to improve depressive symptoms among older adults (Fancourt & Tymoszuk, 2018; Burzynska et al., 2017; Kattenstronh; Kolankowska et al., 2010; Lima & Vieira, 2007; Olsson, 2012). When discussing culturally rooted practices, it is important to acknowledge worldview and the subsequent impact upon a group of people and respective individuals.

Worldview is the way people believe the world works (Sue & Sue, 2013) and a philosophy of life (Ivey et al., 1997). Yeh and Pituc (1999) noted that worldviews can evolve based upon lived experiences, which are shaped by reference groups, geographic location, and family systems. Worldview is also associated with a person’s relationships between moral,

spiritual, educational, economic, and political encounters (Sodowsky & Kuo, 2001).

Additionally, worldview can vary greatly depending upon culture, which influences social judgments and conceptions of reality (Jones et al., 2014).

For some cultural groups such as First-Nation individuals, oral tradition *is* theory (Brayboy, 2006). Payne and Rufino (1995) discussed the power of worldview through participation in *capoeira*. As a Black woman with poor self-image and low self-esteem, Rufino's identity evolved into deep respect and regard for herself, as Candomblé gods in *capoeira* are women and highly revered (Payne & Rufino, 1995). Additionally, embodied ritual through dance and movement is another way that culture can be preserved and proliferated (Downey et al., 2015; Narváez, 2013; Mattsson & Lundvall, 2015).

Cronos refers to changes over time, encompassing philosophies, worldviews, and pedagogical practices (Jones et al., 2014). Within this scope, philosophies, worldviews, and ways of teaching can shift while still preserving various traditions. Cultural transmission regarding meaning and information is critical to the preservation and evolution of culture (Matsumoto et al., 2008).

Dance

According to some traditional cultural practices, the mind and body can both be directly expressed through dance (Panagiotopoulou, 2011). Dance is described as a dynamic visual art form dating back to ancient times (Calvo-Merino et al., 2008) and is cited for having evolutionary functions (Vicary et al., 2017). Given that memories, feelings and relationships being expressed through movement (Toncy, 2008), dance can serve as an effective method of healing for individuals within their respective cultures (Dunphy et al., 2014). Sugarman (1980) noted that dance is a vehicle of cultural enterprise specific to humans through which cultural

norms are expressed. Dance is also considered to be “one of the purest forms of art” (Kelley, n.d., para. 6)

Dance is a “cultural preserver, bodily exercise, and expression” according to Mattsson and Lundvall (2015, p 860). Mattsson and Lundvall (2015) argued that dance contributed to identity formation for Swedish and Nordic cultures in early years, and discussed dance as a medium through which other cultures can be understood. Aesthetic discourse was touted as the least important aspect of dance (Lundvall, 2015), while other researchers have noted the importance of visual expression of the body (Panagiotopoulou, 2011; Downey, 2008; Sakiyama & Koch, 2003) thus demonstrating varied cultural differences and respective preferences. Mattsson and Lundvall (2015) purport that dance remains a tool of social control based on the curricula within physical education that most students’ experience.

With regarding to national identity, Kulbekova and colleagues (2016), Gartzonika (2013), and Gonye and Manase (2015) discussed the significance of national identity as embodied through dance in Kazakhstan, Greece, and Zimbabwe, respectively. Markula (2015) discussed the role of identity among dancers who experience injury, wherein an amateur who strongly identifies as a dancer sacrifices their body to continue training.

Shiple (2013) explored ‘Azonto,’ a Ghanaian dance craze that has been globally proliferated through use of digital media. The term *azonto* refers to a promiscuous woman who is a disreputable outcast (Shiple, 2013). Similar to *azonto*’s affiliation with social ruffians (Shiple, 2013), *capoeiristas* were also associated with *malandragem*, or the riff raff of the streets at the time (Merrell, 2005; Capoeira, 2006; Almeida, 1986). In Ghana, a mixture of hip-hop eclecticism in music became popular among elite youth, and eventually to the middle classes

(Shiple, 2013). Shipley (2013) discussed the influence of a popular DJ, wherein the songs that are played become popular and a critical tool for both social and national belonging.

One participant noted that “half the fun of Azonto is talking about it” (Shiple, 2013, p. 374). Like *capoeira*, azonto is now an intergenerational activity that blends African roots with the modern word and is reflective of cultural values (Shiple, 2013). Aspects of the music were also described, contrasting the repetitive rhythms with the creative ability to engage and respond to dancers (Shiple, 2013; Plach, 1980). Again, like *capoeira*, azonto is a representative microcosm of navigating social space through dance and music (Shiple, 2013; Capoeira, 2006; Lowell, 1992).

Among the middle class in England, dance was mentioned as a means of embodying cultural traditions (Snape, 2009). Cecil Sharp is credited for the revival of folk songs around 1915, which was considered an art form of the middle class at the time. In contrast, Cross and Ticini (2012) have argued that dance has transcended classifications of race and status over time. Similar to this mentality, social class becomes irrelevant when one is playing *capoeira* or participating in the roda, regardless of particular group or style of engagement (Downey et al., 2015; de Campos Rosario et al., 2011; Downey, 2008). However, English folk-dance was developed in resistance to the more popular music genre at the time: jazz.

Keren and colleagues (2013) investigated the collective dance rituals at a Zulu wedding. Findings provided evidence toward Sperber’s (1996) theory of cultural transmission wherein a small proportion of cultural representations are produced, transmitted, reproduced, and reenacted (Sterelny, 2001). Additionally, female dancers often repeated movements, while also exercising flexibility within the structure of the dance (Keren et al., 2013). Similarly, *capoeira* consists of

foundational movements, but allows participants to move among and between formal positions in relation to an opponent and the music (Downey, 2008; Almeida, 1986; Lewis, 1992).

In a three-year-study conducted by Löytönen (2016), the tradition of dance and culture of teaching were explored to gain an understanding of how knowledge is/was socially constructed among 15 teachers and three dance school principals in Finland. Field-based ethnographic data was collected through observation, photographs, video, and audio recordings (Löytönen, 2016). The author found that participants reflected on embodiment and participation in dance activities and noted the importance of generating knowledge in a way that is in consideration of culture to avoid historically hierarchical practices within the realm of dance (Löytönen, 2016).

Action research, autoethnography, and ethnography were utilized to observe how students received cultural information and integrated cultural practices into learning goals in a dance course about Bharatanatyam, a form of Indian classical dance (Banerjee, 2013). Dialogue between student and teacher was found to be a critical method for addressing the multicultural needs of the learners from a critical theory approach (Banerjee, 2013).

Melchior (2011) discussed culturally responsive dance pedagogy in a classroom setting. While it is informative to consider culture, the semantic phrasing of ‘responsive’ still posits culture as an afterthought, rather than the foundation. Melchior (2011) emphasized the importance of collaboration between students and teachers in order to draw upon cultural strengths and ways of teaching to integrate dance into the classroom setting.

From an anthropological perspective, Hanna (1990) described the importance of understanding how therapeutic activities consider culture, what contextual criteria are necessary, what movements are normative, what the movements mean, and how individuals interact and communicate non-verbally. As with *capoeira*, the elements noted by Hanna (1990) are also

critical considerations for *capoeira* participants (Lewis, 1992; Capoeira, 2006; Almeida, 1986; Downey, 2008).

Martial Arts

Holistic approaches to healing are valued by many cultural groups that vary from ‘traditional talk therapy’ due to the integration of mind, body, and spirituality (Holden et al., 2014; Luz, 1995 as seen in Lewis, 1992; Pérez-Gualdrón & Yeh, 2014). The mind-body relationship was investigated by Guthrie in 1997 for women who experienced physical and sexual trauma, wherein participants experienced higher self-esteem, confidence, and healing through engaging in seido karate. It is noteworthy that the most critical factor for empowering both physical and global self-esteem was the experience of participating in a community among women who were also becoming similarly empowered (Guthrie, 1997).

Music

While music therapy can be conducted individually, Stige (2006) discussed the differences when engaging in music therapy as a collaborative exercise on a microsystemic level (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Music therapy is touted as an even more impactful activity when completed with others rather than in solitude (Williams et al., 2014; Stige, 2006; Bunt, 2003), as music can mirror and foster social relationships within and across cultural groups and age divisions (Gilboa & Salman, 2018; Guerrero et al., 2014).

In group settings, music has been employed as a method of conflict resolution, rather than physical altercations, in order to prevent public humiliation and embarrassment (Jones et al., 2004). Group goals were also attained through song-writing with a group of First Australian individuals (Truasheim, 2014). Additionally, Valentino (2006) noted the role of empathy among individuals with differing cultural backgrounds when sharing experiences through music.

A group of eleven international Asian university students participated in a self-regulated music therapy group, with the goal of improving learning experiences in academic, clinical, and personal settings (Lin, 2014). Through qualitative interviews, Lin (2014) found that specific considerations for the group participants included language barriers, feeling loss of control, culturally-based considerations for preparation time, cultural differences when compared to ‘mainstream’ individuals, and inadequate social support. Another major finding was the importance of belongingness established among group members, which was absent in other areas of their lives (Lin, 2014).

capoeira

Capoeiristas have described *capoeira* as “everything, a philosophy, a way of life and means of self-decolonization” (Kugel, 2012, para. 5). Brito (2012) discussed the objective of spiritual freedom at a time when physical freedom was not an option for slaves in Brazil. As slaves practiced *capoeira* often wearing white clothing, they did not actually try to touch each other in order to keep their clothing clean (Downey, 2005; Lewis, 1992). This tradition continues today for many *capoeiristas* who learn the Angola style of *capoeira*, which values traditions and honoring the *orixás*, or gods (Rosa, 2012; Lewis, 1992). Almeida (1986) noted that *capoeira* must be felt from within in order to manifest the philosophy. Merrell (2005) discussed embodied philosophy of Candomblé through mental discipline and sweat. Gardner and colleagues (2008) discussed the role of social and community values, which orients participants toward transcendent experiences.

Capoeira in the Literature

Capoeira, an Afro-Brazilian martial-art and dance, has become increasingly globalized in the past four decades (Almeida, Joseph, Palma, & Soares, 2013). A multitude of countries offer *capoeira* instruction including China and Japan (*capoeira* 1995, 2002, 2006), Canada (Joseph 2012, 2008), USA (Burt, 2015; Hedegard, 2012), Europe (Stephens & Delamont, 2009) and the land of origin: Brazil (Downey, 2008; Iriart & Milani, 2009). Assunção (2005) denoted the significance of the social and cultural context of *capoeira*'s origins, as *capoeira* emerged as a means of survival to escape enslavement during the 1500s when the Dutch occupied northeastern Brazil (Capoeira, 2006; Merrell, 2005). Those who escaped formed *quilombos*, which were self-sufficient communities (Anderson, 1996; Merrell, 2005). Through the practice of *capoeira*, African identity and cultural traditions were preserved (Moura, 1980 as seen in Merrell, 2005; Myers, 2012).

Liberation Communities. As described by a number of authors (Almeida, 1986; Anderson, 1996; Capoeira, 2006; Lewis, 1992; Merrell, 2005), groups of fugitive slaves in Brazil fled and formed communities referred to as *mocambos*, an Ambundu word for 'hideout', or *quilombos*, a Kimbundu word for 'campsite,' or 'slave hut' (Anderson, 1996). *Quilombos*, also called *quilombolas*, were self-sufficient communities, and strove for survival of its members through the practice of *capoeira* (Capoeira, 2006; Merrell, 2005). Palmares is the most famous *quilombo*, which represents a spirit of rebellion and the ability to defy the odds (Anderson, 1996; Lewis, 1992). Numerous songs and lyrics describe the imperative function of *capoeira*, which provided community members with the skills needed to defend against enemies and overcome oppressive forces (Lewis, 1992; capoeirasongbook, n.d.).

While racism and slavery in Brazil was described as more ‘subtle’ than in the United States, the consequences were deemed equally dreadful in both locales (Capoeira, 2006). *Capoeira* has liberated practitioners in Brazil, and even in the United States, wherein a history of enslavement is a grave reality (Almeida, 1986; Kugel, 2018). Today, the philosophy of fighting oppression persists, such that participating in *capoeira* is a means of self-development and liberation (Capoeira, 2006; Kugel, 2018; Merrell, 2005). As stated by Capoeira (2006), “To conquer freedom is to conquer something already given to us” (p. 75), which can be achieved when one is free from the pressures of peer groups and historical constraints (Capoeira, 2006). Freire (2000) added that “it is always through action in depth that the culture of domination is culturally confronted” (p. 36), which was demonstrated by *quilombo* members who used their physical selves to literally fight oppressive forces (Anderson, 1996; Capoeira, 2006; Lewis, 1992; Merrell, 2005). These actions of the ritual fight-dance can be considered as a reciprocally determined ‘cultural pathways’ (Vélez-Agosto et al., 2017), as *capoeira* was generated due to the sociohistorical context, meanwhile the cultural practices of *capoeira* co-created subsequent outcomes (Capoeira, 2006; Merrell, 2005).

Group Participation, Learning, and Neuroscience

Since *capoeira* is a collective activity (Hedegard, 2012a), the *roda*, the wheel/ring in which a *capoeira jogo* (game) is played (Almeida, 1986; Assunção, 2005), provides the opportunity to engage with others in a semi-structured environment. Although some aspects of the *roda* are universal (e.g., the *bateria* consists of instruments, observers sing and clap), specific group conduct must still be learned. *capoeira* groups provide a model for social etiquette through discipline and guidance (Baker, 1995) and specifically benefit youth throughout challenging mental and physical growth (Burt and Butler, 2011). Joseph (2008) provided the example of a

tradition in which *alunos* (students) with lower rank cannot end a *professor's* (teacher) game. In the *roda*, the individual with more skills naturally controls the space (Young & Schlie, 2011), which is broadly applicable to the multitude of oppressive systems that prevent individuals with less skill or resources from gaining upward mobility.

Learning. A variety of pedagogical techniques were used to improve *capoeira* ability and performance including video feedback, scaffolding, and legitimate peripheral participation (LPP). Benitez and colleagues (2015) investigated the use of video feedback to improve 3 specific movements – *revesado* (front walkover), *au de costa* (cartwheel to the back), and *macaco* (back walkover from the floor) – for 5 *capoeira* practitioners. The results indicated that skill performance improved due to immediate video feedback, as opposed to coaching or typical training. Despite the author's findings, they noted that 3 of the 5 participants (60%) could not entirely complete all three movements due to injury (Benitez et al., 2015), which may confound the results, especially considering the small sample size ($n = 5$). Another consideration of this study is the potential bias due to moderate skill level needed to perform the movements. Accuracy of results may increase if the skill level is reduced, thus enabling evaluation of a larger sample. A control group may also provide a baseline of individuals attempting to improve movement without video feedback, rather than attributing improvement only to video feedback.

Downey (2008) purports the role of imitation and the conversational aspects of interaction, specifically through scaffolding. Wood and colleagues (1976) defined scaffolding as a method in which the learner engages in the normal skilled action rather than a simplified version of the task. Byrne (2003) also notes the tendency of instructors to divide learning tasks into components to improve the learner's perception of the movement, even though actually

performing the skill may be more difficult. By reducing the amount of parsing, learners can eventually complete longer comprehensive movements (Downey, 2008, p. 209).

Stephens & Delamont (2009) also discuss how participants can draw upon legitimate peripheral participation (LPP) during the *roda* to learn rhythms, songs, etiquette, humor, *malícia* (deceit/trickery), and *axé* (energy/vibes). Advanced students are expected to assist novices with technique, which can facilitate meaningful contact. Pettigrew and Tropp (2008) found that cross-cultural contact does not necessarily reduce bias, however *meaningful* contact can facilitate positive relations across groups (emphasis added). Specifically, friendship with individuals from ‘other’ groups provides the opportunity to gain an empathic understanding through personal experience (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2008). Markus and Kitayama (2010) purport that interactions with others create a self-concept that is in relation to others, rather than the independent self.

Delamont (2006) discussed authority in relation to perceived authenticity based on embodied Brazilianness, as evidenced by skin color or accented speech. Enskillment, or the evolution of learned capacities, is one means of understanding enculturation (Ingold, 2000 as cited in Downey, 2008, p. 210). As found by de Campos Rosario et al. (2015), learners are attracted to the option of using their bodies in novel ways.

The *roda* provides a space in which to learn not only physical skill, musical instruments, and language through singing, but to gain experiences in congruence with the group culture. Sperber and Hirschfeld (2007) note cultural transmission includes intricate means of deciphering movement and selected transfer of knowledge from teachers.

Neuroscience. A few articles discussed the biophysiological components of movement from an array of perspectives: expertise, kinesthetic and cognitive empathy, and pleasure response to violent stimuli. Calvo-Merino et al. (2015) used a magnetom VISION system

(Siemens) to acquire functional image data of the brain. The authors found that an international sample of expert ballet dancers ($n = 10$) and capoeiristas ($n = 9$) were more likely to have greater activation to stimuli with which they were already familiar. The control group ($n = 10$), however, was not sensitive to the type of stimulus, confirming that familiarized motor skills influence interaction with stimuli.

Koehne and colleagues (2015) used the Emotion Mirroring (MIR) scale and the Mental State Perception (MSP) scale of the Cognitive and Emotional Empathy Questionnaire (CEEQ; Savage et al., 2014) to evaluate tango and *capoeira* experts in contrast to salsa and breakdance experts in Germany. Results indicated that kinesthetic empathy was correlated higher with cognitive empathy for tango and *capoeira* experts. However, the authors note that the statistical comparison of correlations was not significant through use of the Fisher r to z transformation. The individuals who relied less on fixed patterns and learned to improvise more freely demonstrated higher kinesthetic empathy as compared to the total sample ($n = 227$). It is noteworthy that the Tango experts comprised about half (51.5%) of the sample ($n = 117$), which may have influenced the results of the study.

Porges and Decety (2013) evaluated the stimulus value of violence and the relationship to pleasure with 49 males in the Midwest in which 10 of 40 total video clips of the target condition (mixed martial arts (MMA) or control video clips (*capoeira*) were shown. When participants viewed video clips of *capoeira*, the authors found that activation increased the precentral gyrus, which is “sensitive to the observation of human movements” (Servos, 2002; Grosbras et al., 2012). When participants experienced pleasure while viewing the MMA clips, authors found an increase in connectivity throughout the subgenual region, which has been associated with “social attachment and pair bonding” (Insel & Young, 2001).

The results from the neuroscientific articles may be considered in conjunction with extended contact hypothesis, which suggests intergroup bias may be reduced as the result of a close, positive relationship with an individual from an out-group (Wright et al., 1997; Dovidio et al., 2011). Although neurology may predispose individuals to build stronger connections based on what is familiar, bias may be mitigated by increasing exchanges with out-group individuals through meaningful experiences, such as *capoeira*.

Culture: ethnography and anthropology

Cultural context evolves over time and is mutually defined by individuals' beliefs, language, expression, interactions, values, and customs (Gómez-Guiñones, 1997; Smith, 2010; Jones et al., 2014). As culture is complex and multifaceted, one cannot know everything about a particular culture, thus multicultural competence remains aspirational (APA, 2017). However, in an effort to understand various aspects of culture, ethnographic inquiry facilitates a researcher's systematic exploration and documentation of a particular group as both a process and a product (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Through extended periods of time with a cultural group, researchers are able to develop *thick descriptions* (Geertz, 1973) through which meaning can be derived (2008).

Given that *capoeira* has been described as a way of life, a philosophy, and site of cultural transmission (Kugel, 2012; Robataille, 2014; Almeida, 1986; Merrell, 2005; Lewis, 1992; Capoeira, 2006), it is important to review pertinent ethnographic research thus far. The 'Black Atlantic' consists of the United States, the United Kingdom, and the Caribbean as deemed by Gilroy in 1993. Joseph (2012) argued for the inclusion of Canada when discussing the African diaspora through which commonalities are globally expressed (Edwards, 2001). Individuals who

identify as Black often argue *capoeira*'s African origins in order to claim it as their own (Joseph, 2012).

Indications of the author's worldview were described in only a few of the ethnographic studies (e.g., Delamont, 2005; Joseph, 2008). The author's perspective is an important consideration when evaluating the espoused findings. Even with a literature review, the author chooses the most salient aspects of the resources as deemed important by the individual, thus being a subjective process. Implicit bias is an important factor when digesting and interpreting extensive field notes and subsequent interviews. Smith (2010) iterated the strong relationship between cultural context and therein the influence on individuals.

Authenticity. *capoeira*'s physical activity provides the opportunity to demonstrate agility, flexibility, and style of movement, even though some of these qualities are not naturally apparent in some individuals (Stephens & Delamont, 2009). An example of a physical detriment is *cintura dura*, meaning stiff waist and style, which is often embodied in beginner students of European descent (Stephens & Delamont, 2009). A related term, *jogo de cintura*, or game of the waist, is also a Brazilian expression referring an individual who is able to maneuver out of a precarious situation in life (de Campos Rosario et al., 2015). Joseph (2012) describes the significance of traditional Angolan *capoeira* as embodied expression of African heritage and nostalgia, or *saudade*.

Miller Griffith (2016) explored the idea of 'legitimacy' as *capoeira* practitioners from first-world countries engage in 'apprenticeship pilgrimage' to travel to Brazil to train with masters of the artform. The challenges of teaching and learning *capoeira* abroad and the draw of sport tourism are discussed, as *capoeiristas* seek to improve their legitimacy "within social field outside of their own cultural milieu" (Miller Griffith, 2013, p.4). A fellow participant advised

that “it was important to visit the places mentioned in some of the *capoeira* songs; it is hard to appreciate these songs without having visited those places” (Miller Griffith, 2013, p.2). While it is ideal to fully understand the context of *capoeira* songs and places, apprenticeship pilgrimage involves inherit financial privileges that would allow a person to deepen their contextual understanding. For individuals who have limited financial resources, traveling for ‘legitimacy’ is a far-fetched an option. Consequently, it is imperative to gain insight as to the ways that an individual can understand context without the luxury of travel.

Socialization. Given that identity does not develop in isolation, it remains important to consider the self in relation to ecological aspect of one’s life (Vélez-Agosto et al., 2017), as well as the role of one’s culture therein (Juang et al., 2012). According to social identity theory, individuals strive to achieve satisfactory concepts, or images, of themselves (Tajfel, 1974). Allport (1924) denoted that the psychology of the group is essentially psychology of the self. Social identity is shared with group members in which they belong and are cared for (Jones et al., 2014). Social identity is constructed within the context over time, and not static nor finite (Tierney, 1999; Hogg & Williams, 2000). Seligman (1991) noted that social identity is not a terminal process than can be ‘completed’ and is instead on-going.

Social identity is considered the first dimension of self-concept, defined as “an organized set of perceptions, cognitions, or evaluations that one holds about their abilities and characteristics” (Anderson, 2011). Self-esteem is considered to be the second dimension of self-concept, in which individuals strive to augment self-appraisal (Anderson, 2011; Gergen, 1971 as seen in Guthrie, 1997). As such, self-concept is influenced and shaped by interpersonal relationships, experiences, perceptions, and interpretations of interactions with one’s environment (Anderson, 2011). Identity fusion is said to occur when an individual’s identity is

viscerally one with the group (Swann et al., 2012). A fused identity increases loyalty to the group, however could be detrimental when ruptures in the group occur (Swann et al., 2012).

Social Relationships

Social relationships are essential aspects of the human condition, including physical, mental, and spiritual aspects of collective living through which the self-concept is conceived (Markus & Kitayama, 2009; Cottrell et al., 2007; Geertz, 1973; Pavlicevic, 2006; Bunt, 2003; Hadley et al., 2001). Without others, the meaning of self can be rendered arbitrary (Oberman & Ramachandran, 2007). As previously mentioned, social relationships can occur in a multitude of environments including the home, school, neighborhood, place of work, and so forth. Wood, Tesser, and Holmes (2008) noted that there is a reciprocal relationship between the self and group, wherein people are naturally motivated to connect with each other based on desire to belong and affinity toward the group (Rice & Dolgin, 2005). Blaxter (2005) pontificates that the social capital of good relationships extends to personal and community health as well.

When conceptualizing identity in relation to the group, it could include both a *capoeirista's* specific *capoeira* group and the greater context of the *capoeira* community. As identity salience can vary in the given setting, a person's self-concept may also shift depending upon the reference group (Hong et al., 2007; Jones et al., 2014; Yakushko et al., 2009; Coleman et al., 2003; Coleman, 1995; Ferguson et al., 2017; Makshima, 1996; Rockquemore & Brunnsma, 2002). Beras (2016) noted that among boys who were formerly soldiers in the Democratic Republic of Congo, "With *capoeira*, it's a game that brings them together."

Social hierarchies provide order within society and prevent social chaos (Matsumoto et al., 2008). There are both advantages and disadvantages to social hierarchies, as well as expectations for behavior and emotional expression (Matsumoto et al., 2008). Following is a

discussion regarding social hierarchies within various activities including and related to *capoeira*.

Status is a fluctuating component of group dynamics depending upon the context. When Downey (2008) trained with *Mestre Moraes*, he was treated “like every other student” (pp. 188), in which case his academic status as a researcher was curtailed. Downey et al. (2015) also found that capoeiristas are not interested in the academic merit of participants. Contrarily, an individual with a low societal status may train and gain status within a *capoeira* group. Iriart and Milani (2009) highlighted the experience of a 15-year-old youth who integrated himself into the *capoeira* group culture and gained greater visibility and acknowledgement (p. 181). The dynamic nature of status was exemplified by de Campos Rosario et al. (2015) who noted the ability of an *instructor* (teacher) or *mestre* (master) to use their Brazilian capital to gain a respected status in the United Kingdom, rather than the former perception of a *capoeirista* as a criminal in Brazil due to associations as a *malandro*, an individual who lived on the fringes of society, characterized by pimping and seduction, in Brazil (Delamont, 2005).

Another aspect of socialization when participating in *capoeira* is social cohesion. De Campos Rosario et al. (2010) noted that social cohesion developed as trainees regularly attended classes, gained *apelidos*, or nicknames, and completed a *batizado*, or ‘blessing’ ceremony, in which they earned a new *corda*, similar to the belt ranking systems used with other martial art forms.

Social support. The social environment created through *capoeira* is found to influence self-efficacy, appreciation for diversity, and increase understanding of other peoples’ dispositions (Burt & Butler, 2011). Since youth have a desire for group affiliation (Rice & Dolgin, 2005), they may benefit from the mentorship (Law, 2004) and prosocial interactions with

peers through social cohesion developed in the *capoeira* group (de Campos Rosario et al., 2010). Iriart and Milani (2009) also found that immigrant youth gained a sense of belonging after participating in *capoeira*. Group style and commitment was preserved if *disculpos* (students) were socialized into the group culture during early stages of their training (Hedegard, 2012b). Additionally, *capoeira*'s history embodies oppressive experiences at the micro and macro level (Burt & Butler, 2011), which may allow practitioners to achieve new meanings through 'redimensioning of the self' (Iriart & Milani, 2009).

Identity. *Capoeira*'s history embodies oppressive experiences at the micro and macro level (Burt & Butler, 2011), which allows practitioners to achieve new meanings through 'redimensioning of the self' (Iriart & Milani, 2009). *Capoeira* was a prohibited activity and criminalized by law in 1892, wherein individuals could be fined and jailed in Brazil (Capoeira, 2002; Merrell, 2005). As a practical measure, war names, or nome de Guerra, were used in *capoeira* circles to protect individuals' identities in case authorities were looking for them (Merrell, 2005). Still forty years after *capoeira* was a legalized sport, *capoeira* was described as "a game using hands, feet and head, practiced by low-level thieves" (Bessa, 1901 as seen in Capoeira, 2006).

In a qualitative study conducted by De Martini Ugolotti (2014), immigrant youth in Italy gained a sense of belonging after redefining urban spaces through participating in *capoeira* and parkour. Meanwhile, Head and Gravina (2012) discussed the Black identity, not as the color, but as the life situation, exemplifying the contextual factors regarding self-concept. Payne and Rufino (1995) discussed the positive impact of *capoeira* for Black women's identities, as the Candomblé gods, or *orixás*, are women, and greatly respected and honored. Identity was also recapitulated through the honor of receiving a *capoeira* nickname for refugee youth across Syria,

Lebanon, Palestine, and Jordan (Prytherch & Kraft, 2015; Electronic Intifada, 2011), which strengthened the bond between the instructor, learner, and group as a whole.

The social environment created through *capoeira* has positively impacted self-efficacy, appreciation for diversity, and an understanding of other peoples' dispositions (Burt & Butler, 2011). Additionally, a natural inclination toward the group (Rice & Dolgin, 2005) facilitated prosocial interactions and cohesion among *capoeira* participants (de Campos Rosario, Stephens & Delamont, 2010; Hedegard, 2012b). Brito (2015) further noted the reciprocal nature between *capoeiristas* and "values of community belonging" (p. 125), which was exemplified by a professional dancer who reported that *capoeira* "is part of me now" (Stuart, 2013, p. 48).

The dynamic nature of status was exemplified by Downey (2008) and de Campos Rosario, Stephens, and Delamont (2015) in which *capoeira* functioned as a neutralizer. Rather than the reverence Downey (2008) was accustomed to as a professor, his outside status was unimportant in the *roda*, where two *capoeiristas* 'play' while encircled by other members (Merrell, 2005; Lewis, 1992). Instead, his quality of movement was more indicative of his status within the group than his outside title (Downey, 2008). Contrarily, de Campos Rosario (2014) described how his leadership role abroad as a *capoeira* instructor provided him with a status that he could not otherwise achieve, especially in his home country of Brazil. In both instances, the identity as a *capoeirista* was dynamic in nature and shifted the individual's reputation.

Belonging. Iriart and Milani (2009) highlighted the experience of a 15-year-old youth who integrated himself into the *capoeira* group culture and gained greater visibility and acknowledgement (p. 181). The social utility of a nickname originated so that legal authorities in Brazil were unaware of *capoeiristas* real names. (Merrell, 2005; Lewis, 1992; Downey, 2005; de Campos Rosario, Stephens & Delamont, 2010). The instructor stated, "I understand that I'm

changing people's lives and that makes me happy" (de Campos Rosario, Stephens & Delamont, 2010, p. 107) further indicating the impactful nature of participating in *capoeira*

Self-Development and Empowerment. Self-worth, a sense of belonging, and membership were gained through shared activities in publicly available spaces among participants (De Martini Ugolotti, 2014). One 18-year-old shared, "If I can find the way to climb a wall of ten metres just with my imagination, I can use it for other obstacles in my life" (De Martini Ugolotti, 2014, p. 198) Similarly, Iriart and Milani (2009) shared a 15-year-old's experience with *capoeira*, in which he noted that his life improved after he started doing *capoeira*. As participants in this study were males, De Martini Ugolotti (2014) speculated that the reproduction of hegemonic gender roles was perpetuated, due to the lack of female participation, which could be a future area of study.

Delamont (2005) pioneered fieldwork in the United Kingdom through reflexive exploration to learn about the teaching methods used in *capoeira*. *Capoeira* classes naturally built a social network, wherein the instructor established the social hierarchy (Delamont, 2005). In contrast to De Martini Ugolotti's (2014) findings regarding the absence of female participation, Delamont (2005) reported an emphasis on valuing women as equal to their male counterparts from both the instructor and other *capoeiristas*. Delamont (2005) noted that most trainees were White, while a few were Brazilian, and surmised that 'ethnicity and nationality were not particularly salient features. However, perhaps Delamont (2005) was not able to consider *to what extent* or *how* ethnicity and nationality factored into training for respective trainees given the author's limited perspective.

Additional ethnographic work offered similar insights regarding the complexities of *capoeira*, including the history of criminalization (Rosa, 2012), incorporation of acrobatics

(Downey, 2005), language (Downey, 2005), musical instruments (Brito, 2012; Downey, 2005), embodiment (Joseph, 2012; Lewis, 2000; Stephens & Delamont, 2014; Rosa, 2012), community (Stephens & Delamont, 2014), spirituality (Joseph, 2012; Rosa, 2012), cosmology (Joseph, 2012), *malícia*, or trickery and deceit (Stephens & Delamont, 2009a), and aesthetic value (Rosa, 2012).

Awareness of self. Awareness of self may be developed during a *jogo* (game) since “players continuously explore their strengths and weakness, fears and fatigue limits” (Young & Schlie, 2011). Stephens and Delamont (2009) noted that peers may influence *eghiosmo* (self-regard), which exemplifies mutual constitution, or the reciprocal relationship between an individual and their environment (Markus & Kitayama, 2010). Without the social background, the *simasia* (meaning) of the self can be arbitrary.

Youth. The preparation for adult life as a contributing citizen of society occurs during adolescence (Iriart & Milani, 2009). Unfortunately, poor self-efficacy and socialization skills are a detriment to poorly rehabilitated youth, of which a large portion are ethnic minority adolescents (Burt & Butler, 2011). Due to the common disposition of having a negative self-image and fulfilling negative expectations (Seligman, 1991), it is imperative that communities provide structured opportunities that can redirect the path of at-risk youth, such as *capoeira* (Iriart & Milani, 2009). Graham & Harris (2013) suggest that conventional counseling methods (e.g., talk therapy) may not be culturally appropriate for this generation of diverse youth. The discussion of *capoeira*'s history allows for marginalized youth to share their own experiences and apply learned skills and behaviors beyond the *roda* (Burt & Butler, 2011). Hawkins and colleagues (1992) included ethnic minorities, low socioeconomic status, minimal support across settings, and unsatisfactory academic preparation in their definition of marginalized youth. A few

of the reviewed articles ($n = 4$) explored culturally adaptive interventions to address youth behaviors.

In 2015, Burt utilized *capoeira* as a culturally sensitive intervention with aggressive adolescents, which was the only result using the search terms *capoeira* and *therapy*. Burt (2015) outlined the structure and content area of the weekly sessions as well as guidelines of a competent clinician and described an 8-week intervention with a group of about 6-10 youth, for maximum effectiveness (Gladding, 2012). Burt and Butler (2011) established the appropriate application of social cognitive theory with the use of martial arts in a group setting. Burt (2015) also described the minimum competencies needed in order to facilitate a *capoeira* group, of which critical factors include: the capoeirista who provides the physical training, the clinician who provides the group facilitation, and participation of the clinician during sessions.

Leadership Implementation Training (Burt et al., 2013) has also been found to reduce aggressive behaviors in youth due to the emphasis on agency in which youth are empowered to take ownership of their actions and subsequent outcomes. Additionally, self-expression is useful in increasing behavioral self-efficacy (Bandura, 2012). Finally, martial arts can be instrumental in reducing self-injurious behaviors (Potik & Schreiber, 2013), which could be supplemented by contracts to increase accountability for new behaviors (Burt et al., 2013).

Lindsay (2019) implemented after-school instruction for *capoeira* focused upon Black males and social justice at a school in the greater Chicago area with ages 10-20. Black male youth were the target population on account of the lowered academic expectations and disproportionate disciplinary action due to of perceptions of race (Anderson, 1990, 1999; Davis & Jordan, 199; Fultz & Brown, 2008; Garibaldi, 1986, 2007; Gary, 1981; Johnson, 2010; Laing & Brown, 2017). Lindsay (2019) further noted the barriers that he experienced when attending

school as a Black male including “limited examples of positive Black historical figures, my performances of masculinity, and a perceived disconnect between academics and my life” (p. 125). Administrative leadership in the school was credited for valuing not only a student’s academic success, but their “social-emotional development, identity, and character,” (Lindsey, 2013, p. 111), which illustrates the potential and significant impact that a leader can have within their respective purview and ecological setting.

Lindsay (2019) noted that a student in one of the *capoeira* classes completed the homework and “told me he loves *capoeira*” (p. 71), exemplifying the child’s affinity for participating in the artform. Lindsay (2019) also mentioned a student’s drawing that depicted him as “a *capoeira* superhero” (p. 71), indicating that Lindsay “must be doing something right” (p. 71) in his role as an instructor. Due to the positive impacts at the school, Lindsay went on to share *capoeira* with other schools throughout the community to address systemic racism that the students were facing in their daily lives (Lindsay, 2019).

capoeira and the APA Multicultural Guidelines

As denoted by the APA (2017), ecology, identity, and intersectionality are essential considerations when addressing the psychological needs of culturally diverse populations. Vélez-Agosto and colleagues (2017) developed a new iteration of Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological Theory (1979) that posits culture at the microsystemic level, rather than at the macrosystemic level. As previously described, the Cultural Microsystem Model is depicted as a spiral, rather than concentric circles to acknowledge the fluidity between the levels and reciprocal relationship between a person and their respective environments (Vélez-Agosto et al., 2017). Drawing from Bronfenbrenner’s (1979) model, Vélez-Agosto and colleagues (2017) provided specific examples of components in the spiral including cronos, political policies, social services, laws,

media, neighborhood, workplace, school, day care, home, and self. Throughout the various settings, ‘cultural pathways’ are conceived as practices or exchanges wherein a developing person and the context are mutually determined (Vélez-Agosto et al., 2017).

Ecology. Unlike other traditional eastern martial arts, *capoeira* involves music, singing, physical movements, and cannot exist without the group (Capoeira, 2006; Merrell, 2005; Lewis, 1992; Almeida, 1986). *Capoeiristas* can train in solitude, however an individual cannot actually *play capoeira* without another person (Almeida, 1986; Capoeira, 2006). *capoeira* has been described as a language in itself, a lifestyle, a philosophy and a site for self-decolonization (Kugel, 2012) due to its rich sociopolitical and emancipatory traditions (Lewis, 1992; Downey, 2005; Merrell, 2005; Capoeira, 2006; Prytherch & Kraft, 2015). In 2012, Head and Gravina noted the significance and meaning made through both songs and movement. Capoeira (2006) also described the on-going relationship between *capoeira* and societal systems, which evolved over time. It was not until Mestre Bimba’s advocacy for *capoeira* as an organized activity in 1886, at which time Brazil’s Ministry of Sport and Recreation recognized *capoeira* as a legal activity that embodied both history and culture (Merrell, 2005; Lewis, 1992). Prior to this shift, *capoeira* was considered an activity for outlaws, criminals, and ruffians (Merrell, 2005; Lewis, 1992; Capoeira, 2006).

Within the microsystem, embodied learning (Habjan, 2013; Stephens & Delamont, 2009) and expression (Joseph, 2012), scaffolding (Downey, 2008), and legitimate peripheral participation (Stephens & Delamont, 2009) have been topics of pedagogical inquiry. Additionally, research has investigated a dialogic relationship between consciousness and movement (Levin, 2018, 2016, 2014), as well as non-verbal communication (MacLennan, 2011;

Young & Schlie, 2011; Robitaille, 2014) and embodied empathy (Koehne, Schmidt, & Dziobek, 2015).

As marginalized individuals gain critical consciousness, scholars hypothesize that their histories of oppression transform through emancipatory behaviors (Camarota, 2004; Diemer, 2009; Watts et al., 1999 as seen in Pérez-Gauldron & Yeh, 2014). From a social justice perspective, the Cultural Microsystemic Model (Vélez-Agosto et al., 2017) provides the framework in which marginalized individuals' opportunities for empowerment through positive social engagement, self-acceptance, confidence, efficacy, determination, assertive communication and expression, as well as political understandings (Watts et al., 2003).

Gaps in the Literature

Several researchers have investigated *capoeira* through ethnographic study (de Campos Rosario, Stephens & Delamont, 2010; De Martini Ugolotti, 2014; Delamont, 2005; Downey, 2008; Downey et al., 2015; Joseph, 2012; Stephens & Delamont, 2009; Stephens & Delamont, 2014; Robataille, 2014; Rosa, 2012; Brito, 2012). Out of all of the studies, de Campos Rosario and colleagues (2010) conducted the only ethnographic inquiry that involved a capoeirista as the author. Their article focused on the relationship between the teacher and students from the perspective of the instructor (de Campos Rosario et al., 2010). Various power dynamics were discussed, as far as the instructor's authority during training and authentic value as a practitioner from Brazil (de Campos Rosario et al., 2010). While the instructor's perspective illuminated the intentions and strategies behind developing relationships and identity within the group, researchers note the need for additional investigation of participant experiences (de Campos Rosario et al., 2010).

CHAPTER III

METHODS

Research design: Why qualitative

Although quantitative measures regarding acculturation or ethnic identity could provide statistical information, the proposed project will entail an exploratory process, as qualitative inquiry facilitates a focus on meaning, agency, language, and values, which are uniquely human qualities (Wertz et al., 2011). Through the lens of participants, we may gain a contextualized understanding of their group experiences and strengths (Merriam & Tisdale, 2016), rather than simply comparing to a dominant group and viewing differences as deficits (Cole, 2009). When well-being is compromised, as is with many visible minorities who experience the effects of systemic oppression (Sue, 2010), social support becomes a critical outlet for ‘sanity checks’ (Sue, Capodilupo, & Holder, 2008), healthy coping, and emotional catharsis (Dinenberg, McCaslin, Bates, & Cohen, 2014; Haslam et al., 2014; Jetten, Haslam, & Haslam, 2014).

As the primary instrument for data collection and analysis (Merriam & Tisdale, 2016), the researcher may serve to facilitate social meaning by bearing witness to participant experiences with *capoeira* (Kinloch & SanPedro, 2014). Qualitative inquiry reallocates power imbalances between researcher and participant through collaboration and a dialogical approach (Watkins & Schulman, 2008). By gaining knowledge about individual experiences regarding barriers throughout various levels of one’s ecological framework, policy makers may be better informed regarding what is and is not working to access appropriate, culturally congruent care (Bharati, 2016; Lim et al., 2005) as information is foundational to social action (Freire, 2000).

For the purposes of this specific study, a narrative theoretical approach was employed in order to focus on the participant experiences (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Josselson, 2011). As

stated by Obama (2018), “Your story is what you have, what you will always have. It is something to own,” (p. xi). Narrative analysis focuses on ‘ways of knowing’ and emphasizes meaning and content of lived experiences (Josselson, 2011). Furthermore, stories provide individuals with a way to “orient themselves toward the world and life” (Brayboy, 2006, p. 439), through which a person can develop their identity (McAdams, Josselson, & Lieblich, 2006). Oral traditions, such as storytelling, *cuENTOS*, family histories, and narratives, are methods of cultural transmission, and ways in which practices, ideas, and values can transcend time (Anzaldúa, 1990; Brayboy, 2006; Courlander, 1976; Olivas, 1990; Yosso, 2005). Brayboy (2006) shared about an experience in which a colleague questioned the theoretical foundation of oral traditions, to which his mother replied, “Baby, doesn’t she know that our stories *are* our theories?” (p. 426, emphasis added). Stories, like culture, are the foundation for the inner workings of communities (Brayboy, 2006).

The process of identity formation can also be understood through a narrative lens (Josselson, 2011), as is the topic of the proposed study. Researchers who employ a narrative framework are able to access information and meaning that cannot otherwise be gained through other methods (Maruyama & Ryan, 2014). For instance, although a paper or online survey could ask the same questions developed for the semi-structured interview, elicited responses would not indicate the depth of a person’s experience, nor the meaning therein (Kim, 2016; Maruyama & Ryan, 2014). Narrative frameworks value oral tradition as legitimate knowing, as marginalized perspectives have been historically omitted from mainstream education (Anzaldúa, 1990; Brayboy, 2006; Valencia, & Solórzano, 1997; Yosso, 2005). Furthermore, oral histories provide orientation for an individual toward the group through which identity develops (Markus & Kitayama, 2009).

When operating from a feminist framework, it is important for the research to invite the participant to share their thoughts about what it is like working with the researcher, who may have different identities than the participant (Brown, 2010). By doing so, the researcher uses their position of power to open the conversation to concerns that the participant may be experiencing in order to establish trust and rapport (Brown, 2010). As a researcher using a narrative paradigm in conjunction with a transformative perspective, it is important to consider both privileged and marginalized identities, and the subsequent impact on relationships with participants (Ponterotto, Casas, Suzuki, & Alexander, 2010). Since narrative work requires a researcher to construct, deconstruct, and reconstruct a story (Josselson, 2011), this could not be adequately addressed in one fallow swoop and is instead a recursive process. As Josselson (2011) notes, “there is never a single self-representation” (p. 226), so one would be remiss to understand self as definitive (Tierney, 1993).

Through a philosophical hermeneutic framework, the researcher’s worldview may have less influence on the conclusions drawn based upon the reciprocal nature of the communicative relationship with the participant (Freeman, 2008). This idea draws upon Paolo Freire’s question: Does our work mirror the researcher’s dreams or the community’s dreams? (as seen in Wertz, et al., 2011). Within this framework, “meaning that is made... is brought forth in the event of participating in dialogue with another” (Freeman, 2008, p. 387). In other words, the information provided only exists within the dynamic between the researcher and participant, rather than a researcher who solitarily analyzes data in their office or workspace (Kinloch & SanPedro, 2014). A counseling psychologist may choose to utilize a person-centered approach because the focal point of shared time is heavily dependent upon what the participant/client chooses to bring forth (Rogers, 1979). A critique of the narrative approach is the limitation of language, in

which construction of an individual's reality cannot move beyond the language used to describe it (McLoed, 2001). Moreover, an individual who has limited insight may not provide substantive responses, iterating the importance of appropriate inclusion and exclusion criteria (Maruyama & Ryan, 2014).

After considering the narrative approach and philosophical hermeneutics, it is evident that the researcher perspective and role can vary greatly depending upon the theoretical framework (Josselson, 2011; Anderson, 2011; Freeman, 2008). In order to increase confidence in analyses, qualitative researchers can employ mixed methods, member checking, and review panels to triangulate meanings and applications of collected data, which are further described with regarding to validity and reliability below (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2006; Johnson and Christensen, 2008, as seen in Stake, 2010).

Methodological Framework

The methodological framework for this study includes the Cultural Microsystem Model (Vélez-Agosto et al., 2017), narrative inquiry, and a critical framework as described below. A description of the ontological and epistemological underpinnings is also included.

Cultural Microsystem Model. Vélez-Agosto and colleagues' (2017) Cultural Microsystem Model will be utilized in order to understand various perspectives about individuals' experiences with *capoeira*. *capoeira* offers an environment in which an individual can reconceptualize identity through exploration of the self, immediate environment, interactions between the person and environment, and larger societal context (Almeida, 1986; Lewis, 1993). *capoeira* is an activity that requires a holistic approach including the mind, body, relationships with others, and spiritual practices (Capoiera, 2006; Merrell, 2005). As previously described, Vélez-Agosto and colleagues' (2017) delineated an update to Bronfenbrenner's

Ecological Model (1979), to shift culture from the macro system to the microsystem.

Additionally, rather than conceptualizing the levels as concentric circles that are hierarchical, the authors provide the visual recapitulation as a spiral, wherein aspects of the self and culture are reciprocally influenced by each other (Wertz et al., 2011).

The psychology of liberation is apt to support forthcoming narratives, as capoeiristas have denoted the emancipatory qualities of participating in *capoeira* (Kugel, 2012; Downey, 2008; Lewis, 1992). The psychology of liberation consists of critical analysis, self-definition, collective organizing, and collective action, which aligns with a social justice framework (Pérez-Gualdrón & Yeh, 2014; Duncan et al., 2004; Watts et al., 2003). Counseling for the purposes of client empowerment also translates into power shifts within immediate relationships, group interactions, and greater community (McWhirter, 1994). Phases of an emancipatory framework are similar to identity development models for marginalized groups (e.g., Cross, 1995; Benet-Martinez & Haritatos, 2005; Ibrahim, Ohnishi & Sandhu, 1997) including disillusionment, reactive critical engagement, constructive self-definition, and emancipatory discourse, praxis, and immersion (Duncan et al., 2004). As liberation is an ongoing process, again the hermeneutic circle and dialogic spiral will have important roles in establishing a representative analysis through the proposed study (Duncan et al., 2004; Merriam & Tisdale, 2016).

Inherent to the psychology of liberation is a critical lens, which aims to bring about social change through the observed critiques and the disruption of power (Levitt et al., 2017; Patton, 2015) and narratives of resistance (Denzin, 2016) “for the sake of liberation, transformation, and social change (Levitt et al., 2017). Merriam and Tisdell (2016) remind researchers to be mindful

of power relationships, especially within the study itself. Furthermore, Merriam and Tisdell (2016) remind researchers that projects are conducted *with* participants, not *on* them.

With this in mind, I hope to shift the conceptualization of therapy beyond traditional methods that rely on sitting in a room for 50 clinical minutes, as this minimizes the physical aspects of the self (Guthrie, 1997) and is not a holistic approach. Instead, I hope to illuminate a culturally centered group setting wherein homage is given to meaningful practices, interactions, and healing by honoring members' perspectives and experiential knowledge (Guthrie, 1997; Lewis, 1992; Brayboy, 2006; Delgado Bernal, 2002; Yosso, 2005).

Narrative Inquiry. Drawing from a narrative approach, individuals who participate in *capoeira*, also known as *capoeiristas*, will be asked to share their stories to gain insight about the experiences with *capoeira*, which is said to have liberative qualities (Kugel, 2012). According to Roulston (2010), transformation and healing can be privileged through a decolonizing interview and engaging in restorative justice practices. Although 'bracketing' is a method used by researchers who engage in phenomenological research (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016), bias still remains and must be considered (Eisner, 1993; Rosaldo, 1998).

Narrative inquiry is described as a way to make meaning of everyday experiences through the analysis of stories (Clandinin & Connelly, 1990; De Fina & Georgakopoulou, 2012; Freeman, 2017; Goodall, 2000; Riessman, 2008). The study of experiences through story can offer an explanation as to *why* something is happening (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Polkinghorne, 1988). The intersection of time and space is particularly poignant in consideration of interconnectedness and interpretation, which is central to humans' orientation to our world (Freeman, 2017; Kinloch & San Pedro, 2014; Maxwell & Miller, 2008), as sociohistorical and cultural context informs how individuals engage socially (Polkinghorne, 1995). Smith (1980)

discussed the idea of *social transactions*, which is congruent with Vélez-Agosto and colleagues' (2017) Microcultural Framework and the idea of *cultural pathways*, which are the daily practices or routines that people carry out (Rogoff et al., 2016). Denzin (1989) specified a biographical approach to narrative inquiry, in which a person's identity, familial relationships, and significant life events are emphasized.

Freeman (2017) purported an advantage of a narrative approach, as it “provides crucial insights into human interpretation” (p. 35). Additionally, Freeman (2017) noted that narrative inquiry provides a theoretical foundation for understanding the actions, interactions, values, and meanings, and other shared aspects of the human condition. *Practical reasoning*, or the ability to gain insight, is an important aspect of appraising how an individual decides to move forward or what actions to take (Wallace, 2009). Through storytelling, an individual engages in a reflexive process of storying, and restorying (Kinloch & San Pedro, 2014), through which marginalized perspectives can reconstitute narrative patterns (Boje, 2010). Narratives aid individuals in reconciling chaos and creating organization, especially in the face of unexpected events or adverse experiences (Freeman, 2017; Jones, Dovidio, & Vietze, 2014).

Historically, the most common critique of narrative inquiry is the absence of academic rigor (Behar-Horenstein & Morgan, 1995). Olson (1990) pontificated that expression through narrative methods was in fact the “antithesis of thought and argument” (as seen in Freeman, 2017, p. 32). Furthermore, Clandinin and Connelly (2000) expressed concern that narrative inquiry does not have a strong theoretical foundation, wherein researchers are challenged to marry narrative inquiry with theoretical perspectives (Brinthaupt & Lipka, 1992). Ricoeur (1992) illuminated the challenges of narrative inquiry, describing the process as a precarious

combination of fiction and reality. Freeman (2017) advised researchers to be clear about the intent of the narrator in relation to what is narrated by participants.

Given the numerous aforementioned challenges, Smith (1980) denoted the importance of considering context when narrative data is interpreted. Despite the noted limitations, narratives provide critical aspects of the human experience that are not shared or accessed through other methods (Freeman, 2017). Additionally, narratives elicit greater understanding of specific topics (Freeman, 2017) and are useful for exploring various aspects of identity (Bamberg, De Fina, & Schiffrin, 2008), such as the lived experiences of *capoeiristas*. Freeman (2017) added that narratives are germane to critical, emancipatory research, which is the focus of the proposed study.

Narrative thinking is described as dynamic and action-oriented, through which human change is evidenced and hypothesized (Freeman, 2017). Through stories, populations are united over time, through histories, and across place and culture (2017). According to Vélez-Agosto and colleagues (2017), cultural pathways are the means through which shifts occur over time, also described as *cronos*. Stories can transcend time, and are simultaneously meaningful in the sociohistorical context, wherein stories are recapitulated and subject to the zeitgeist, or ‘spirit of the times’ (Freeman, 2017; Schultz & Schultz, 2011).

Cultural transmission, or the learning processes through which culture is passed on (Cavalli-Sforza, Feldman, Chen, & Dornbusch, 1982), can be intricate and complex, especially when deciphering movement (Sperber & Hirschfeld, 2007). *capoeira* offers numerous instances through which cultural transmissions can occur, such as through song, movement, and philosophy (Almeida, 1986; Capoeira, 2006; Lewis, 1992; Merrell, 2005). Specifically through a performative approach, *embodied interactions* are physical means of engaging in cultural

discourse (Scott, 2011). Additionally, the *roda* provides the physical space and structure wherein cultural transmission can take place (Capoeira, 2006; Lewis, 1992); Stephens & Delamont, 2009). Guthrie (1997) further exemplified the embodied healing through her research with assaulted women, wherein they reclaimed their physical selves and were empowered through movement.

Critical Framework. Critical qualitative inquiry addresses research questions that aim to investigate hegemonic power, which inherently oppresses and marginalized individuals who are not members of the dominant group (Kim, 2016; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The ‘truth’ and knowledge construction are germane to critical inquiry, as individuals are at risk of accepting the status quo, thus contributing to the on-going disparate conditions that exist within social structures (Kim, 2016; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). A critical framework emphasizes the importance of social transformation through individual empowerment (Kim, 2016). Additionally, change over time, or *cronos* (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Vélez-Agosto et al., 2017), can be critically examined to determine how society has previously arrested aspirations and goals, especially within our educational systems wherein significant developmental processes take place (Kim, 2016). Through critical examination, systems can be modified and become sites of “resistance, possibility, and hope” (Kim, 2016, p. 40).

Critiques of critical theory indicated that a focus on academic work has distanced theoretical principles from the lived experiences of marginalized groups (McCarthy, 2001). In order to address omitted perspectives, Biesta (2009) added that a deconstructionist approach seeks to provide justice “to that which is excluded” (as seen in Kim, 2016, p. 68). As previously mentioned, non-verbal culturally centered practices are not yet a part of standardized efforts to improve psychological well-being for individuals of color, or who have experienced other forms

of oppression (Hagedorn & Hirschorn, 2009; Ault-Brutus & Alegría, 2018; Pérez-Gauldron & Yeh, 2014). For these reasons, the proposed study will highlight the lived experiences of marginalized individuals in an effort to learn more about the emancipatory characteristics of participating *capoeira*, which are likely accessed through cultural pathways and practices.

Ontological Underpinnings. According to Wertz and colleagues (2011), “philosophy matters and is relevant to research with humans” (p. 79). As such, it is important to describe both the ontological and epistemological underpinnings for the proposed study. From an objective perspective, reality can exist independently of our beliefs and understanding (Al-Saadi, 2014). However, according to Tierney (1999), “objectivity does not exist” (p. 452), rather multiple realities can exist simultaneously (Wertz et al., 2011). As a person seeks to gain understanding, they naturally draw upon historical references in relation to the discussion at hand (McLoed, 2001). Gadamer (1975) further posits that we first gain understanding in relation to our social circles and societal values and can then reflect upon ourselves and gain insight, highlighting the contextual nature of perspective and knowledge.

Hermeneutics is a way of exploring the relationship between self and other (McLoed, 2001), wherein interpretation occurs in consideration the context (Patton, 2015). Mayers (2003) and McLoed (2001) discuss the reciprocal relationship between text and researcher, in which both configure the next junction, thus mutually contributing in a dialogic spiral (Kinloch & SanPedro, 2014). Additionally, Radnitzky (1970) posited that hermeneutics allow a historical dialogue to deepen and therein encompass greater meaning.

In consideration of Bakhtin’s Theory of Novelness (Kim, 2016), the idea of ‘dialogic truth’ is germane to exploring numerous, unmerged voices, as is the focus of the proposed study. Novelness is conceptualized in contrast to epic knowing, which features a single, ‘official’

or ‘complete’ point of view (Kim, 2016). Novelness is described as flexible and noncanonical, featuring three parts: *polyphony*, *chronotope*, and *carnival*. *Polyphony*, is the idea that simultaneous truths emerging from both researcher and participant (Kim, 2016). The consideration of multiple perspectives is congruent with Kinloch and SanPedro’s (2014; 2017) description of the dialogic spiral, and mutual construction as purported by Vélez-Agosto and colleagues (2017).

Chronotype, literally translated as ‘time’-‘space’ in Greek, refers to the interconnectedness of relationships in order to understand life as individuals and social creatures (Kim, 2016). As with Vélez-Agosto and colleagues’s (2017) Cultural Microsystemic Model, *chronotope* entails that the researcher to regard participant experiences in consideration of historical, biographically, and social perspectives (Kim, 2016). In this vein, Capoeira (2006) noted that “*capoeira* has been in perpetual interaction with ‘the system’ and different power structures” (p. 16).

People naturally experience the social world in a similar fashion to the way they experience the biological world (Gelman, 2003; Hirschfeld, 1996 as seen in Swann et al., 2012). The way that people form their thoughts, rituals, relationships, and navigate their lives is based upon culture and has implications regarding group membership (Jones et al., 2014; Rosaldo, 1989; Bastian & Haslam, 2008; Bastian, Loughnan, & Koval, 2011; Chao, Chen, Roismann, & Hong, 2007; M. J. Williams & Eberhardt, 2008 as seen in Swann et al., 2012). Attributions of inferiority or negative characteristics are most often committed by researchers outside of the group being studied, and rarely by researchers within the group being studied (Banks, 2006). The idea of *fundamental attribution error*, or the belief that another’s faults are due to their internal

flaws rather than circumstances (Jones, Dovidion & Vietze, 2014; Masuda et al., 2008) exemplifies how misconceptions of inferiority can occur and perpetuate oppressive conditions.

In order pre-emptively address this potential error, a transformative approach will illuminate the experiences of participants to work toward liberation and empowerment as change-agents themselves (Banks, 2006) by asking individuals to share their experiences. Rather than revering the researcher as expert or monolithic knower, the power of the story and onus is upon the participant, thus shifting the power dynamic between researcher and participant (Cole, 2009; Kim, 2016). By conducting semi-structured qualitative interviews, a critically orientated framework will highlight the perspectives of individuals who are otherwise marginalized and silenced within the mainstream narrative (Nadal, 2017; Pérez-Gualdron & Yeh, 2014; Sue, 2010). Through shared experiences in and of themselves, catharsis occurs (Banerjee, 2013; Yalom, 2005), thus the act of bearing witness to a participant's life is an act of social justice wherein the person's perspective, and literal voice, are heard.

Epistemological Underpinnings. Knowledge can come about in a multitude of ways, wherein “paradigms coexist rather than replacing another” (Banks, 2006, p. 783). With proverbial phrase, “Is the glass half-empty or half-full?” it could be argued that it is half empty, and half full, both of which are simultaneously true. Eisner's (1998) idea that interpretation is in the eye of the beholder provides insight as to the viewer's perspective of the water (or lack thereof) in the glass. Additionally, “things can always be other than they are,” (Marie Sandy, personal communication, September 26, 2017), so it is important to consider one's own limitations. Rosaldo (1998) exemplified this notion through his description about his experience with the cultural practice of headhunting. Prior to experiencing his own profound grief and loss, Rosaldo (1998) could not understand why, or how a person could take another's

life. Unfortunately, despite our best intentions, we must acknowledge our own shortcomings with unfamiliar concepts, which is also an ethical principle for best practices within counseling psychology (Rosaldo, 1998; Pope & Vazquez, 2016; APA, 2014).

As noted by Clark (1965, as seen in Banks, 2006), all researchers have biases, and the only way to correct for them is to identify and address them, less our “insidious bias” infiltrate our work. In order to engage in research that will impact others, Banks (2006) notes the importance of prioritizing social justice and equality, which aligns with counseling psychology’s specialty areas of multiculturalism and advocacy (Fassinger, n.d.). As previously mentioned, Nadal (2017) has urged counseling psychologists to identify as psychologist-activists, now more than ever, in order to function within a social justice framework.

Social science is a subjective undertaking, wherein lived experiences shape knowledge even while other realities exist (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). Additionally, a researcher’s culture, context, and positionality influence their pre-existing assumptions, research questions, salient findings, and overall analyses (Banks, 2006). Contextually, it is important to consider the hermeneutic circle, in which a back and forth exchange occurs between various parts of a whole, and the larger context, through which meaning can be derived (Merriam & Tisdale, 2016). As purported by Kinloch and SanPedro (2014), “dialogue ... and language ... are collaboratively constructed,” (p.26) wherein the researcher has a substantive role in knowledge creation but is not the omnipotent power. As someone who values our community and relationships therein, shared meaning is important (Bakhtin, as seen in Kinloch & SanPedro, 2014) and congruent with the principal investigator’s multicultural worldview and social justice orientation.

Analytic Tools

Narrative analysis ascribes patterns to events and is rooted in identity across cases (Boje, 2010; Denzin, 1989). Foucault (1977) and Nietzsche (1968) discussed the social construction of narrative approaches in order to examine social power and how knowledge is determined (Boje, 2010; Greer, 1997). Narrative analysis can be conducted with *story-cases*, which are acquired through interviews, fieldwork, and additional text such as marketing materials (Boje, 2010). Thematic analysis is described as the categorization and synthesis of collected data, which can be employed in conjunction with a narrative approach.

Thematic Analysis. Thematic analysis is a systematic method used to identify commonalities, relationships, or overarching patterns, or explanations of cultural meaning (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Lapadat, 2010). Sense-making, or meaning, is an important feature of thematic analysis (Lapdat, 2010; Mishler, 1986). Riessman (2008) noted that rich data can be acquired through *latent analysis*, or analysis of the content, rather than a focus on the interpersonal conversation, or *semantic analysis*, so long as it is an appropriate method given the investigation (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Another advantage of thematic analysis is the ability to condense large amounts of data without losing the context (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Instruments

Data was collected via semi-structured interviews, identity diagrams, and through a post-interview survey, as described below.

Semi-structured Interviews. According to Pérez-Gualdrón and Yeh (2014) and Sue and Sue (2010) the use of qualitative interviewing is congruent with cultural values of relationship building and a collectivistic orientation. Rather than employing a digital survey that would not adequately capture the conversation resulting from a dialogic spiral (Kinloch & SanPedro, 2014),

the principal investigator conducted semi-structured qualitative interviews with group leaders and group members.

It was important to ensure that information was being captured to answer the research questions, while also allowing for flexibility based on participant responses. The semi-structured format provided the opportunity for a dialogic spiral to occur (Kinloch & SanPedro, 2014), as the researcher may not otherwise gain insights due to limited perspective (Rosaldo, 1998; Eisner, 1998; Bazerman & Tenbrusel, 2013). Questions for group members and group leaders were piloted prior to the actual study to ensure that the responses could inform the overarching research questions (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Appendices B and C detail the questions asked of group members and group leaders, respectively. While the interview questions are similar, it was important to distinguish their experiences since they had differing roles within the group. This also allowed for responses to be triangulated, as more than one individual was asked about the same thing.

It was possible that although group leaders participated in this study: 1) group leaders chose not to ask group members to participate; 2) group leaders asked group members to participate, but group members decided not to participate; 3) group leaders no longer had an active role with *capoeira*, therefore did not have current group members to ask.

Participants were asked to self-select a pseudonym, rather than the principal investigator imposing a pseudonym (Merriam & Tisdale, 2016). There were a number of individuals stated that the principal investigator could use their *capoeira* name or stated no preference for a pseudonym. For said individuals, excerpts of their names were scrambled to make a new pseudonym so the highest level of confidentiality could be maintained, while still honoring their wishes.

Identity Diagrams. As part of the semi-structured interviews, participants were asked to visually represent their identity using by creating a diagram (Appendix B and C) to show aspects of intersectionality and salience, which is described as “a parameter of a stimulus that indexes its effectiveness” (American Psychological Association, 2020). The principal investigator provided an example identity diagram and an explanation, however participants were reminded that there was no right or wrong way to represent themselves. Appendix L includes identity diagrams for all participants.

Post-interview Survey. A post-interview survey was offered following the completion of group member and group leader interviews (Appendix D). The post-interview survey anonymously asked participants about their experience with their interview to encourage honest feedback, which could detail dynamics within the dialogic spiral such as identity, oppression, and trust (Saldaña, 2016), which were the foci of this study. Participants were also asked where they would place *capoeira* within the Microcultural Framework (Veléz-Agosto et al., 2017), as well as their reasoning to establish goodness-of-fit with this study. Through the post-interview survey, additional context and triangulation was ascertained and clarified (Merriam & Tisdale, 2016).

Data Collection Procedures (IRB protocol)

Maruyama and Ryan (2014) recommended the use of standardized procedures to avoid preventable inconsistencies, as delineated in protocol documents (see appendices). As suggested, the principal investigator provided the informed consent documents to participants in order to address the inquiry’s purpose, determine who has the final decision regarding the study’s content, discuss payment, and delineate pragmatic concerns such as the time and meeting link for the interview (Taylor & Bogdan, 1984).

Given that the ecological framework was essential to the study's paradigm, interviews were offered via skype or zoom to increase the geographic range of participants and to allow the researcher to clarify any misunderstandings and gain meaningful responses (Maruyama & Ryan, 2014). Rapport-building and the ability to observe non-verbal body language also improved the quality of data provided by participants, especially when discussing complex topics (Maruyama & Ryan, 2014).

Protection of Human Subjects

Risks. A potential risk of participating in this study included psychological discomfort due to sharing information with interviewer. As previously mentioned, a participant could choose not to respond to questions and could stop the interview at any time, without consequence. Choosing to end the interview did not negatively impact the participant's eligibility for payment, as that would be a coercive practice. As all participants completed interviews via video platforms, receipts of the gift card are only available in the principal investigator's password protected email account.

In the case that a participant was in distress and required additional support, the principal investigator prepared informational including resources such as national crisis phone lines and steps to take in case of an emergency or mental health crisis (see Appendix D). The researcher was also prepared to work with the participant to develop a safety or crisis plan, as this was within the competence of the researcher's practice (see Appendix E). The researcher was required to abide by laws regarding mandated reporting, which was described in the consent process and prior to the semi-structured interview. The researcher was also prepared to discuss protective factors with the participant to instill hope and identify natural supports as needed (see

Appendix F). Although these procedures were prepared, none of the participants required implementation of a safety plan, review of protective factors, nor available resources.

Another potential risk included the possibility that a group member feared retaliation from a group leader. In an effort to prevent any retaliatory action toward group members, as previously noted, the researcher first spoke with the group leader to explain the research project and answer any questions. If the group leader did not indicate their interest in participating in this project as evidenced by completed the screening form and informed consent, the researcher did not continue to pursue involvement with that group out of respect for the group leader. Group leaders provided permission prior to the principal investigator conducting any interviews with group members.

Recruitment

Recruitment occurred via personal connections with *capoeiristas* to gain entrée with the target population. The researcher first inquired with respective group leaders to discuss the objectives of the research project and answer any questions. With the group leader's permission, the principal investigator reached out to group members who were identified by the group leader as eligible for the study. Group leaders also chose to notify their group members that the research opportunity was available and provided the link to the screener (Appendix A) and project flyer (Appendix N) rather than principal investigator initiating contact with group members. Additional participants were recruited through use of electronic messages which were sent via social media or email to self-identified group leaders or members (Appendix I). Recruitment began in October 2019 and concluded in July 2020.

Purposive Sample. Purposive sampling was employed to ensure that participants have the experiences needed to address the research questions (Merriam & Tisdale, 2016). Maximum

variation within the sample allows for inclusion of a variety of perspectives, through which patterns are even more valuable (Merriam & Tisdale, 2016). In addition to positive experiences, participants were asked to share about negative, or disconfirming, experiences with *capoeira* in order to procure the greatest range of variation, through which themes can be distilled (Merriam & Tisdale, 2016). The principal investigator recruited from multiple *capoeira* groups, who practiced different styles of *capoeira*. Prospective participants complete an initial screening (Appendix A) to determine eligibility for the proposed study. Participants were recruited until saturation was reached within the sample (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Sample Size. The sample consisted of eight different *capoeira* groups, including 15 group leaders and 12 group members. Group leaders were asked to complete semi-structured interviews (Appendix C). In order to strengthen and contextualize data provided by group leaders, group members were asked a set of questions that differed from the group leaders (Appendix B). It was possible that: 1) group leaders chose not to ask group members to participate; 2) group members were asked but chose not to participate 3) the group leader was no longer teaching, therefore had no current group members to interview.

Saturation. Saturation is considered satisfactory when data does not produce new information or insights, or responses are repeating (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Participants were interviewed in the order that they were available until saturation was reached in the data (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). In order to recruit appropriate participants, the principal investigator collaborated with group leaders to ascertain more information about the group members such as total quantity of members, age range and mean, gender composition, racial/ethnic backgrounds, and so forth.

Screener

In order to achieve purposive sampling, prospective participants were able to access the screening questions online at

https://milwaukee.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_081xdUwDoZe38t7 or by scanning a QR code.

Inclusion Criteria. Individuals who are interested in participating in the study were asked the following questions:

1) Are you an adult who is at least 18-years-old? *This ensured that the participant was able to provide legal consent to participate in the study.*

2) Have you participated in *capoeira*? If so how long? 0-6 months; 6 months – 1 year; 1-5 years; 5 years or more. *This ensured that the participant was able to draw from experiences with capoeira. However, the person did not need to be currently involved, as this allowed for the exploration of reasons for leaving capoeira.*

3) Do you consider yourself to be a minority in any of the following categories: race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religious affiliation or practice, gender identity, legal status, language ability, learning ability, etc.? *This addressed the ways in which a person's identity related to engaging in capoeira as a therapeutic activity.*

4) Are you proficient at speaking and verbally understanding conversational English? *This ensured that the participant was able to converse with the researcher, as the mutual construction of knowledge is critical to a dialogic spiral (Kinloch & SanPedro, 2014). Reading and writing proficiency in English was not needed for the purposes of a qualitative interview.*

When a person was able to meet all of the inclusion criteria, the individuals name and email was requested so that a confirmation email can be sent including information regarding the date, time, and location of the semi-structured interview.

Exclusion Criteria. Exclusionary criteria consisted of the following:

- 1) Under the age of 18, as they are not old enough to provide legal consent.
- 2) No participation in *capoeira*, therefore are not be able to respond to the questions during the semi-structured interview.
- 3) No aspect of identity that is marginalized (i.e., race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religious affiliation or practice, gender identity, legal status, etc.). The scope of the study is in regard to marginalized individuals, therefore a person who only identifies as a member of the majority culture is not the focus of this project.

4) Lack of proficient speaking and verbal understanding in English. As English is the researcher's first language, best practices indicate that the researcher must conduct interviews within their respective competence to ensure comprehension (APA, 2014). This is a limitation of the study, especially due to Portuguese being the primary language of *capoeira*.

Consent Form

Prospective participants received an electronic copy of the Informed Consent form and had the opportunity to ask any questions prior to providing consent. Participants were able to complete the document electronically or via paper form that was emailed back to the principal investigator (Appendix M). Participants were also given the opportunity to ask questions before and after the interview.

Post-Interview Survey

All participants were invited to anonymously complete a post-interview survey (Appendix D) to provide input as to the theoretical model of the study. The survey asked participants about their interview experience, as well as the fit of the model.

Data Collection

As COVID-19 was identified as a public health epidemic during data collection (CDC, 2019), all interviews occurred via video platform such as skype or zoom. The anticipated time per interview was about 60 minutes. Participants were offered a \$10 amazon gift card for their time, in congruence with an effort toward reasonable wages for work (International Labour Organization, 2019; U.S. Department of Labor, n.d.). A participant was able to choose to withdraw from the study at any time and remain eligible for receipt of compensation, however all participants who began an interview also completed all semi-structured interview questions ($n = 27$). Proof of receipt is accessible only in the Principal Investigator's password protected email account. Interviews occurred between November 2019 and July 2020.

Handling the data

Skype and zoom interviews were audio recorded for the purposes of transcription and analysis. Audio recordings were preferred to handwritten notes, as the researcher could not conduct a conversation and simultaneously capture all of the information that the participant provided (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Audio recordings were kept on a password protected cell phone that did not have any cellular service, which was kept in a locked filing cabinet in the principal investigator's office. After participants reviewed the transcript of their interviews, audio files were deleted, as the transcripts were used for analysis.

Transcription

While automated services are time-efficient way to transcribe interviews, computer programs lack the ability to interpret idioms or denote non-verbal information, such as a pause or sigh (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). As a result, the principal investigator transcribed interviews, which allowed for increased familiarity with the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The principal investigator redacted identifying information such as name, place, particular *capoeira* group, and so forth to ensure anonymity (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Transcriptions are stored in the principal investigator's password protected account that is provided by the affiliated university. Only authorized individuals had access to the files on an as-needed basis, such as research team members and the participants.

In congruence with a hermeneutic approach and to increase face-validity of the transcript, the principal investigator provided an electronic copy of the interview transcript to each participant with redacted details (e.g., no proper nouns, no *capoeira* group names, rather generic terms such as "*capoeira* group"). By doing so, participants could verify the contents of the conversation, identify meaningful information, and provide any corrections or clarification (Kim, 2016; Maruyama & Ryan, 2014; Merriam & Tisdale, 2016). Although all participants were provided access to their transcripts, sixteen participants, or roughly 63% did not review their file. However, four individuals, or roughly 14.8% of the sample looked at their transcripts and provided no corrections. Additionally, six individuals, or roughly 22.2% of the sample reviewed their transcripts and provided edits or additional changes.

Data storage

Digital data will be confidentially stored for seven years, in accordance with IRB recommendations. Hard copies of data will be stored in a locked filing cabinet in the principal investigator's locked office. After seven years, data will be confidentially shredded or deleted.

Participants

A total of 27 individuals participated in the current study, consisting fifteen group leaders and twelve group members from a total of eight different *capoeira* groups. Groups A, B, E, and F included at least one group leader and at least one group member. Groups C and D included group leaders only, as they were not actively teaching *capoeira* during the time of the study. Group H consists of only group leaders. However, each group leader had a different rank including Mestre, Contra Mestre, and Professor.

Table 1

Group Leader and Member Structure

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	Total
Leaders	1	1	1	2	5	1	2	3	15
Members	3	2	0	0	2	1	3	0	12

Geographic Regions

Participants represented the East Coast, Midatlantic, South Atlantic, South East, South Central, and Midwest regions of the United States. Nine individuals, or roughly 33.3% of the total sample represented the North East. This region was comprised of six participants, or about 22.2% of the total sample from the North East, and three participants or roughly 11.1% of the total sample from the Mid-Atlantic region. Seven individuals, or roughly 25.9% of the total sample represented southern regions, including four individuals, or roughly 14.8% of the total

sample from the South East, and three individuals, or roughly 11.1% of the total sample from the South Central region. Eight individuals, or roughly 29.6% of the total sample represented the Midwest. Three individuals, or roughly 11.1% of the total sample included members that are abroad, although they were previously based in the United States.

Table 2

Geographic Regions

Region	# of participants	%
North East	6	22.2
Midatlantic	3	11.1
South East	4	14.8
South Central	3	11.1
Midwest	8	29.6
Abroad	3	11.1

Educational Attainment

Although educational attainment was a not a specific question in the semi-structured interviews, 88.9 % of participants (twenty-four out of twenty-seven) referenced some aspect of their education. Four individuals, or roughly 14.8% of the total sample referenced completion of their doctoral degrees. One individual, or roughly 3.7% of the total sample stated they were pursuing their doctoral degree. Six individuals, or roughly 22.2% of the total sample referenced completion of their master’s degrees. Thirteen individuals, or roughly 48.1% of the total sample referenced their bachelor’s degrees. One individual, or roughly 3.7% of the total sample reported that they were pursuing their bachelor’s degree. Two individuals, or roughly 7.4% of the total sample did not reference their educational attainment during the interview.

Table 3*Educational Attainment*

Highest Degree Achieved	# of participants	%
Doctorate	4	14.8
Pursuing Doctorate	1	3.7
Masters	6	22.2
Bachelors	13	48.1
Pursuing Bachelors	1	3.7
Unreported	2	7.4

Age

Individuals ranged in age from 24-61, with an average age of 33.7 years old. One participant, or roughly 3.7% of the total sample shared that they were between the ages of 18-24. Ten participants, or roughly 37.0% of the total sample shared that they were between the ages of 25-29. Four participants, or roughly 14.8% of the total sample shared that they were between the ages of 30-35. Six participants, or roughly 22.2% of the total sample shared that they were between the ages of 35-39. Five participants, or roughly 18.5% of the total sample shared that they were between the ages of 40-44. One participant, or roughly 3.7% of the total sample shared that they were age 45 or older.

Table 4*Age of participants*

Age Range	# of participants	% of total sample
18-24	1	3.7
25-29	10	37.0
30-34	4	14.8

35-39	6	22.2
40-44	5	18.5
45+	1	3.7

Martial Arts and Athletic Experience

Eighteen individuals, or roughly 66.7% of the total sample shared that they had former experience in various martial arts or athletic endeavors. Thirteen individuals, or about 48.2% of the total sample had previous experience with martial arts, wherein some individuals practiced more than one martial arts discipline. Two of the individuals with former martial arts experiences, or roughly 7.4% of the total sample had a background in martial arts and another sport, including track and field or soccer. Of the three individuals who did not have previous martial arts experiences, they were involved in soccer, track and field, swim, gymnastics, breakdancing, and basketball. Again, it was possible that an individual named more than one activity. Nine individuals, or about 33.3% of the total sample indicated no prior martial arts or athletic experience.

Table 5

Martial arts and athletic experience

Activity	# of participants	% of total sample
Karate	4	14.8
Kung fu	4	14.8
General MMA	3	11.1
African MA	2	7.4
Boxing	1	3.7
Jailhouse Rock	1	3.7
Kenpo	1	3.7

Su Bak Do	1	3.7
Jiu Jitsu	2	7.4
Soccer	2	7.4
Track & Field	2	7.4
Basketball	1	3.7
Breakdancing	1	3.7
Gymnastics	1	3.7
Swimming	1	3.7

Entrée to capoeira

Participants shared that they learned of *capoeira* through six different ways. Some individuals shared more than one instance of encountering *capoeira*, however the responses shared herein are specific to the reason why a person decided to try *capoeira*. For example, a person may remember that they saw a movie featuring *capoeira* after starting to learn *capoeira* from a family member, so that instance is categorized as ‘Family Member’ rather than ‘Pop Culture’. Eight individuals, or roughly 29.6% of the total sample shared that they learned about *capoeira* through a friend or family member. Six individuals, or roughly 22.2% of the total sample shared that they learned of *capoeira* while at college. Six individuals, or roughly 22.2% of the total sample shared that they learned of *capoeira* by passing by someone who was doing *capoeira*, and later looked up *capoeira* in their respective areas to pursue training. Two individuals, or roughly 7.4% of the total sample shared that they learned of *capoeira* through pop culture, wherein one individual referenced the movie *The Mighty Quinn* and one referenced the video game *Tekken*. Three individuals, or about 11.1% of the total sample shared that they intentionally searched for *capoeira* after previously encountering *capoeira* at an earlier time.

Two individuals, or roughly 7.4% of the total sample shared that they learned of *capoeira* through other martial arts experiences.

Table 6

Entrée to capoeira

Ways of Learning	# of participants	% of total sample
Family or friends	8	29.6
College	6	22.2
In Passing	6	22.2
Pop Culture	2	7.4
Intentional Search	3	11.1
Other Martial Arts	2	7.4

Starting Age

Four individuals, or roughly 14.8% of the total sample shared that they started *capoeira* when they were about 16 years old or younger. Fifteen individuals, or about 55.6% of the total sample started *capoeira* between ages 18-24. Eight individuals, or roughly 29.6% of the total sample began *capoeira* when they were age 25 or older. Three of the participants who started *capoeira* when they were children noted that they tried *capoeira* on account of family members who were attending or teaching classes. The other individual who started *capoeira* as a child stated that a friend brought him along to class when he was a teenager.

Table 7

Starting age for participation in capoeira

Starting Age	# of participants	% of sample
9-17	4	14.8
18-24	15	55.6

25+

8

29.6

Years in capoeira

Individuals shared that they have practiced *capoeira* between 6 months and over 25 years, with an average of about 10.9 years participating in this art form. Three individuals, or roughly 11.1% of the total sample has participated in *capoeira* between zero and four years.

Twelve individuals, or roughly 44.4% of the total sample has participated in *capoeira* between five and nine years. Three individuals, or roughly 11.1% of the total sample has participated in *capoeira* between ten and fourteen years. Six individuals, or roughly 22.2% of the total sample has participated in *capoeira* between fifteen and nineteen years. Three individuals, or roughly 11.1% of the total sample has participated in *capoeira* for twenty years or more.

Table 8

Years in capoeira

# of years in <i>capoeira</i>	# of Participants	% of total sample
0-4	3	11.1
5-9	12	44.4
10-14	3	11.1
15-19	6	22.2
20+	3	11.1

Group Style of capoeira

Participants identified with three main styles of *capoeira*: angola, santista, and a general practice that includes all styles of *capoeira*. Nine individuals, or roughly 33.3% of the total sample identified as encompassing all styles of *capoeira*, with three individuals, or roughly 11.1% of the total sample specifying the contemporânea style. Thirteen individuals, or about 48.1% of the total sample identified with the Angola style, with three individuals or an estimated

11.1% of the total sample specifying Angola Sao Bento Grande. Five individuals, or roughly 18.5% of the total sample identified with the Santista style of *capoeira*.

Table 9

Group style of capoeira

Type of <i>capoeira</i>	# of participants	% of total sample
All Styles	6	22.2
All – contemporânea	3	11.1
Angola	10	37.0%
Angola – Sao Bento Grande	3	11.1
Santista	5	18.5

Group Affiliation

Some participants shared that they started with the same group and have continued to train with their current group, however others have changed groups for various reasons such as moving to a new city, available options, or based on preference for the instructor or group leader. Fifteen participants, or roughly 55.6% of the total sample has trained with one *capoeira* group. Nine individuals, or an estimated 33.3% of the total sample has trained with two *capoeira* groups, starting with a different group and now remain with their second group. Three individuals, or about 11.1% of the total sample have trained with three different groups.

Table 10

Group style of capoeira

# of group affiliation	# of participants	% of total sample
1	15	55.6
2	9	33.3
3	3	11.1

Reasons for Affiliation with Multiple Groups. Out of the twelve participants who shared that they were affiliated with more than one *capoeira* group, the primary reasons were 1) moving to a new location and 2) interpersonal reasons. Three individuals, or roughly 25.0% of participants affiliated with two groups reported changes due to moving. Six individuals, or roughly 50.0% of participants affiliated with two groups reported changes due to interpersonal reasons. All three individuals who participated in three *capoeira* groups, or roughly 25.0% of this subset cited moving as their primary reason for changing groups. One of the individuals involved with three *capoeira* groups also stated, “I’m not really committed to training with a specific practice ... I’m just gonna have fun and try everything” (Muito).

Table 11

Reasons for affiliations with multiple groups

# of groups	# moved	% moved	# interpersonal	%interpersonal
2	3	25.0	6	50.0
3	3	25.0	0	0

Current Involvement

Twenty-four individuals, or roughly 88.9% of the total sample is currently practicing *capoeira*. The remaining three individuals, or roughly 11.1% of the total sample were not in current practice at the time of interviews. Two individuals, or about 7.4% of the total sample cited shifts in focus to other fighting styles. The other individual, or roughly 3.7% of the total sample noted challenges with accessibility due to distance from training options and stated the desire to begin training again in the future. One individual, or roughly 3.7% of the total sample shared that although they are training themselves and have previously taught, they are not currently teaching.

Additional details regarding individual identity diagrams of each participant is included in chapter four.

Description, Analysis, and Interpretation of the Data

As noted by Merriam and Tisdell (2016), analysis should commence early and in conjunction with data collection. As data was collected, the principal investigator organized and inventoried the information to efficiently understand what was available and to retrieve data without confusion (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016) Coding cycles were employed through use of thematic analysis, as described herein.

Thematic Analysis

A theme is described as a pattern within the data that aids in answering the research question, however there is no hard or fast rule about how frequently an idea must occur for it to be considered a theme (Braun & Clark, 2006). For the purposes of this study, prevalence was determined if a theme was apparent across at least seven different *capoeira* groups because one group consisted of only an individual. However, Braun and Clarke (2006) iterate that there is not a specific correct or incorrect way to determine prevalence, other than the relevance to the research question(s).

As thematic analysis is employed across a variety of disciplines, critics argue that is not delineated well, and is a difficult process to replicate for this reason (Lapadat, 2010; Boyatzis, 1998; Roulston, 2001). In order to provide a structured way to employ thematic analysis, Braun & Clarke (2006) discuss six phases. The first phase requires a researcher to familiarize themselves with the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006), which occurred during the interview process, transcription, and reading of the transcript prior to initial coding. The second phase involves initial code generation, whereas the third stage re-focuses and broadens analysis to conceptualize

initial themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The fourth phase includes theme revisions and refinement. Finally, the fifth phase determines the ‘essence’ of the themes, wherein themes are named and defined, which will be discussed in chapters four and five. The sixth phase involves production of the report, including the final analysis, wherein adequate evidence of the themes must be provided (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

When engaging in thematic analysis, there are multiple potential sources of data, such as the *data corpus*, *data items*, and *data extracts* (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Themes of total body of data, or *data corpus*, can be identified through the ‘prevalence,’ which can be determined within a participant’s transcript or across participants (Braun & Clarke, 2006). *Data items* are described as the individual artifacts, such as transcripts, field notes, research memos, audio files, and so forth (Lapadat, 2010). *Data extracts* describe the parts of data that are coded (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Through use of thematic narrative analysis, content of the data corpus is emphasized over the data extracts (Kim, 2016). Data extracts were utilized throughout coding cycles, while the data corpus was considered in later phases to consolidate and determine final themes.

Apriori themes

Based upon the extant literature regarding *capoeira* and psychology, the principal investigator expected several themes to be included in interview responses. The prospective coding scheme included three main categories: 1) *pedagogy* (Stephens & Delamont, 2009; Downey, 2008; Benitez, Santiago & Miltenberger, 2015; Almeida, 1986; Capoeira, 2006; Kugel, 2012; Lewis, 1992; Merrell, 2005), 2) *social relationships* (de Campos Rosario, Stephens & Delamont, 2010; Iriart & Milani, 2009; Porgest & Decety, 2013; Downey, 2008; Downey, Dalidowicz & Mason, 2015; Koehne, Schmidt & Dziobek, 2015; Iriart & Milani, 2009; Stephens & Delamont, 2009; Young & Schlie, 2011), and 3) *self-development* (Almeida, 1986; Burt &

Butler, 2011; Burt, 2015; Calvo-Merino, Glaser, Grezes, Passingham & Haggard, 2015; Guthrie, 1997; Lewis, 1992; Joseph, 2012; Kugel, 2012; Merrell, 2005).

Coding Cycles

Researchers have numerous options as far as coding procedures, including *theory driven*, *data driven*, and *hybrid* methods. Patton (1990) described coding as a progression from description to interpretation. Theory driven coding is derived from theoretical concepts, where in a researcher may be more familiar with the nuances of the data (Tuckett, 2005). However, a potential drawback of theory driven, or deductive coding, is that the researcher may be constrained by existing literature and subsequently limit coding possibilities (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Conversely, *data-driven coding* revolves around the collected data with less of an emphasis on the theoretical foundation (Braun & Clarke, 2006). *Data-driven coding* is often used with a grounded theoretical approach (Patton, 1990), however critics note that data is not collected in a vacuum, and meaning is different when the data is decontextualized (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Lapadat, 2010). *Hybrid coding* involves both deductive and inductive coding, wherein initial themes are drawn from the extant literature, while new themes may be available in the collected data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In order to allow for themes to arise, hybrid coding was employed, as there were already themes within the extant literature. Coding is a recursive process (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Kim, 2016; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016) and requires that researchers engage in numerous iterations of codes and themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Saldaña, 2016).

First Cycle

Three transcripts consisting of one group leader and two group members were utilized for the first cycle of coding. Prior to coding the transcripts, research team members and the principal investigator first read through the transcript to gain familiarity and thereafter code upon the second read through (Merriam & Tisdale, 2016). While initial themes were drawn from the extant literature, hybrid, or provisional coding allowed for new themes to arise based on the collected data (Braune & Clarke, 2006; Saldaña, 2016). As data was co-created by the researcher and participant (Kinloch & SanPedro, 2014), hybrid coding allowed for more flexibility and refinement of *apriori* codes as participant interviews could distinguish relevance of the current literature to the research questions (Freeman, 2017; Merriam & Tisdale, 2016; Saldaña, 2016).).

In order to clarify concepts, the transcript was coded by *data extracts*, or smaller chunks of the transcript (Braune & Clarke, 2006). All three research team members and the principal investigator participated in the first cycle of provisional coding, as this served a preliminary function prior to delving further into the coding process (Saldaña, 2016). Based on the results from the first cycle of coding, the principal investigator developed an initial coding manual to further delineate coding concepts. The coding manual was modified in later coding cycles until reaching the final version, as seen in Appendix K.

Second Cycle

The transcript from Group Leader C was used to establish interrater reliability, as there were not additional group leaders or members who could triangulate the findings from the interview. According to Maruyama and Ryan (2014), interrater reliability can be estimated by calculating a kappa statistic (Cohen, 1960). As noted by Landis and Koch (1977), a kappa statistic that ranges from 0.41 to 0.60 indicates moderate agreement, a range from 0.61 to 0.80

indicates substantial agreement, and a range from 0.81 to 1.0 indicates nearly perfect evidence of agreement. In order to determine the kappa statistic, the principal investigator divided the transcript into “meaningful units of analysis” (Campbell, Quincy, Osseman & Pedersen, 2013, p. 304), otherwise known as *data extracts* (Braune & Clarke, 2006), to unitize the data, which resulted in 405 units.

As the purpose of this coding cycle was to establish interrater reliability, units were distilled to capture a single idea to be as concise as possible per unit. Per Saldaña’s (2016) recommendation, both the principal investigator and research team member C double-coded a random 20% of the units, which yielded 81 units. Our initial kappa statistic was 0.90, or 73 out of 81 units. The second coder and principal investigator discussed discrepancies (8 units) until 100% agreement was achieved. Following the reconciliation of all 81 units, the coding manual was revised to include updates based on our conversation. An example of a change to the coding manual was the inclusion of a code for “pedagogy – empowering others”.

Third Cycle

The principal investigator used the updated coding manual to independently code eight transcripts, or thirty percent of the collected data, including the first three that were used to develop coding manual. This recursive process allowed for verification of the coding manual’s utility, or relevance to the data (Braune & Clarke, 2006; Saldaña, 2016). In contrast to the second cycle of coding wherein data was split into *extracts* (Braune & Clarke, 2006), the third cycle of coding employed *data clumping* to maintain the integrity of an entire idea (Saldaña, 2016). As some ideas were more complex than others, it was possible for a unit to have more than one code. The first code was considered the primary code to emphasize the overarching idea, however additional codes were included to illustrate the nuances therein.

The principal investigator unitized the eight transcripts, wherein the total units per transcripts ranged from 84 to 360 units. The second coder was asked to audit a random 5% of the units, which was a total of 85 units that ranged from 5 to 14 audited units per transcript. As data chunks included more aspects of an idea, the principal investigator anticipated greater variation in interrater reliability. Initial agreement was 69 out of 85 units, or a kappa statistic of 0.81, indicating evidence of almost perfect agreement (Landis & Koch, 1977). One transcript had a kappa statistic of 1.0 (6 out of 6 units), meanwhile the remaining seven transcripts included one to four units to be reconciled. The principal investigator and second coder discussed the remaining 16 units until 100% agreement was reached.

Fourth Cycle

The principal investigator coded the remaining 19 transcripts independently to solidify themes, concepts, and assertions about the collected data (Saldaña, 2016). Units were organized by theme and analyzed to determine saturation across groups (Guest, Namey & Chen, 2018). Themes were reported in the results if saturation in the sample was 87.5% or higher. In other words, results were reported if seven or more out of the eight groups each had at least one person who discussed the theme. Although results for six out of eight groups are not thematically saturated, they are included to inform the reader of potential areas of future study.

Trustworthiness of the data

Due to the inherent subjectivity in the researcher's instrumental role of interpretation, researchers can employ various strategies ensure the integrity of the data (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Maruyama & Ryan, 2014). Validity and reliability, or trustworthiness and rigor, were accounted for via an audit trail, analytic memos, member checking, post-interview survey, and triangulation of the data via two or more trained coders and by interviewing the group members

whenever possible (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). In order to increase confidence in analyses, qualitative researchers can employ mixed methods, member checking, and review panels to triangulate meanings and applications of collected data, which are further described with regarding to validity and reliability below (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2006; Johnson and Christensen, 2008, as seen in Stake, 2010).

Credibility

One method of increasing trustworthiness in the data includes member checking, which can occur through the hermeneutic process (McLoed, 2001), wherein participants were provided with access to their respective transcripts for review. By doing so, participants had the opportunity to clarify any misinformation or misunderstanding that occurred during the interview to increase legitimacy of the conversation with the researcher, thereby maximizing the internal validity of the transcription (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Dependability

Dependability can be established through use of triangulation, as multiple sources of information can indicate the consistency of one perspective (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). In order to triangulate data, whenever possible, more than one individual was interviewed from a *capoeira* group. Additionally, whenever possible, both group leaders and group members were interviewed. An audit trail is also considered to be one way to establish dependability (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016), wherein the researcher maintains records of data collection procedures for data, decision-making throughout analysis, reflexive processes, and additional questions as a result of the procedures. Furthermore, a research team contributed to the dependability of the analysis and allowed for perspectives beyond the principal investigator.

Research Team. A recruitment letter (Appendix J) was used to recruit research team members, which included two master’s students and one undergraduate student. Each research team member provided a reflection of their own privileged and marginalized aspects of identity and completed an orientation to the theoretical frame, research questions, coding protocol, and use of analytic memos.

Research team members were required to complete IRB training prior to any interaction with the data and were trained by the principal investigator to ensure integrity of the coding process (Levitt et al., 2017). All three research team members participated in the first cycle of coding. Thereafter, team members one and two participated in the second cycle of coding. Team member three was most involved, as he also participated in the third cycle of coding. The table below indicates self-identified aspects of identity that were most salient for research team members.

Table 12

Research team members

Research Team Member 1	Research Team Member 2	Research Team Member 3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Master’s student • Perpetual learner • Father of two boys • Raised in Midwestern region • Of Mexican descent • Grew up below poverty line, now in middle SES 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undergraduate student • Advocate for education • Latina • Proud of Latina culture because ancestors fought for her privileges and rights 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full-time Master’s student • Partner • Son • Uncle • Male in the counseling field

Triangulation

Triangulation of findings based on two or more coders also serves to mitigate the risks of the principal investigator’s biases and worldview (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). For initial stages of

coding, three research team members participated in theme generation based using three transcripts from one *capoeira* group. Triangulation also occurred by obtaining multiple sources of information, including both group leaders and members. Lastly, triangulation occurred across groups to discern emerging themes.

Purposive sample

In order to ensure that a variety of experience levels, geographic range, and demographic characteristics, purposive sampling was employed (Maruyama & Ryan, 2014; Merriam & Tisdale, 2016). By striving for maximum variation in the sample, there is even greater value within emerging patterns (Merriam & Tisdale, 2016).

Divergent data

In order to mitigate the tendency to seek result that are congruent with preexisting biases, researchers are advised to seek data that offers alternative explanations (Patton, 2015) or identify disconfirming examples to maximize variation within the sample and to increase trustworthiness of the data (Merriam & Tisdale, 2016; Antin, Constantine & Hunt, 2015; Corbin & Strauss, 2015). Participants were asked for disconfirming data, or ways in which *capoeira* can be harmful or not helpful (Appendices B & C). Participants were asked about their negative and/or harmful experiences with *capoeira* so that all aspects of *capoeira* could be illuminated, rather than only the positives (Antin, Constantine & Hunt, 2015; Corbin & Strauss, 2015).

Although this study focused on the experiences of individuals who identified as People of Color, there were two individuals who did not self-identify as BIPOC. The first was Ica, who self-identified as woman. Although Ica did not self-identity as BIPOC, during the interviews her student Noa thought he recalled that Ica had Cameroonian heritage. The second individual who did not identify as BIPOC was Raca, who self-identified as a White male. However, Raca stated

that his ideas about marriage and having his own family were not mainstream, as he did not have an interest in pursuing either.

To capture any additional information that was not prompted by the semi-structured interview questions, the principal investigator asked an insurance question to inquire if there was anything else they were not asked about, but thought was important for people to know about *capoeira* (Krueger & Casey, 2015).

Iterative coding

Since narrative work requires a researcher to construct, deconstruct, and reconstruct a story (Josselson, 2011), this could not be adequately addressed in one fallow swoop and is instead a recursive process (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Kim, 2016; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). As such, iterative coding requires that researchers engage in numerous iterations of codes and themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Saldaña, 2016). Coding recommendations to researchers include the necessity of ‘clumping’ rather than ‘splitting’ data during the coding process, which occurred in the third cycle of coding (Saldaña, 2016). Additionally, researchers are encouraged to code essential parts of the data corpus, rather than every single line (Saldaña, 2016). Finally, Saldaña (2016) encouraged researchers to be open-minded regarding the coding process, and to pilot initial codes with the first few pages of a transcript to evaluate their utility, which occurred during the third and fourth cycle of coding.

Audit trail

In order to withhold a high standard of reliability, or rigor, Merriam and Tisdell (2016) recommend use of an audit trail, which is a log of the processes detailing how the project has arrived at its current state thus far. The audit trail includes recruitment processes, institutional review board updates, correspondence with participants regarding review of respective

transcripts. Additionally, analytic memos and diagrams are used to document and capture researcher's ideas about the emerging framework (McLoed, 2001), which are important when examining positionality and questioning what might be missing or has not yet been considered (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Engagement with the data

Adequate engagement with the data facilitates the recursive nature of qualitative inquiry (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). In order to engage with the data both adequately and recursively, the principal investigator: 1) conducted the semi-structured interviews, 2) transcribed the interview and redacted identifying information, 3) re-read the transcript prior to any coding, 4) completed an analytic memo following the initial reading, 5) coded the transcript, 6) completed an analytic memo following the initial coding, 7) conceptualized the codes from multiple transcripts into visual format in order to make sense of the data, 8) refined visual code organization into an initial coding scheme (Appendix K), 9) established interrater reliability with research team members by coding 20% of a selected transcript, 10) reconciled discrepant codes via discussion until interrater agreement was 100%, 11) completed the remainder of coding independently, 12) ensured ample breaks throughout coding procedures in order to remain vigilant to units and subsequent codes (Braune & Clarke, 2006).

Research Question Development

In July of 2017, a colleague invited me to teach a *capoeira* workshop in accompaniment of the existing curriculum regarding aggression replacement training. IRB approval at UWM and informational flyers were available to potential participants one week prior to the scheduled workshop. Participants provided consent on the date in which the workshop and focus group took place. A *capoeira* instructor primarily led the workshop, after which I facilitated a focus group.

The workshop took place at a community organization in Milwaukee and lasted roughly 75 minutes. The workshop included a warmup, foundational physical movements that are used in *capoeira*, and a few beginner songs that are sung in Portuguese, along with the use of an *atabaque* (traditional drum).

Following the workshop, participants agreed to participate in a focus group to provide feedback regarding their experiences during the workshop. Participants shared about their previous experiences with *capoeira* (if any), what they liked/enjoyed, what they didn't like or care for, anything they learned about each other, anything they learned about themselves, suggestions for future groups, and were given the opportunity to ask facilitators questions. The focus group was audio recorded, transcribed, and coded utilizing discourse analysis (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Wertz et al., 2011; Starks & Brown Trinidad, 2007; Burck, 2005; Gee, 2014).

A total of six individuals, consisting of two youth who participated in social services programming for at-risk youth, and four social workers from their agency included a range of ages (11-32) and racial/ethnic backgrounds (White, Afro-Caribbean, Black). Based on responses, participation in a *capoeira* workshop was an experience that included a multitude of benefits, such as gaining social support from their peers, realizing new perspectives beyond their roles as social workers or youth participants, the opportunity for exploration of physical self, learning about the historical components, music, and new insights regarding self. As previous literature indicates, social support from friends and family (Bharati, 2016), mental and physical liberation and empowerment (Kugel, 2012; Guthrie, 1997), access to resources (Asanin & Wilson, 2008,) and a strong ethnic identity (Sue, 2010; Branscombe, Schmitt, & Harvey, 1999) can serve as a buffer between deleterious impacts of stress and allostatic load.

Reflexivity/Positionality

Researchers are warned that interpretation itself is an act that undermines the data (Banks, 2000), so it is important to consider the researcher's influence upon what is being shared (Kinloch & SanPedro, 2014; Kim, 2016; Freeman, 2017). Researcher and participants collaboratively construct data (Charmaz, 2011; Freeman, 2017), so it is particularly important for the researcher to address positionality in relation to the topic, which is provided herein. When conducting narrative research, reflexivity prompts a researcher to interrogate their own positionality (Probst & Berenson, 2014; Maxwell, 2013; Wertz et al., 2011; Gergen & Gergen, 1991). Narrative work is understood through the surrounding context and the relationship through which information is acquired (Josselson, 2011), so the researcher must consider their own stimulus value and their influence on what is being shared (Brown, 2010). Kim (2016) cautions researchers to be mindful of the Hawthorne Effect, or the Observer Effect, in which a participant may engage inauthentically due to the setting. To offset this concern, Speer (2008) recommends that interviewers engage in natural 'conversation moments' so the recorder becomes 'forgotten' on account of the level of engagement and natural discourse (as seen in Kim, 2016). As it is impossible to eradicate the influence of a researcher's presence, we can instead be mindful how the researcher impacts the connections between methods, context, and collected information (Kim, 2016). The following discussion will illuminate the principal investigator's status as both an insider and outsider, personal experiences and biases, as well as the inclusion of disconfirming data (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Insider/outsider

From an *etic*, or universal perspective (Sue & Sue, 2010), I am also a capoeirista, just as are the participants, so I am peripherally considered an insider. However, I will be an outsider when

speaking to any individual who belongs to a different *capoeira* group. Therefore from an *emic*, or culturally specific perspective (Sue & Sue, 2013), we are all members of respective groups, who may engage in different practices and philosophies. I suspect that my *capoeira* group's philosophical teachings about how one engages with *capoeira* will influence my interpretation of the narratives. For the purposes of gaining further insight as to my own positionality, my group leader will be asked if he would like to participate in the semi-structured interview. Respective group members were also asked to participate due to my limited interactions, as the group is based on another state. This will serve to further illuminate my perspective, as I learn directly from my group leader and am likely influenced by their teaching style and philosophies.

For example, I was taught that *malícia*, or cleverness, (Lewis, 1992; Merrell, 2005; Kugel, 2012) is favored over physical power or brute force. Power is not in one's musculature, rather in their cleverness, or ability to trick their opponent. So, in learning about a narrative for an individual who practices in a group that favors physical power, I must be aware of my bias toward mental deftness (Banks, 2006; Rosaldo, 1998). I must also remember that, "we tell the story that seem most meaningful to ourselves" (Stake, 2010, p. 131), so blind spots are even more important to consider (Bazerman & Tenbrusel, 2013). As previously mentioned, additional research team members, as well as consultation were employed to address and mitigate potential biases.

Identity Diagram

A visual representation of my identity circles is available in Appendix L, which is labeled as 'principal investigator'. The largest circle that I depicted is 'lifelong learner' because I enjoy learning new things that are not necessarily school-related, rather I have a general orientation and affinity toward learning overall. Within the larger circle I have two smaller sets of circles. One

set of the circles is representative of my responsibilities, or the things that I need to ensure that I do on a regular basis. These circles are labeled ‘single-parent’ and ‘student’ since they are really important and require a lot of my time, especially considering that I have been in graduate school for nearly a decade (started in 2011).

As I continue to matriculate through the higher education system, I must recognize my position of power as a member of ‘the institution.’ As an English speaker, I have the privilege of understanding the majority of both written and spoken communication. While I am by no means rich or wealthy, I must remember my position of privilege in my ability to provide for my daughter (Cole, 2009). I am able to obtain gainful employment and access compensation that exceeds the federal minimum wage (United States Department of Labor, 2017), meanwhile almost half of the children who reside in Milwaukee are members of single-parent households who do not necessarily have the same luxury (County Health Rankings, 2017). Historically and currently, it is evident that women have not had access to the same wages as our male counterparts (Waldfogel, 1997) and continue to fight for equal wages (Graf, Brown & Patten, 2019).

The other set of smaller circles on the right side of my diagram represents the things that I enjoy, or would spend more time doing if not for my responsibilities. These circles are labeled ‘creator’ because I make a variety of things (i.e., handbound books, acrylic paintings) and sew. Within that I have ‘capoeirista’ because I conceptualize *capoeira* as an act, or reenactment, of creating, as far as movement and using your voice to create music, gathering to create the space, and so forth. Finally, overlapping those two smaller sets of circles in the middle, it’s labeled ‘adopted’ because that’s been an influential aspect of how I understand the world and myself.

As an adopted individual, I am often the only Taiwanese person in each setting. Through my work as a therapist at a shelter for runaway and homeless youth, I have encountered more youth who have been adopted either by next of kin, or a non-relative. Other than these recent experiences, I have been accustomed to being the only adopted person in the room. Some identity models are likened to that of bi-cultural or multicultural individuals (Shannon Chavez-Korell, personal communication, April 2016). My heritage is an area of my identity that I continue to explore as a person who is 92% East Asian, and 8% Polynesian, according to my results from Ancestry DNA.com. Recent changes in the database indicate that this has shifted to 88% Southern Chinese (Eastern China and Southeast Asia), 10% Northern Chinese, and 2% Korean.

Although I have experienced a multitude of microaggressions based on my phenotype, in our current sociocultural context, I may be perceived as a ‘model minority’ and be expected to ‘succeed’ (Sue, 2010; Sue & Sue, 2013; Tierney, 1993), which may have positively impacted my affinity for academic aptitude. Although Asian-Americans are stereotyped as model minorities, there are still considerations as to how mental health is conceptualized and treated within this community (Lim, Mascari, Songco & Vang, 2020).

As a cisgender, pansexual woman of color, my identities hold both positions of privilege and marginalization (Cole, 2009; Sue, 2010). Although I can empathize with non-binary gender identified individuals, I cannot claim to know what is like as transgender individual who are often victims of violent acts solely based on their identities (Bieschke, Pérez, & DeBord, 2007; Sue, 2010; Sue & Sue, 2013).

Bias

Although many of us like to think that we do not have biases (Bazerman & Tenbrusel, 2013), we have developed the ability to distinguish insider and outsider groups as a survival mechanism over time (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Sherif, 1957). As such, it is important to acknowledge and illuminate my own biases, so that the reader can make an informed decision as to how the data and conclusions are interpreted.

Although I enjoy the pursuit of knowledge which is in congruence with a hermeneutic approach (Freeman, 2008), I am still limited by my experiences and knowledge thus far (Rosaldo, 1990; Eisner, 1998). Given this limitation, it is imperative to acknowledge my role in the mutual construction of knowledge when engaging in scholastic inquiry (Tierney, 1999), as the power differential between researcher and participant is minimized due to valuing their respective input. Additionally, the framework of this project includes use of the dialogic spiral (Kinloch & SanPedro, 2014), wherein data is co-created between the investigator and participant. To illuminate my involvement specific to *capoeira*, herein is my entrée, as well as both my negative and positive experiences with the art form.

Entrée. In 2012, a friend from my job was aware that I had done breakdancing during my undergraduate studies, and that I competed gymnastics through level ten during my high school years, so he invited me to come do this “really cool” activity called *capoeira*. At the time, I thought very little of this invitation and put it off and put it off until my friend reminded me that it was uncouth to discount anything until I had not tried it myself. So, I finally went to a class, and asked my friend, “Why didn’t you tell me to come sooner!?” And of course, he did try, about six months prior.

What I remember most about my first-class is how scary the *roda* seemed, but the spirit of *capoeira*, the challenge, and the welcoming atmosphere incited me to return to class.

Although I felt incredibly awkward trying to figure out how to move my body in new ways, I *also* felt encouraged because the people who attended classes just laughed along with me and reminded me that I had to keep trying to make progress, so it was a norm to look ridiculous and fail miserably over and over again.

Although I started with a Regional group, like many of the participants for this study, after meeting my current Contra Mestre, I realized and learned that *capoeira* could be manifested in so many ways. I simply didn't know what I didn't know, and I didn't know that there were different types of *capoeira*, different philosophies, and different strategies or ways of playing. Throughout my time in *capoeira*, I experienced an expanse of disheartening and inspiring moments, with the positive greatly outweighing any negative challenges as described below.

Negative experiences. The few negative experiences that I have seemed to be based in machismo culture and occurred at two separate events. The first was after a *batizado* in an East Coast State, where everyone was celebrating and enjoying themselves at a club. I was sitting down and saw that one of the lower-level-ranking students brought some women over to the Mestre, seemingly for approval or disapproval, as the Mestre sent the women away with a wave of his hand after looking them up and down. The second negative experience that I can vividly recount was at an open-*roda* event in the Midwest, hosted by a group that is characterized by being very protective of allowing outsiders into their training setting. One of the *capoeiristas* appeared to be angered by a movement that the other *capoeirista* did, and then kned the offending *capoeirista* in the chest and pinned him to the ground. From an outsider's perspective,

this response seemed disproportionate to the scenario and disincentivized my desire to play amongst individuals with exceptional impulsivity and limited ego-strength.

Positive experiences. In contrast to the negative experiences in the *capoeira* community, I have benefited from the art-form itself, my respective training group, and aspects of self-development, which are described below.

Capoeira the art form. Through *capoeira*, I have felt empowered to learn a history that was never taught to me in grade school, to make more sense of the African-Diaspora and appreciate the message and living resilience that is embodied in *capoeira*. It's mesmerizing to watch and experience, so much fun to play (in the *roda* and *batería*), and really and honor to be able to learn.

Group. I am not sure if it was the specific individuals that I met, or if most *capoeira* groups are as supportive and connected as the group I was introduced to. Over time, I experienced a sense of family-hood, and consider fellow capoeiristas to be my brothers and sisters in the art. I have received and offered mutual support through annual and regional events and conversation about the day-to-day challenges of life. Through *capoeira*, I have been able to connect to other individuals while traveling and abroad.

When traveling to my first batizado on the East Coast, I remember being welcomed by strangers and allowed to stay on someone's floor after knowing them for a few hours. I was embraced and perplexed at the welcoming nature of the individuals that I met, sharing their physical space, stories, and time. Similarly, when my group at the time was hosting their annual batizado, I hosted one of the guests at my home and continue to see the work that he is doing in his respective community.

One of my favorite experiences was when I was staying at an air bnb in Havana, Cuba. The rest of my friends moved onto a different city in Cuba, but I stayed behind because I had to leave the next day to return to work. The woman's son had already taken us around the town and learned that I did *capoeira*. He said that one of his friends actually did *capoeira* also and asked if I wanted to go to a class. Of course, I said yes, so in the evening we ventured out to find his friend who did *capoeira*. Under the blur of the streetlights near the Malecon, they were having a *roda* so I got to jump in and play. I can still remember the feeling of excitement in my body when I heard the berimbaus and saw shadows moving underneath the trees. It was really fun (understatement) to connect with others, not needing verbal language, but being able to interact, contribute to the axe overall, and just enjoy each other's company. Afterward they invited me to join them for a walk, but instead I turned in for the night. I didn't want to lose my phone so I didn't bring with me and consequently don't have any photos or videos from that evening, which might make my memory all the fonder.

Self. I feel emotionally overwhelmed when thinking about all the ways that *capoeira* has been healing for me. I have felt both physically and mentally empowered as I have pushed through physical challenges, which allow me to remember how strong I am in both domains. I have had a significant break in training due to my responsibilities as a single-parent, and have recently gotten back into training while working on this research project. Coming back into training after some years felt very defeating, realizing how weak my body had become. But, months later, I am gaining strength and jogging the muscle memory within. As I become stronger, I feel more and more prepared to take on challenges in my life, whether physical, mental, or emotional, and remember that I am capable of doing things that I pour into. When I do

capoeira, my soul is revived at such a beautiful means of expression with the history of resilience and community – something I strongly advocate for and intentionally work to build.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

This chapter is divided into three sections. The first section describes the individuals who participated in this study. Aspects of participant identity are discussed to gain insight to the first research questions: *What aspects of identity are most important for capoeiristas?* This section also includes a description of participant responses to the Post-Interview survey. The second section focuses on results per group to address the research questions: *What meaningful cultural traditions or routines are practiced by capoeiristas?* and *What aspects of capoeira are therapeutic, or healing, over time?* This section includes a description of which categories were identified during the coding process and participant responses.

Semi-structured Interviews

As previously mentioned, a total of 27 individuals completed semi-structured interviews between November 2019 and July 2020 via video platforms such as Skype or Zoom. The interviews ranged from 55 – 126 minutes, with an average interview length of 80 minutes. Transcript word count ranged from 2,769 to 28,800 words, with an average word count of 11,617.

Identity diagrams

Each semi-structured interview asked participants to visually represent their identity using circles. The circles could overlap, be totally separate, concentric, and so forth, as there was no right or wrong way to create the diagram. Rather, this was an exercise to visually represent an individual's identity and capture the intersectionality that is inadequately described through use of a checklist or disparate categories. Participants included a range of 4 – 28 circles, with an average of 7.9 circles per person, and a mode of six identity circles. Three participants, or roughly 11.1% of the total sample represented their identities without strict use of circles while

still explicating how the image was representative of their identity. In the following table, disparate sections of the aforementioned diagrams are counted as ‘circles’. For example, if the identity diagram included seven labeled parts, it was included as ‘7’ for the circle quantity.

Table 13

Identity circles

Circle Quantity	# of Participants	%
3	1	3.7
4	3	11.1
5	4	14.8
6	7	25.9
7	3	11.1
8	4	14.8
9	3	11.1
...		
17	1	3.7
18	1	3.7
19	1	3.7

Reported Ethnicity and Salience

Out of the 27 participants, 25 self-identified their ethnicities, or roughly 92.6% of the total sample. Two participants did not self-identify as ethnic minorities, however one identified as a woman and the other identified as ‘not mainstream’ due to having no interest in getting married and having his own family. The two non-ethnic minority individuals were included to discern any divergent data. For the purposes of this study, ethnic salience was indicated if the

participant mentioned ethnicity during the interview *and* included ethnicity in the identity circles. Overall, the ethnic salience for this sample was 63%, meaning that for almost two-thirds of the participants, ethnicity was an important aspect of their identity. Individuals who self-identified as ‘Black and Native,’ ‘Black and Afro-Latino,’ ‘Pan-African,’ ‘African American,’ ‘Puerto Rican,’ ‘Mexican,’ ‘Latino,’ ‘Korean,’ and ‘Minority’ included ethnicity on their identity diagrams. Eight Black-identified individuals, one Chinese-identified individual, and two individuals who did not self-identify ethnicity did not include their ethnicity on their identity diagrams.

Table 14

Ethnicity and salience

Ethnicity	# of participants	%	Salient	% Salience per Ethnicity
Black	14	51.9	6	42.9
Black + Native	1	3.7	1	100
Black + Afro-Latino	1	3.7	1	100
Pan-African	1	3.7	1	100
African American	2	7.4	2	100
Puerto Rican	1	3.7	1	100
Mexican	1	3.7	1	100
Latino	1	3.7	1	100
Korean	1	3.7	1	100
Chinese	1	3.7	0	0
Minority	1	3.7	1	100
Unreported	2	7.4	0	0

Out of the fourteen individuals who self-identified as Black, five individuals, or roughly 45.5% of Black males and one female, or 33.3% of Black females included their Black identity in their identity diagrams. Meanwhile six males, or roughly 54.5% of Black males in this sample, and two females, or roughly 66.6% of the Black females in this sample did not include their Black identity in their identity diagrams.

Table 15

Black identity, gender and salience

	Salient	% per gender	Not Salient	% per gender
Male	5	45.5	6	54.5
Female	1	33.3	2	66.6

Gender Identity

Although gender identity was not a specific question during the semi-structured interviews, every participant referenced their gender either during the interview process or in the creation of their identity diagram. Participants identified as male or female, and zero participants self-identified as gender queer or non-binary. In the table below, salience indicates that the person’s gender identity was mentioned during the interviews *and* included in the identity diagrams, suggesting that gender is an important part of their identity.

Table 16

Self-Identified Gender and Salience

	# of participants	% of total sample	Salient	% Salience per gender
Male	21	77.8	10	47.6
Female	6	22.2	2	33.3

Sexual Orientation

Although sexual orientation was not a specific question in the semi-structured interviews, twenty-three individuals, or roughly 85.1% of this sample, referenced their spouse, partner or sexual orientation. Nineteen individuals, or roughly 70.4% of participants referenced a sexual orientation toward a person of the opposite gender, such as stating “my wife; my girlfriend; my husband; my partner (he)”. Eight individuals, or roughly 29.6% of participants referenced being in a marriage, and eight individuals or roughly 29.6% of participants referenced a being in a relationship. Nine individuals, or roughly 47.4% of the heterosexually identifying individuals also included referenced to their relationship on their identity diagram (i.e., “boyfriend”; “partner”; “husband”; “wife”).

Out of the eight individuals who did not indicate a heterosexual relationship, one individual identified as bisexual and being in a monogamous marriage to his husband. The second individual identified as gay/asexual. Both individuals, or 100% of the non-heterosexually identifying participants included their sexual orientation on their identity diagrams. The remaining six individuals, or roughly 22.2% of the sample did not mention an aspect of their sexual orientation or being in a relationship and did not include this aspect on their identity diagrams.

Table 17

Sexual Orientation (SO)

	# of participants	% of total sample	Salience	% salienc of SO
Heterosexual	19	70.4	9	47.4
Non-heterosexual	2	7.4	2	100
Not reported	6	22.2	0	0

Familial Role and Friendship

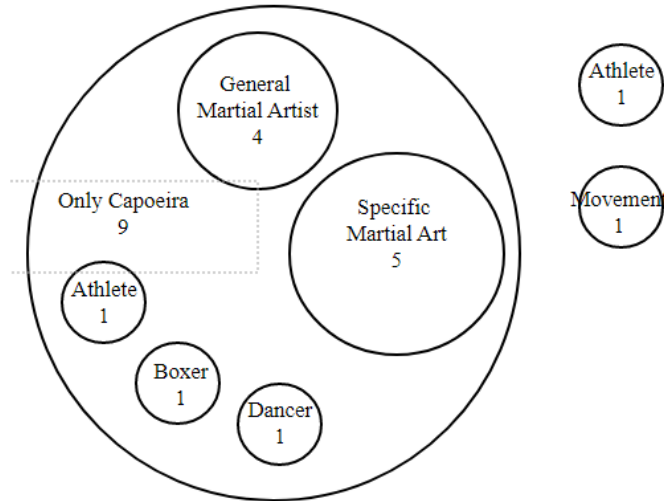
Thirteen individuals, or roughly 48.1% of participants referenced their familial role on their identity diagrams (i.e., “brother”; “son”; “sister”; “daughter”). Out of the fourteen individuals who did not reference an aspect of their familial role, four participants, or roughly 14.8% of the sample identified “friendship” or being a friend on their identity diagrams. The remaining ten individuals did not reference their familial role on their identity diagrams, although it may have been discussed during the interviews.

capoeira, martial arts and movement

Twenty-three individuals, or roughly 85.1% of the total sample identified some aspect of movement in their identity diagrams. Twenty-one individuals, or about 77.8% of participants self-identified as a capoeirista or labeled ‘*capoeira*’ on their identity diagram, including one who specified ‘angoleiro’ as the type of capoeirista. Four of those individuals, or roughly 14.8% of the total sample also included the identity of being a general martial artist or fighter. Five of those individuals, or roughly 18.5% of the total sample specified an additional martial art style, such as Budo, Su Bak Do, Tae Kwon Do, Brazilian Jiu Jitsu, and Mixed Martial Arts. In addition to identifying as a capoeirista, one of those individuals, also identified as a boxer, another identified as an athlete, and another as a dancer, respectively. One individual who did not identify as a capoeirista identified as an athlete, and another identified with movement in general, each comprising roughly 3.7% of the total sample.

Figure 3.

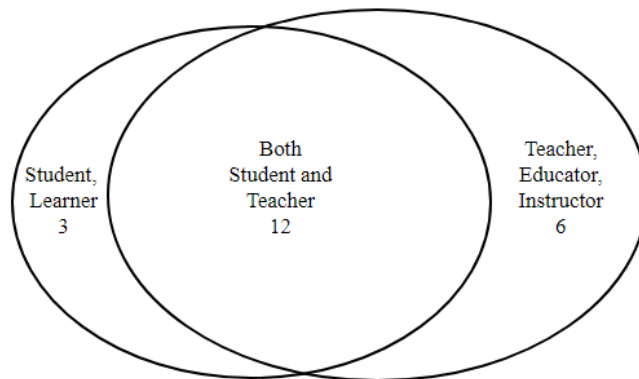
Participants who included capoeira or other movement styles and martial arts



Student/teacher. Nineteen participants, or roughly 70.4% of this sample self-identified as a student or learner, and a teacher, educator, or instructor. Nine individuals, or about 33.3% of the total sample identified as both a student and teacher. Three individuals, or roughly 11.1% of the total sample identified as only students or learners. Six individuals, or roughly 22.2% of the total sample identified as only educators, teachers, or instructors.

Figure 4.

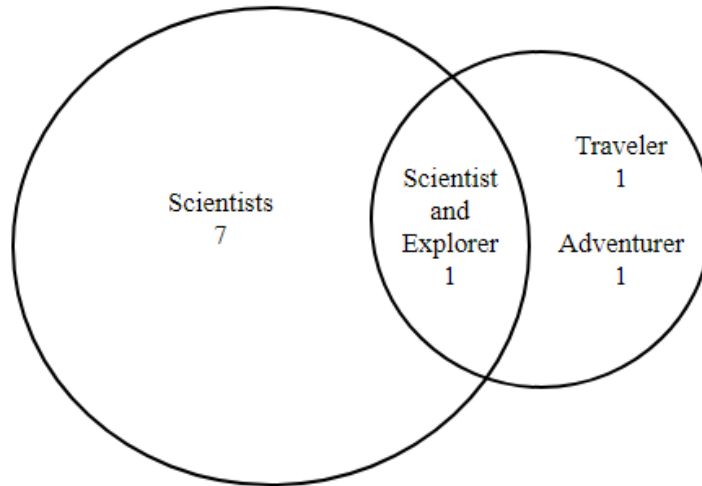
Participants who identified as a student or learner; and/or teacher, educator



Science and Exploration. Eight participants, or roughly 29.6% of the total sample identified as scientists. Of those individuals, one participant also identified as an explorer. One individual, or roughly 3.7% of the total sample, did not identify as a scientist did identify as a traveler. Another individual, or roughly 3.7% of the total sample did not identify as a scientist did identify as an adventurer.

Figure 5

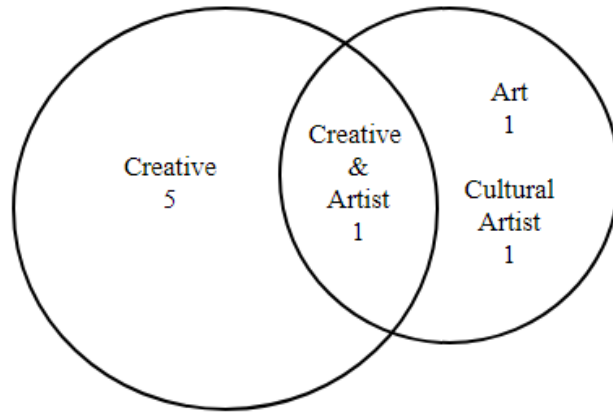
Participants who identified as a scientist and/or explorer, adventurer, or traveler.



Creative, Artists. Seven individuals, or roughly 25.9% of the total sample identified as creative or an artist. Five of those individuals, or about 18.5% of the total sample identified as creative. Two individuals, or roughly 7.4% of the total sample included ‘art’ or ‘cultural artist’ on their identity diagrams. One individual, or roughly 3.7% of the total sample identified as both an artist and creative.

Figure 6.

Participants who identified as creative and/or artists



Community Orientation and Social Awareness. Five individuals, or roughly 18.5% of the total sample identified an orientation toward community involvement and social justice. Three individuals, or roughly 11.1% of the total sample identified as a community leader. One individual, or roughly 3.7% of the total sample identified community as an important aspect of their identity. One individual, or roughly 3.7% of the total sample identified as socially aware, and one individual, or roughly 3.7% of the total sample identified as an activist.

Spirituality

Four individuals, or roughly 14.8% of the total sample identified an aspect of spirituality on their identity diagrams. Out of those four, one individual, or roughly 3.7% of the total sample specified being Baptist Christian, while the other three individuals, or roughly 11.1% of the total sample identified spirituality in general.

Intersectionality and Identity Descriptions

While commonalities are identifiable across participants, it is important to note that each person's identity diagram was different from the next. As previously discussed, the APA (2014) acknowledges that our identities are not one-dimensional and instead different aspects of our identity become more salient depending upon the context and situation. In order to illuminate the intersectionality among participants, a description of their identity diagrams is presented below in alphabetical order by pseudonym. Punctuation and letter style were persevered in the descriptions to refrain from misrepresenting how a person self-identified. All identity diagrams are available in Appendix M.

Brandon

Brandon identified eight different aspects of himself, consisting of “NEUROSCIENTIST, BLACK, BOYFRIEND, *CAPOEIRA*, MOTOR CONTROL, ADHD, TD” and “BJP”. When asked about the most marginalized aspect of identity, Brandon stated “part of me wants to say Black ... and I identify more with being Black than ADHD, but I also feel more marginalization due to ADHD”. When doing *capoeira*, Brandon described “my identity as a martial artist” as the most salient aspect of self.

Regarding the function or influence of his identity, Brandon stated there's I guess like a certain amount of security and confidence that I get from knowing that I'm a martial artist... and then I guess like, coming from being like a neuroscientist and like a grad student and martial artist, just like kind of both of them being very strenuous kind of lifestyles... I get confidence from that in that like there is very little that I can, like there's like very little that I can attempt that I won't be able to like conquer.

Brandon added that being a boyfriend contributes to his empathetic qualities, noting that communication with his girlfriend has allowed them to be “in a really nice place now, like I think I mentioned that we moved in together”. Overall, Brandon emphasized the confidence he experiences in consideration of his identity:

it allows me to think back on the challenges that I've faced previously and allows me to face even more challenges ahead without being afraid or kind of like shirking away like, "there's no way I could do that," or anything.

Cava

Cava identified five different aspects of himself, consisting of "Artist, marriage, *capoeira*, creative" and "family". When asked what aspect of self is most marginalized, Cava stated

as far as what the public sees, the artist 'cause a lot of people know me for being married and *capoeira*. But like as far as my artistry, a lot of people don't really, it's not something that a lot of people see on the forefront.

When doing *capoeira*, Cava described creativity and family as the most salient aspect of self

because "when it comes to teaching, when it comes to finding ways to learn for myself...and then dealing with *capoeira*, we talk about within the jogo, trying to be like creative on how you're about to do a particular move, or how you're gonna transition from one move to the next

Regarding the function or influence of his identity, Cava highlighted being an artist and creative and stated

I'm always thinking, trying to be creative and innovative, but like everything I do, I just do it 'cause I'm an artist. Like, that's my mindset. So even with *capoeira*, like the way I move is, you know I'm doing it, obviously compiling the foundation of *capoeira*, but like, I'm an artist, I'm always gonna be doing things creatively. And even when it comes to like family, and my marriage, it's like, my wife is also an artist too, so like that helps. But everything like, I'm just an artist so that's like, my passion, that's the way I move with everything.

Curtis

Curtis identified six different aspects of himself, consisting of "Student, Hard Worker, Capoeirista, Low-income Background, Minority POC" and "Game Player (learning through play)". Curtis added that "the one [identity] that kind of connects minority and hardworker, student and game playing is *capoeira*". He also explained the importance of games: "I like video games, I fell in love with *capoeira* because it was a game, like I like to play, I like non-

consequential skill development”. When asked about the most marginalized aspect of identity, Curtis stated “I would say capoeirista. That’s the thing I least assume that someone that I’m talking to knows about, in terms of common circles”

When doing *capoeira*, Curtis stated the most salient aspect of self was “game player”. He added, “I enjoy the play itself, the idea of just like interacting with another person outside of any other, you know, language or sphere of thought, it’s just like, “Here’s where we are, completely present in this game.”” Regarding the function or influence of his identity, Curtis denoted the importance of his identity as “low income” and stated

I think an integral part of my identity is the “low income.” I was trying to think of a better word but like, I feel that a lot of the decisions in my life are from that starting point and that I never want to forget that and you know, try to integrate that into as things get easier throughout life, try to remember to how privileged I am every step of the way now.

Data

Data identified nine different aspects of himself, consisting of “Family NAME, BLACK, FATHER, ART, HUSBAND, SCIENCE EDUCATION, BUSINESS OWNER, COMMUNITY LEADER” and “CAPOEIRISTA”. When asked about the most marginalized aspect of identity,

Data stated

probably art. I don’t really get to express myself as much, you know, it’s only through *capoeira* that I’m able to do it, but I haven’t done it in like, I don’t know how long. And if it wasn’t for *capoeira*, I wouldn’t do that either.

When doing *capoeira*, Data stated the most salient aspect of self is “just being a capoeirista. Just being able to play and express myself and not have to worry, and just be”.

Regarding the function or influence of his identity, Data shared about the stages of manhood:

I mean, it reminds me of, one of my *capoeira* students, he’s a – I’m his senior in *capoeira*, but he’s my senior in life...he’s an older guy, he’s probably pushing late sixties, early seventies by now.. we would always sit and talk about masculinity, what is manhood, stuff like that. And he does these leadership camps for young Black males, and we break down the stages of manhood. You know, there’s that child state, your warrior

state, your statesman state, your elderhood, and then you walk with our ancestors. You know, the problem that a lot of people have, a lot of males have, is we stay in the warrior state far too long. You know, the warrior state is protection of the family, protection of the community, you know, having a mission of defense or attack. But at some point you're supposed to shift into your state, into your statehood, where you are nation building, where you are creating opportunities in the neighborhood for younger people, where you are creating institutions for the elders, you know, 'cause you'll be one one day.

Do

Do identified six different aspects of himself, consisting of “Life Learner, Friendship, Fighter, Capoeirista, Education” and “Minority”. Do discussed the challenges of having more than one ethnic identity “a lot of people don't see it, but I think it's just a struggle for me to identify myself cause one side, I'm either not too Black enough, and then my other side is 'I'm not Native enough”. He added

I just started realizing, and I would tell people all the time, they'd say, “oh what are you?” and I'd say, “oh I'm mixed.” And I realized that, my teacher asked me, how does that make you feel. I was like, “well it almost makes me feel like a, it feels like I was born in the lab. Mixed.” The term 'mixed' feels like I was a science project.

When asked about the most marginalized aspect of identity, Do stated “I would definitely say 'minority'...because I'm pretty sure there's a lot of people who are mixed who are in the same boat as me who struggle to identify themselves”. When doing *capoeira*, Do stated the most salient aspect of self is “definitely my Native side just because...like what we talked about earlier, like the axe, I just feel like I'm connected to the world”. Regarding the function or influence of his identity, Do stated

I have to put a professional act – I'm surrounded by parents, I'm surrounded by teachers, I'm surrounded by my team and obviously when I'm at home or when I'm with my friends, I'm a goofball and I'm silly and everything... then when I'm going to school or if I'm going to *capoeira*, or if I'm going – I'm the quietest guy ever, I can be silly for a little bit and then I'm like, I'm focusing, especially in school. I don't think people even recognize me sometimes, I'm so quiet. I'm just like, “I gotta go to class, I gotta do what I gotta do”. And that's the same thing when, now that I'm teaching kickboxing and jiu

jitsu; yes I can be silly, but there's a time and a place, so I try to keep it as professional as possible

E

E identified four different aspects of himself, consisting of “Mexican, MMA Fighter, Capoeirista” and “Instructor”. E stated that his involvement with *capoeira* “just led me into fighting; I just feel like it prepared me for it”. E also elaborated the importance of distinguishing himself as Mexican-American:

my mom always told me to say I was Mexican-American and I didn't think it was a weird thing to say but like, growing up people would ask, “what was I?” and I would tell them that I was Mexican-American. And then they just always looked at me funny, like “why do you have to say you're Mexican-American, why don't you just say you're Mexican?” So little stuff like that, like my mom made sure to like emphasize that I'm American 'cause you know my parents are illegal, so then like that impacts on a lot. Just like most of my friends kind of have the same thing

When doing *capoeira*, E shared about the importance of family, where in his mother used to bring a photograph of E doing a *capoeira* movement on one hand:

that was when I was like, nine-, ten-years-old, she would always bring that along and walk around and tell her co-workers about me and all the things that I would do. But yeah, my mom is very proud when it comes down to this kind of stuff she tells the whole world.

Regarding the function or influence of his identity, E discussed the importance of being a capoeirista:

It did a lot for me, I feel like it did a lot for my parents too, just so they don't have to worry about me as much cause they would always leave me and my sister home alone cause they were always working, so we had to go. So I would take my sister to classes, or we had to go do performances so I know that's something. And then, keep me away from stuff that I shouldn't be doing, right? And instead of thinking about doing bad things, I go out and do *capoeira*, even like thinking bad about myself.

Game

Game identified six different aspects of himself, consisting of “Black, Student/learner, Afro Latino, Martial artist, Social awareness” and “Capoeirista”. When asked about the most marginalized aspect of identity, Game stated “I would say capoeirista...but I guess martial artist”.

When doing *capoeira*, Game described “student/learner” as the most salient aspect of self

cause like I’m still, you know, like, it’s a lifelong journey, so building that... trying to constantly improve ... social awareness especially ... keeping that in mind of *capoeira* history and the roots. And I guess Afro-Latino and Black because it just resonates with me, you know the history of it is what hooked me so much and one of the reasons why I’m doing it.

Game also discussed the cultural importance he experiences when doing *capoeira*:

I think people who are especially, for me, I kind of take it more personally these days because I just feel like, as someone – I’m not Brazilian, but I feel like that part still resonates with me, and just feel like it’s a path, it’s a cultural thing.

Regarding the function or influence of his identity, Game stated “it’s definitely the reason I got into *capoeira*, that definitely shaped my life”. He added “as a Black person in this country, it’s definitely, shapes my perspective on a lot of things”

Greg

Greg identified six different aspects of himself, consisting of “Community Leader, Black, Angoleiro, Gay/Asexual, Activist” and “Family Man”. When asked about the most marginalized aspect of identity, Greg stated, “I would say my Black identity”.

When doing *capoeira*, Greg stated the most salient aspect of self is “I’m Black, cause there’s just no getting around that”. He added that the activist community leader identity” is also salient:

because like I am a Monitor within my group...there’s a specific standard that I feel like I have to uphold whenever I play in the roda and whenever I interact with beginner students, experienced students, experienced teachers and other mestres, and more so than those two, my identity as an Angoleiro because my group and my style of play is within the Angola context, regardless of whether I’m playing fast, whether I’m playing slow, or even at like a mid-speed, or even if I’m playing *apanha laranja*, my identity as an

Angoleiro is always going to be there. So that's the very first thing somebody is also going to experience when they're engaging with me in *capoeira*.

Regarding the function or influence of his identity, Greg stated

because I'm a Black man, in America, I always have to sort of mentally prepare myself for just whenever I step out of the house, whenever I'm not around my family. And because there's, there's a big chance that I may not make it back alive. So I have to sort of mentally prepare myself for the absolute worst thing to happen each and every single time I step out and interact with society. Whether that's me walking up the street to like a local coffee shop, or if I'm driving to work, me being a Black man, and a distinct one at that because of my beard, it's something that I have to mentally like, check, each and every single time I step out of the house.

Ica

Ica identified six different aspects of herself, consisting of "Learner/Student, Scientist, Capoeirista, Partner, Teacher" and "Sister/Daughter". Ica also described a philosophy about her life, wherein "the way that I perceive my life is ...the path of the scholar/warrior. Everything is under that scholar, as well as the warrior".

When asked about the most marginalized aspect of identity, Ica stated, "capoeirista eh? I don't know...I mean in my brain they're mainstream". When doing *capoeira*, Ica described "student/learner" as the most salient aspect of self. Ica explained, "I learned from my students when I teach them. I learn from other people when I take classes".

Regarding the function or influence of his identity, Ica stated

They all influence each other. How I teach is influenced by my training as a scientist and my training as a capoeirista, but also influenced by how I learn. And then that influences everything, so it influences my science, it influences my *capoeira*, it influences who I am for my partner as much as it influences who I am for my sister. Everything is influenced by everything else. It all ties together. I learn from all of it.

Junior

Junior identified six different aspects of himself, consisting of "Family Historian/Oriented, Teacher, Life Student, Traveler, Capoeirista" and "Creator". When asked

about the most marginalized aspect of identity, Junior stated “*capoeira* is definitely not mainstream...I mean it’s mainstream in different parts of the world and Brazil, but definitely here, where we live, it’s definitely not mainstream”. Junior elaborated:

It still has like the ability to be, but I think it’s something that I always have to like, talk to people about, like share, create, and you have to be a teacher, you have to be a creator, be able to have those qualities, express that to people. I definitely think that’s not like mainstream.

Junior also stated that “maybe creator” is not mainstream, meaning “people realizing that they can create their own realities”. When doing *capoeira*, Junior described “creator” as the most salient aspect of self because “I need to think multiple moves ahead...like being aware of my surroundings”. He also noted the importance of context:

You know, yes, I’m interacting with this person, but what are we singing right now? You know, what messages am I like receiving from the *bateria*, what um, is there somebody that’s trying to come into the *roda* and change it, you know what I’m saying? You have to be aware of those things, so I definitely think it’s, the creator comes into it for me.

Regarding the function or influence of his identity, Junior stated “they [identities] walk with me all the time.”

Mandinga

Mandinga identified five different aspects of himself, consisting of “Spiritual values, COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP, *CAPOEIRA*, Partner + Father” and “BLACK MALE”.

When asked about the most marginalized aspect of identity, Mandinga stated:

if I had to choose one, community leadership would be the one area where I would say is more marginalized than the others... because that’s more of an external piece, that’s more of the things that I do, that others may acknowledge ...whereas these other elements that I have here, they’re more internal, they’re more intimate.

When doing *capoeira*, Mandinga stated that there is not a singular aspect of self:

it’s hard for me to say that there’s one guiding force when I’m doing and training *capoeira*, ‘cause *capoeira*, when you’re training alone, it’s very difficult. ‘Cause a lot of

days I get up and although I may go through a training routine, I may be at it for forty-five minutes, an hour, sometimes a little bit longer, it's not easy. And there's definitely times where I don't want to be doing this, I'd rather be working or doing something else, just spend time with my family, but there's something internal that is guiding me through that process. And it's, not only it's the mental piece, telling myself, "keep going, keep going." There's the physical piece in terms of getting my body to do the movements, to play the instruments. And then there's also the spiritual piece, realizing that this is a part of a bigger connection to the African Diaspora, realizing that it comes from a distance, it comes from struggle, and those feelings that I am experiencing, are signature to the art form, and it's a privilege for me to stop.

It's a privilege for me to say that "I'm not going to do that because it doesn't feel good at the moment," or because I'm tired. And, in many ways, I definitely feel like I am not only honoring the experience for myself, but also honoring God and what has brought these different elements that have brought me to really connect and expand my relationship to *capoeira*.

Regarding the function or influence of his identity, Mandinga stated "it's embedded in everything that I do". He added:

By all means, am I proud to be Black? Absolutely, yes. Am I proud to be a man? Yes, absolutely. Am I proud to train *capoeira*, be a capoeirista? Absolutely. Father, partner, all of the roles that fit me, I'm definitely proud of those identities. And then there's times when I just want to be. I just want to be and chill, and not think about the labels that others are just putting on me, you know what I mean?

Mel

Mel identified five different aspects of herself on an enneagram consisting of "nurturer protector, essential creative, image acts of kindness, drive" and "sacrifice helper community" wherein it "reflects who I am, where I want to be, what stresses me, and then also what's like my trigger, but then that also like corresponds with the different hats that I wear." Mel added:

this is what I am here, and I wrote the essential creative 'cause I am a creative person and it is essential to who I am, but you see this line of circles here. So then it comes all the way up here, and that's where my drive comes from. So that's where I'm confident in what I want and how I get there, so that's the teacher in me, the educator, not only in my own classroom but when it comes to *capoeira*, no matter how much I want to deny it, I am an educator *chuckle*.

Mel also noted the challenge of balancing her own needs and the needs of others:

... I call it the sacrifice helper because this is my stress point here. I do it, but it, it's like counterproductive to my down here, because here is the individual, but here is the community aspect... here's my primary circle here, this one right next to it here, image and acts of kindness, so when it, I can, that hat comes to that whole negligence of my own self-preservation, like when I sat there and taught class five days a week but ignored everything that I needed to survive that. And I realized that hat comes from that emotional thing I told you, of you can give so much, and neglect yourself but it's family members, so it's a whole drama there.

Mel described the nurturer and protector aspect of self:

that's like what I come to the table with *capoeira*, like *sigh* "I'm gonna protect these kids, I'm gonna protect our tradition, I'm going to nurture what we have so it can continue to grow." Um, and that's a little bit of anger on that side to but you know, we're working on that so *chuckle*

When asked about the most marginalized aspect of identity, Mel stated "the creative in me, like through my expression, would be the most marginalized". When doing *capoeira*, Mel stated:

when I'm in the roda, that part is the most important *chuckle* with the kids I love so much *chuckle*. 'cause it's just like you're telling stories with your body, and interacting with your, I was gonna say opponent, with your partner, you're interacting.

Regarding the function or influence of her identity, Mel stated

so having that confidence like, I am a woman, I am strong, I can handle my own shit and your shit and then some. But then also this art that I do, comes from people who look like me. This shit is in my veins, it is in my veins, it's pumping in my bloods, in my bloods *chuckling*, in my blood. So, I sit there with confidence, like, "I deserve to be here." I don't care what color your skin is, I don't care what country you're from, I don't care what your title is. If you're respectful to me, I'm respectful to you as well. But you come on some bullshit, that has transcended to my life. Like, who I, how I live as a person, how I hold my high in everything that I do, in everything that I do.

So that's helped me, that, and in *capoeira* too, that helped me too, like I'm valid, and I'm not going to exist in this box that y'all want me to fit in. 'Cause first of all, your box don't fit me, number one. It just doesn't. You know ... just sit with your feelings if you're mad 'cause I really don't give a fuck, I really don't. Um, so that helped me there in my life.

Muito

Muito identified eighteen different aspects of herself, consisting of “Buddhist, Korean, American, Daughter, Sister, Matron/Mentor, Student, Humanitarian, Public Health Professional, Scientist, Researcher, Explorer, Dancer, Eccentric, Martial Artist, Capoeirista, Kitty” and “Goddess”. When asked about the most marginalized aspect of identity, Muito stated “maybe eccentric? A lot of other things are like traditional roles people put down”. When doing *capoeira*, Muito described “eccentric and like dancer, martial art, *capoeira*” as the most salient aspect of self. Muito added “‘cause I like to do it with my brother... there’s that family aspect”. Regarding the function or influence of her identity, she stated:

I think that I’m a pretty eccentric person in general, I’m very weird. And I don’t think I can hide that. I think that, if anybody were to talk to me for even like five minutes or so, like, a lot of the stuff would come out. But my day to day life is just like work, I just do research/science with like health data. So, I guess like it comes out if somebody does talk to me because a lot of people that talk to me think that I do a lot of stuff and that I’m really interesting and unusual, ‘cause like most people don’t have the number of hobbies and the types of hobbies that I have...like martial arts takes a very long time to cultivate and develop, and most people nowadays don’t have that kind of time, money, effort, energy, or don’t want to cause it’s a pretty demanding hobby.

Muntu

Muntu identified four different aspects of himself, consisting of “Ethnicity, Educator, Family” and “*capoeira*”. Muntu described his diagram by stating

in ethnicity or just the person who I am, which encompasses my family, educator and *capoeira*. Um, my family is a portion, that’s outside, or within, well all three levels are still within my ethnicity, but so my family has part that’s connected to me being an educator. And my family also has a part of me being a capoeirista considering the fact that my brother, my family participates in *capoeira* as well. And then, *capoeira* is within the circle of me being an educator because sharing of the art, educating other people.

When asked about the most marginalized aspect of identity, Muntu stated “based on the way I drew my circles it’s *capoeira*”. When doing *capoeira*, Muntu described “ethnicity and family” as the most salient aspect of self. Regarding the function or influence of his identity, Muntu stated

depending on where I go, what I do, that influence need to sometimes check it, and challenge it. It’s a major influence on every aspect of what I do, from where I go to get my food, from how I relax, from what I read, that influences, that’s a major influence.

Neef

Neef identified nine different aspects of himself, consisting of “Spirituality, student, explorer, Scientist/Researcher, Leader, Athlete, Medical student, capoeirista” and “caregiver”. When asked about the most marginalized aspect of identity, Neef stated “I would say spirituality, just because like, I think it’s been exorcized from a lot of practices”. Neef also emphasized the quality of having an open and wandering mind:

Like you don’t always have to be focused, you don’t always have to be locked in on something, like letting your mind wander a little bit. Um, exploring your own mind. Like being a student of yourself and also a student of the world, I think is something that um, a lot of us don’t do. Like it’s almost like stripped from us as children because I don’t think many of us explore why we think the way that we think. Um, and why others think the way they think, and why the people we follow think the way that they think. I think if we did more of that we would come to more um, sustainable truths.

When doing *capoeira*, Neef described “student” as the most salient aspect of self because of “learning like what I’m doing, or how to do what GROUP LEADER’s teaching or also learning how to better teach others or to motivate them to practice”. Regarding the function or influence of his identity, Neef stated “I think my identities allow me to like do whatever I want.” He provided the example:

like I’m 6’5” right, so there’s like people who don’t expect me to be a medical student, and they probably will never expect me to be a doctor, and I get it. Most people who look like me are probably playing sports...most people who have this haircut are probably playing sports... then I’m also a nerd, like I love anime, I love um, science, I love, I mean it’s my passion. I play music, I play the piano, I play the guitar, like I try to do so much,

just to experience as much as I can cause that's like I don't know what else, what other rules there are to follow on this earth.

So I think by doing that I'm allowed to kind of delve into whatever I want. If I want to go snowboarding tomorrow, where I'm from a lot of times, a lot of people don't do things like that, so. Because I do a lot of those things, I no longer feel like I can't operate in them. Like I mean, there are certain things I'll probably never be able to do right, but I don't feel limitations because of the way that I've been raised and because I live my life like that... Like I don't go "oh I'm Black, therefore I can't do this" or "I'm too tall, therefore I can't do this" ... or "there's nobody that looks like me or thinks like me in this space, therefore I can't do that." I feel like I can jump into anything and my perspective, if different than others, will only offer me an advantage or an opportunity to learn.

Njinga

Njinga identified five different aspects of herself, consisting of "LoveR of ALL Things, Spiritualist, LeaRNER, Cultural Artist" and "Leader/Teacher" which are "all encompassing to me, because they're allowed to be a little bit more vague". When asked about the most marginalized aspect of identity, Njinga stated

Due to the specific work that I do in terms of West African dance, drum, *capoeira* is Afro-Brazilian expression, all of that in itself is cultural, it's that little link between the cultural artist slash leader slash learner. I'm not saying that there aren't other people that do this, but that look like me...I don't know any other female that has taken these disciplines, so personally and so equally and also is received on a platform internationally, with these traditionally male dominant expressions ... so it's not one, it's all those overlapping little pieces.

When doing *capoeira*, Njinga described "being a learner" as the most salient aspect of self "because it's not so much about me teaching, but learning how to work with you for your best you". Regarding the function or influence of her identity, Njinga highlighted the importance of intention and sharing from her overflow:

I imagine, and reimagine, it to be, whatever the thing is that I need, right, maybe it's joy, maybe it's courage, maybe it's strength, maybe it's the belief of healing, maybe it's patience, whatever it is, maybe it's money, whatever it is, I look at it as – cause I like coffee also – a coffee flowing into the coffee cup, but you know how there's a little saucer underneath. So when the coffee cup is over flowing, it gets caught by the little

saucer. And I have so much joy and so much patience, so much love, so much light, so much positivity, so much hope, so much positivity in expectation of the spirit world, that it's going to happen, that I can give from my overflow. And it does no harm to me to share. And it has this wonderful quality of exponential growth.

Noa

Noa identified seventeen different aspects of himself, consisting of “African American Male, Martial Artist, Capoeirista, Budo, Historical African Martial Arts, Adventurous, Willing to try new things, Nigerian Descent, Jamaican Descent, Spiritual, Family Man, Baptist Christian, Morally Straight, Humanistic, Advocate, Compassionate” and “Open-minded”. When asked about the most marginalized aspect of identity, Noa stated

the adventurous type because of the fact that it kind of just ebbs and flows into the other stuff. Like I actually get a chance to practice more of these things, adventurous could be, you know there could be a lot more to adventurous but you know, I don't actually get the chance to go out and travel. I don't actually get the chance to go out and do things a lot but, the martial arts aspect, I definitely feel that you get to you know, to try out. Like that's the most adventure I would get so.

When doing *capoeira*, Noa described “African” as the most salient aspect of self

because of the fact, because it's an Afro-Brazilian martial art. It's an art that stems from the African Diaspora, so I deeply identify with this because, not necessarily because of the fact that I identify as the African culture that it comes from, but I identify with the African Diasporic Movement.

Regarding the function or influence of his identity, Noa shared

well I mean, it's a very important part. It's like you know, you can't, you cannot refute that you're Black. You cannot to say to anybody “oh I'm not Black” because you know, you are phenotypically Black, you can't actually escape from it. *chuckle* You know, you can't escape from certain phenotypes, it's just right there in plain site.

Now as far as heritage is concerned, you know, like you can say that you are of, like you're family is from some different country, it may not be African. Um, you know, it does add some more variety, some more flavor to you. But nevertheless, so it's like, African American will always prevail because that's like the first thing that you see when you see someone of my complexion, someone of my phenotype. You will definitely see, you will think “oh he's African American” and then you'll see, you can

dive into the two things that make me, you know, that add into make my identity interesting. Um, but yeah, like as far as that, it affects the way that I, you know, how I live my life, how I socialize with certain people.

Ole

Ole identified eight different aspects of himself, consisting of “father, husband, bisexual, designer, student, capoeirista, teacher” and “latino”. To describe his identity diagram, he stated

I feel like two of the, societally two of the biggest identities I have is being a father and a husband. And sort of closely attached to that is, so my sexual identity, being bisexual, because that certainly leads to, for one thing, I’m married to a man, so you know, there’s that, and it brings a perspective to my life and my parenting that’s just different, it comes from a different place different way that we discuss things in my household and the way that I was raised, and different perspectives that I think we are passing on to our kids in that way.

I have, I think more strongly identified as Latino in the last ten years, than I have really since I started capoeira, more strongly identified as Latino than I think I ever did before that. I was raised to be White, basically, to pass and to not be you know, like Spanish wasn’t taught in my household. We weren’t really taught about traditions about Puerto Rico or Spain, um, so, like finding that side of my identity, that cultural tradition, is really, has really lended itself into being a capoeirista, right , being a part of this community that owns it’s cultural tradition.

When asked about the most marginalized aspect of identity, Ole stated “bisexual probably. That identity lives in a, kind of lives in strange place within American society, especially for me”.

When doing *capoeira*, Ole described “being a student, being willing to constantly learn” as the most salient aspect of self. Regarding the function or influence of his identity, Ole stated “I’m not sure about that one, because they’re all, they all play in together”.

Raca

Raca identified four main aspects of himself, consisting of “Reflection, Extrovert, Critical” and “Comedian”, wherein eEach of the four main aspects included specific details. As a part of “Reflection”, Raca included “Nightmare child, Bully, Positive Feedback, Utilitarian, Altrium” and “Importance of experience”. As a part of “Extrovert”, Raca included “Friends,

Helping others, What is family?, Community, Struggle for personal time, Capoeirista” and “fun, dance, laughter”. As a part of “Critical”, Raca included “Societal Pressures, Find hidden intention, Analyze motives, What is worthwhile?” and “Despising misinformation and pretentiousness”. As a part of “Comedian”, Raca included “Relaxed attitude, Nihilism, Not serious, Easing others worries, Conflict internally during professional scenarios” and “Making meta jokes like writing too much in the last bubble when I’m running out of space”.

When asked about the most marginalized aspect of identity, Raca stated “probably comedian...being funny is kind of a rarity”. He shared that “to be critical” is also “not mainstream enough”, wherein “I guess I’ve always felt like that set me apart from *most* people” Raca also posited “not many people really think about it [true reflection]”.

When doing *capoeira*, Raca identified “the critical comedian, a mix of those” as most salient. He added “when I’m teaching, I’d say the extrovert”. Regarding the function or influence of his identity, Raca shared “I wouldn’t necessarily say it’s my role as a teacher being important to me it’s just the fact that I’m doing *capoeira* that’s important to me (gotcha) more so than most things including family”.

Rão

Rão identified five different aspects of himself which he described as “cohesive”, consisting of “Me, *capoeira*, Liberation, Boxing Career” and “Confidence”. Rão identified four additional aspects of himself that he described as “released” including “Past achievements: drum music major, limits, insecurities, and doubts”. When asked about the most marginalized aspect of identity, Rão stated

I would say confidence would be the most marginalized, and least mainstream, least mainstream would inadvertently be the things I thought would be most mainstream, which is me being a college drum major, and the music, the music industry because like I said, I achieved those under not being myself, so I achieved those under a moniker. I

didn't achieve those under the full, fully being myself...I would have been an entirely different person, not saying I would have won or lost or whatever the case is, or would have changed the outcome. But the performance and the expression of the music that I would have done, would have been more authentic, not what everybody else wanted to hear.

When doing *capoeira*, Rão described confidence as the most salient aspect of himself, including the liberative qualities he has experienced:

I'm free now. I am, yeah like *chuckle*, I am not reduced to putting on a mask in my everyday life. I've changed, I'm self-employed, I work for myself, um, yeah, I'm liberated, I'm free, I don't have to succumb to pressures, society's expectations, relationship expectations... self-expression and trial and error, and the confidence of knowing that you're gonna have trial and error, the confidence of knowing that you're imperfect, but you're being the best that you can be, your authentic self. So it's like a self-authentication-type situation.

Regarding the function or influence of his identity, Rão shared

Within *capoeira* I was able to be me. You know, even in boxing, my coach called me NAME, I had a name. But even in *capoeira* you get a name, but you get a name that relates more so to you, versus you know, being behind a mask. You know, in *capoeira* I can take the mask off, I can be myself.

Ser

Ser identified seven different aspects of himself, consisting of "African, Educator, Husband, Worker, brother, supporter" and "friend". When asked about the most marginalized aspect of identity, Ser stated "the least mainstream would probably be a friend, because I think so many people call one another". When doing *capoeira*, Ser described "educator" as the most salient aspect of self. He elaborated that

part of my role, regardless of my rank, my role has been to instruct. So if I learn something, and I know somebody else need it, that's what I need to do, I need to teach that... 'cause even in our class we have a diverse class, we have Anglo, we have Asian ... we have people of European, Indian, Hispanic, African descent in class and so we all come, when we all come in the door, it's the same, no discrimination, anybody could get these hands, it doesn't matter. So yeah, being the educator, is probably the one that is most important while I'm in *capoeira*, in class.

Regarding the function or influence of his identity, Ser noted

the way I look, the color of my skin, some people see it as a threat, and some people see it as, you know, this is who we are. So I change my, I'm almost code switching, depending on the job, because if I want to continue to be an impact on my community, I need to be around to do so. And tying this back into the quilombos, eighty years, at the end of the day, you do what you need to do to survive.

He also stated his intention to set an example and shift the narrative with Black youth:

So I have other young Black males and females and people of different nationalities and cultures, who see me, a Black male, with long hair, who for all intensive purposes, like well-educated, articulate, not a thug, so once they see or hear someone else, "oh all Black people, look at this guy he's a thug." "Okay well let's look at Ser," or "okay well Ser has long hair, I know him, and he's not that way, he's smart, he's articulate, he's nice, he's kind," ... I try to you know, embody, you know just kind of help change the narrative. The young Black like males that look up to me, or that see me, "oh okay, well I could be successful, without having to cut my hair." "I could be successful without having to dress a certain way," ... if it's something that you want to do, don't be limited. You see me as an example, don't be limited by your surroundings, don't be limited by where you're from, don't think that just because what you see on tv is who we are, you can be whoever you want to be.

Sim

Sim identified eight different aspects of himself, consisting of "Puerto Rican, Father, Soo bahk do, student/instructor, *capoeira* student/instructor, brother, engineer, tech," and "son". Sim also noted the relationship with his brother, wherein "I'm always looking out for him" and that "I'm always trying to be there for people and bring the best out of them". In sum, Sim stated "I'm the guy that you know, if they need somebody, I'm here to help them". When asked about the most marginalized aspect of identity, Sim shared that "not a lot of people know about Soo bahk do, like every time I say it it's like, "what? What are you talking about?" When doing *capoeira*, Sim shared that the most salient aspect of his identity "would just depend on what the situation requires". Sim further described the nuances of being both a student and instructor:

when it's class and it's just me, I know I put the student/instructor, but depending on who's in the room, maybe the student identity will come out more, maybe the instructor identity will come out more. You know, I'm always there, to you know, either know that you know, I'm in a good spot where I can really focus on myself, or if I can see somebody really struggling and I'm comfortable with and have experience either, let's say they're losing balance on some of the technique, I lost my balance on that technique many years ago, I haven't mastered it yet, but I know like some of the tricks to kind of improve it, that's when I'll kind of step in and be kind of the instructor role, that takes over.

Regarding the function or influence of his identity, Sim stated that

it's just every day, you know whenever I'm at work, especially like when I have to go to the office... with the kids being at home with their mother, the father side of things in the back of my mind, "hey," you know, "how are the kids doing?" or "do you need any help with anything?"

Sim also discussed his identity as an instructor, highlighting the connection to family:

I can honestly say, that's the role that, it's not my most confident, like I always get hesitant sometimes, but I know it's in my blood. I know that you know, grandfather's a teacher, my father's a teacher, all the people that were there in my bloodline, that have been there to help people to learn and grow and develop. You know being the introvert that I am, you know sometimes I'm like, "do I really want to do this," they did it for me, I'm gonna do it for them, so that's kind of.

Simba

Simba identified eight different aspects of himself, consisting of "Pan-African, Citizen of planet earth, Athletic, Cis-Gender Heterosexual, Big Brother, Son, Scientist, Spiritually Awakened" and "Mastery of Self". When asked about the most marginalized aspect of identity, Simba stated, "being a citizen of planet earth is a more global perspective, as opposed to a nationalist perspective which is more popular in our current times. Being Pan-African means that I am a minority in COUNTRY". Simba shared that he is not yet self-identified as a capoeirista, "but, if I stick with it, then maybe I will become one. Right now, I am an apprentice". Simba added that he experiences a "stronger connection with the African world" which "allows for creative expression and new ideas".

Regarding the function or influence of his identity, Simba shared that “from a global perspective...I have more connections with everybody, we are all earthlings”. He also shared:

in education or curriculum [an African presence] might not be there, but if it is something that I know or have learned outside of the classroom, that increases my confidence in my ability to master the material, knowing about the African presence

Student A

Student A identified four different aspects of herself, consisting of “capoeirista, learner, Biologist” and “partner”. She noted “I don’t feel very dimensional. So, I think that’s the other main identity that competes with me for *capoeira*”. Student A explained “my biology kind of barely overlaps with my *capoeira* circle. In a sense of course I’m kind of interested in like the mechanics and the anatomy and physiology of practicing *capoeira*”. When asked about the most marginalized aspect of identity, Student A stated “maybe biologist. It’s kind of like weird...like I’m pretty nerdy, like I’m one of the awful people who explains like science and biology when nobody asked for it”. Student A attributed her affinity to *capoeira* to her value of learning “cause it’s something that I am always learning, always learning about. So I always am studying biology, studying how to teach, and there are things to do with *capoeira*”.

Regarding the function or influence of her identity, Student A shared I think, in my life, I’m always trying to prove myself in all these ways. Um, like, I’m always trying to being a better teacher. So I draw from *capoeira*, I think about the instructor’s I’ve interacted with – how do they teach, what makes their teaching style so effective? Biology’s always changing, information is always changing, so I’m always having to keep up with that which that forces me to be a constant learner... and then just trying to be a good partner, like... maintain a healthy relationship.

Terra

Terra identified seven different aspects of himself, consisting of “being black in America, making learning fun & being gifted, creativity, movement, music, language” and “masonry”.

Terra stated

I was diagnosed as GT when I was, before I started kindergarten, so Gifted and Talented...So I was like in advanced classes and ...in first grade, part of my GT classes was having me read to students in a higher grade than I was, which was very very very awkward because it's like, you're making us look like we're stupid because you're the smart kid who's reading us a book...as I've gotten older, I didn't even really think anything about it, being gifted...when you're in school, there are opportunities for you, if you are GT. But once you graduate, the world does not give a shit about any of that...Bills, are still the same, you know you gotta go to work. You know, nobody cares about, you know if you are GT

When asked about the most marginalized aspect of identity, Terra stated “being Black in America. All day.” When doing *capoeira*, Terra described “being Black” as the most salient aspect of self “having it relate directly to my culture even though my family isn't from Brazil, but it still relates”. Terra added

It's made me feel like there's still a connection between Black people and something Black people created because, Black people, to be honest with you, we ain't got much left, Mião, that hasn't been taken

Terra also noted the idea of epigenetics and the subsequent impact upon his experience with *capoeira*:

like the trauma that's passed down through generations and that might be why I sing these songs the way I do, or why it feels so good, like the vibrations in my chest. I just feel like that relation to the ancestors allows me to sing like that.

Regarding the function or influence of his identity, Terra shared

being Black has shaped my entire world from how I act, to certain rules of engagement, what I can say to people, what I shouldn't say to certain people, how people react to me, you know, so, that, just first and foremost. there are people who will see me, and they will A: say that I look like a suspect, because I'm always gonna look like a suspect to somebody. Or, they're gonna have their judgements, like I'm not to get into all of the stuff that I've dealt with because anything that you could name that you've seen on tv or heard that's happened to a Black person, outside of me dying. people just see a Black man, who's tall, and loud, and that's it. And that's enough, because in those three things, you know they've already assumed 'that's a loud Black man' and that's pretty much it.

Tiba

Tiba identified six different aspects of herself, consisting of “black woman, professor, wife, learner, daughter” and “capoeirista”. When asked about the most marginalized aspect of

identity, Tiba stated “I’m inclined to say Professor... there are very few Black women who are in physics and even fewer who are professors in the area”. She added that “it’s definitely very isolating”.

When doing *capoeira*, Tiba stated that “luckily none” of her identities are most salient, as “being a wife and a member of my family is great, but I kind of like that none of the others [identities] matter”. On her identity diagram, she separated “capoeirista” from everything else “because I like that *capoeira* is something where I do *capoeira*, my husband doesn’t even like *capoeira* ... and it has nothing to do with my job so I like that it’s separated from everything else”.

Regarding the function or influence of her identity, Tiba shared that

I feel like sometimes I get pulled in quite a few directions because of my identity ... so other Black female professors help me, help to guide me in that way, in telling me it’s okay to tell the department chair that I don’t want to be in charge of Diversity and Inclusion. “No because I have these classes to teach and I have this research to do and you won’t even consider it when I go up for tenure.”

Tiba also shared about her internal conflict in feeling both pride and sadness about her identity:

I kind of have mixed feelings. Normally I would be more cheerful in saying *chuckle* in saying that about presenting my identity and the blend of being a minority with being a professor, it gives me great pride. I should say it still gives me great pride, It's just right in this moment I also feel a sadness about it, that it feels like it’s necessary , to be the – to prove that, “look here are People of Color, doing well! Don’t you accept us now? Don't you like us now?”

Zum

Zum identified three different aspects of himself, consisting of “illusion, intelligence, and ignorance”. When asked which aspect of his identity is most marginalized, Zum stated

All of those can replace the other, and they can all be a plus or a negative, so it’s hard for me to place one above the other. on a daily basis, they all kind of intertwine. It’s like

what we think we know, and sometimes we have to unlearn some of our ignorances and not know, and you know, increase our intelligence.

When asked about the most marginalized aspect of identity, Zum stated

To be honest, they all work, they all like take first place, second place, and third place. So for me it's not like it's a, in no particular order. It's like, we would prefer to be always intelligent, but that's an illusion by itself.

Regarding the function or influence of his identity, Zum shared that “through *capoeira*, I think it's like a reconnection ... for me it was like, “wow, something that's African” and it's something that I never had”. He added that “with *capoeira*, I've been able to embrace a lot more of who I am ... as people from, within the African Diaspora...it was good to find out through *capoeira* a little bit more about self”. Zum also discussed the function of his identity from a historical perspective:

with *capoeira* I've been able to embrace a lot more of who I am, and not the specifics, but it still gave me a general idea to be interested in, you know, as people from, within the African Diaspora, here's different aspects of what we've done and who we are, and how we've come to be American and the conditions that are still happening in Africa. Or you know, why we do the things we do, or don't do and you know, what residue we have from slavery, and what residue we have from the things our parents did or couldn't do.

Post Interview Survey

All interview participants electronically received the link to anonymously participate the post-interview survey. A total of eleven individuals shared about their interview experiences, and ten individuals identified which categories they thought best described *capoeira* within the Microcultural Model.

Interview Experiences

Eleven individuals, or roughly 40.7% of the sample, provided responses about their experiences with the interview. Participants used positive descriptions, such as “it was pleasurable”; “it was refreshing to share my narrative”; “it felt really good for me”; “I like

talking about [*capoeira*] so it was fun and no different than talking about it to people regularly”. The process of sharing was also noted as “therapeutic”; “cathartic because it allowed me to openly express other facets of my identity”; “it felt comfortable and almost casual to share my experience”; “it felt good to contribute”; and because “I got to put meaning to my experience in *capoeira*”. Two individuals noted that this experience “allowed me to reflect” or gain perspective, as one person noted that “I’ve been doing *capoeira* for over 20 years ... and I feel that I’m too modest at times” with the hope of sharing to motivate others and “push them forward”. One participant noted the affirmative quality of sharing their experience and stated, “it was a helpful reminder for focusing on the more implicit benefits and values I find in *capoeira*.” Another participant shared that “It was great to feel like my voice mattered”. Additionally, a participant stated that they felt “a sense of belonging in knowing that other people felt the same ways that I do about [*capoeira*]”.

Theoretical Fit to Microcultural Model

Ten individuals, or roughly 37% of the sample, indicated where they thought *capoeira* fit on the Microcultural Model. Participants could select all categories that applied and provide an explanation as to why they made their selections for self, home, neighborhood, school, workplace, media, day care, social services, laws, political policies, and *cronos*, meaning ‘changes over time’. Each category was identified at least once. Individuals selected a range of 1 - 9 categories, with an average of 3.5 categories and a mode of one and three responses.

Table 18

Responses to Post-Interview Survey

# of Categories	# of respondents
1	2

2	1
3	2
4	0
5	1
6	1
7	1
8	0
9	1

Eight participants, or roughly 29.6% of the total sample identified self, as “I embody *capoeira*, so I’m one with it;” and “*capoeira* is almost like my belief system” or a part of their values. Self was also identified due to “the personal growth that is gained” and because “of the eleven choices, self is the root” wherein “*capoeira* is an individual journey that can exist within the remaining word choices”. Another individual stated that *capoeira* is “a form of self-care in my life” and “contributes toward me being a more well-rounded individual”.

Six individuals, or roughly 22.2% of the total sample identified *cronos* because “*capoeira* has greatly changed over time” and “*capoeira* is versatile ... and has the ability to adapt” which could also lead to “future changes over time”. An individual chose *cronos* because “*capoeira* helped me to see that I was not an isolated individual, but that I was connected to the greater universe”.

Six individuals, or roughly 22.2% of the total sample identified neighborhood because “*capoeira* is a community and without a community there can’t be *capoeira*”. Participants also noted that “it is important for the community to be aware of *capoeira*” and “its presence should be felt in the community, especially among the youth”.

Four individuals, or roughly 14.8% of the total sample identified social services because “there are lots of social benefits from participating in *capoeira*” and again “because *capoeira* is a sense of community” and “a network of support physically and mentally for all who are interested”.

Three individuals or roughly 11.1% of the total sample identified home and school, as “*capoeira* belongs wherever I reside”. Two individuals, or roughly 7.4% of the total sample identified day care and political policies “because I see *capoeira* as tool for community change”. One individual, or roughly 3.7% of the total sample identified media, laws, and workplace and noted that “more exposure to *capoeira* in the media would result in its growth and reach among the community”.

Figure 7

Fit to Theoretical Model

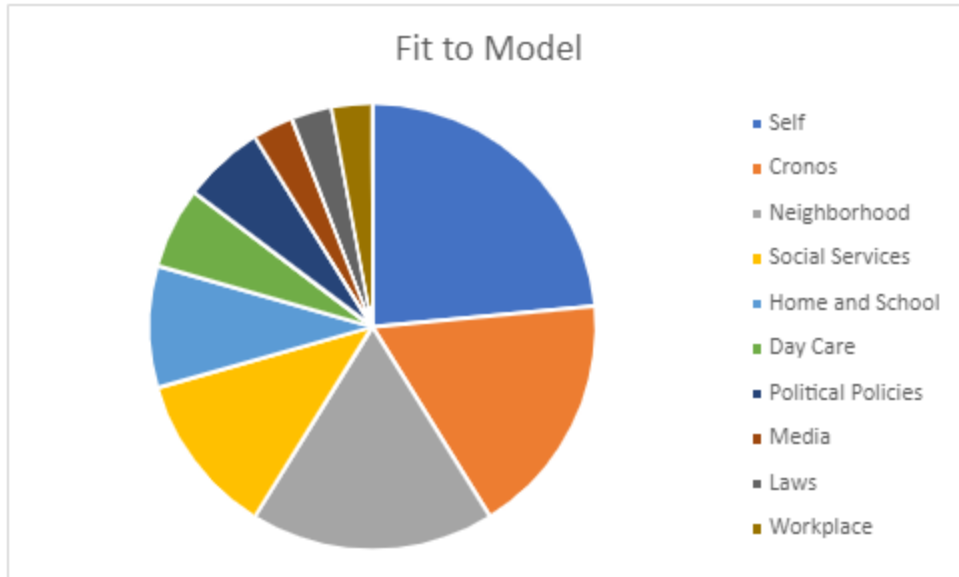


Table 19

Theoretical fit to Microcultural Model

Category	# of responses	% of total sample
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Self	8	29.6
Cronos	6	22.2
Neighborhood	6	22.2
Social Services	4	14.8
Home	3	11.1
School	3	11.1
Day Care	2	7.4
Political Policies	2	7.4
Media	1	3.7
Laws	1	3.7
Workplace	1	3.7

Overall Results

As participants shared many complex ideas, they were categorized by the ‘primary code’ which was the main idea, whereafter additional codes were considered ‘secondary’ or ‘tertiary’. The purpose of including more than one code was to capture the depth of the idea, while still being able to organize the data in a meaningful way. Appendix K illuminates each the codes used, as well as examples. To review, the main categories of the coding manual are 1) philosophy; 2) cultural traditions; 3) pedagogy; 4) healing: interpersonal; 5) healing: self-development; 6) harm; 7) identity; 8) unique aspects of *capoeira* and 9) miscellaneous.

For the purposes of this study, prevalence was determined if a theme was apparent across at least seven different *capoeira* groups or 87.5% of the groups in this sample, as one group consisted of only one individual. The table below includes a list of codes discussed by all eight, or 100% of groups, and seven out of eight, or 87.5% of groups.

Table 20

Prevalence of Results

Total groups	%	Code
Eight	100%	1.0 Philosophy – general
		1.1 Philosophy – Universality, greater connection
		2.7 Cultural traditions - Naming
		2.8 Cultural traditions – Axê/ase
		2.9 Cultural traditions – History/roots
		3.7 Pedagogy – Encouragement/no limits
		3.8 Pedagogy – Leader role/description
		3.9 Pedagogy – Member/students role
		4.1 Healing: Interpersonal - Welcoming
		4.4 Healing: Interpersonal – Family/travel
		4.5 Healing: Interpersonal – knowing each other/connection
		5.5 Healing: Self-development –

Empowerment/liberation

- 5.6 Healing: Self-development - Insight
- 5.7 Healing: Self-development – Healthy coping/better functioning

- 5.10 Healing: Self-development – Physical benefits

- 6.2 Harm – Training challenges

- 7.0 Identity - general

- 7.4 Identity – being a *capoeirista*

- 7.5 Identity – function/influence

Seven 87.5

- 2.1 Cultural traditions – Passing knowledge/intergenerational
- 2.5 Cultural traditions – Ceremony/ritual
- 2.6 Cultural traditions – Music and language
- 2.10 Cultural traditions – *na roda, na vida*
- 3.0 Pedagogy – general
- 3.3 Pedagogy – Start where you can
- 3.4 Pedagogy – Adapt to the individual
- 3.6 Pedagogy – Context/application
- 3.13 Pedagogy – greater landscape of *capoeira*
- 3.15 Pedagogy – consistency/commitment
- 4.2 Healing: Interpersonal – Inclusive community

- 4.6 Healing: Interpersonal – safe space
- 5.11 Healing: Self-development – general growth
- 7.3 Identity – Most important when doing *capoeira*
- 7.6 Identity – congruence
- 9.3 Miscellaneous

Across all groups, the primary codes occurred as follows: pedagogy 24.7%; cultural traditions 17.7%, identity 16.3%, healing: self-development 13.2%, healing: interpersonal 12.2%, harm 5.9%, philosophy 4.1%, miscellaneous 3.0% and unique aspects of *capoeira* 2.9%. Thick, or rich descriptions, are included herein so that a reader can determine to what extent the findings are transferable (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Results will be discussed per domain of the primary code identified and prevalence.

Pedagogy

Sixteen different codes were identified for this domain including: foundation; break it down/build it up; start where you can; adapt to the individual; awareness of surroundings; context/application; encouragement/no limits; leader role/description; member/students role; growth mindset; empowerment; take it or leave it; music; consistency/commitment; and working together. Out of all sixteen codes, three were discussed by all eight groups: leader role (3.8), member role (3.9), and encouragement/no limits (3.7). Additionally, seven codes were discussed by seven out of eight groups: general pedagogy (3.0), start where you can (3.3), adapt to the individual (3.4), context/application (3.6), greater landscape of *capoeira* (3.13), and consistency/commitment (3.15).

Leader role. Regarding the leader’s role, participants discussed a number of subcategories, including the value of students, aspects of support, and the leader’s role as a

student. Do stated, “I think *capoeira* is a poor man’s martial art because everyone is struggling to be that *capoeirista* who travels around the world.” In terms of role, Junior noted: “I have to walk a certain type of way, I have to be this leader, I have to accept it.”

I sat down and talked to Cifu and we would have these long conversations...then I met another Cifu... they were already calling me master, and I was like, “I’m not a Master.” and they were like, “You just haven’t owned the title yet, you just haven’t claimed the title.” ... it’s like, “the way you talk, the way you portray yourself” ... and they’re both Masters for 20, 40, 30, whatever years, you know, actually I think they were both Masters longer than I had been alive you know, and they were both saying, “the stuff that you are thinking about, there are men who have trained for decades who don’t think about those things, they don’t take them to heart, they don’t convey that to their students, and you’re already doing that,” like, “you’re a Master.” (Data)

Raca discussed a student who was dubious about his ability to become a *mestre*:

He [group member] was saying something like “ah you know, whatever, I’m never gonna be a *mestre*” ... And I was just like, “dude, you could be a *mestre*!” Like as far as my understanding of being a *Mestre* goes at this point, it’s just like if you spend a lot of time in your life and you get the point where people just recognize that you are producing good students and you know the history and you like retain that kind of knowledge over the course of your life and you’re good with it, you’re gonna end up being called a *Mestre* someday. It’s not necessarily whether you can do backflips or whether you did ... xyz requirements, it’s more just like what you’re doing and working toward. (Raca)

Data described how he became a leader following an event:

This man, at the time he was 63? ...and he was in better shape than all of us... he came ready to fight actually, ‘cause Mestre just kind of sent him out to us... he teaches in the *favelas*, to this day where the gangs lead, you know, they rule, and they actually have shoot outs with ... the corrupt local police... and so at the end of it, he made an announcement, he said, “okay, this is no longer Estagiario Data, this is Professor Data,” and he handed me a cord, and I was like, “nooooo” and he was like, “yessssss” he was like, “Yesss!!” and I was like, “awe man!” ‘cause I knew that there was even more responsibility being heaped on by this man, and you can’t say no. (Data)

Terra discussed not only the role, but the responsibility that group leaders have:

as a teacher in this art, it is your responsibility to make sure that your students know the context and the historical stuff about *capoeira* because this is what you signed up for. You know, if you want to do an art that’s not thoroughly based in cultural context, go box. You know, there are other options for you, but *capoeira* is not the one for you.

Similarly, Ole noted:

if you have an instructor who's willing to open the group up to the perspectives that the members bring, I think can help, really helps, especially if that instructor I feel has a strong foundation in the roots of *capoeira*...what it is and where it came from, and really understanding that, which is an interesting thing to talk about I think in this time right now, especially in the U.S. right now because of everything that's going on racially. because *capoeira* is a racial tradition that stems from White supremacy *chuckle* and its effects on Black cultures. So, I think there's value in making those connections which can be missed if the instructor doesn't have that sort of foundation in the why behind *capoeira* , which is something that I've found particularly under GROUP LEADER. He has such a personal experience with that, whereas my previous instructor did not.

Mel shared about her group leader:

the leader is also a Black woman. So there's so much, there's so many intricacies ... that comes from that, to be led by someone who is of Color, to be led by someone who is a woman, and to be led by someone who is conscious and aware of her role in everything, it creates culture in a great way as well. (Mel)

As a member of three different groups, Student A noted her observations about group leaders as a whole: "they are able to be so dedicated and sacrifice so much to become *capoeira* instructors, professors, *mestres*, but then still have such a robust life outside of that." She added:

They have a way that they sacrifice to train *capoeira*, the way that they kind of arrange their lives around it, how much of a priority it is...then also the way that they're able to balance what's going on, like leading a group, training students, but then they can balance personal relationships, and having families, and all these other things.

Mel noted:

There's so many people who come to me like, 'you're so lucky, you're so lucky.' I mean I've had people come to me - I don't know why people think I'm gon' teach *capoeira* one day – but, another *Profesor* came to me one day and was like, 'oh you have such a good example, if you want to teach *capoeira* one day, you have a great example,' *chuckle* ... people really do hold her [GROUP LEADER] to a high esteem.

As far as leadership qualities, Simba shared, "he [GROUP LEADER] is really strong physically and mentally, so I don't have to hold back and can strive to reach my reach my highest potential and full capabilities without judgement." Neef noted, "I would say he's definitely a mentor to me but he also feels like an older brother." He added:

an older brother in the sense that like they want the best for you, they're gonna guide you and they're making sure that you're doing the best, but they're not going to hound you

about when you're not doing certain things cause they have faith in you that you're gonna get it done, and so that would be the best way to explain my relationship with him; like if he asked me to do something, nine times out of ten I'm gonna do it, even if it's gonna take time out of my schedule.

Tiba shared, "our leaders are really kind and you can really tell that they love *capoeira* and they try to bring in good *axé*, as they call it, that great positivity." Noa stated, "the fact that this is not her primary source of income... she treats it like more of a side gig and a chance to build the community and to share an art that she loves that is near and dear to her heart as well."

INSTRUCTOR, he gives off a good axe, he gives off a good energy of, "just keep doing what you can, know your limits, and let's see if we can go beyond them a little bit more with," ... for me, singing and playing instruments at the same time. He was like, we've had classes where he's like, "okay, sing this, these songs in a row." He knows that's my weak point but you know, I'm still there, I'm gonna try. And he'll have to show me a number of times before I'll get to where I want to be, but I know I feel safer because of the group, and the energy that we have for each other. (Sim)

Group leaders and group members discussed both negative and positive attributes of 'leading by example'. Game noted the lack of example that he observed, stating, "even teachers weren't really going to all of the events and I guess the students were probably, you know, following that example." Data stated, "don't let your Master's problems become your problems, you're here to learn a thing, and be a better person, and move on. You know, I don't always agree with what my Master does."

loyalty is not blind loyalty, because you're in this class it doesn't mean that if I say, you know, "dislike this person," or "do this," that you're gonna be stupid enough to do it. loyalty is to yourself and to your elders, to those parts of life that's, that's good and real, if, you don't be loyal to be and I'm telling you to do something that's really jacked up, that's kind of, that's just being dumb. (Zum)

An arrogant teacher creates poison in his own group, which creates poison in the community. And so it all comes down to who leads, and to who follows *chuckle* 'cause like, you can choose, "Oh my Mestre's the best and I'm gonna do whatever he wants, I'll do everything like him." 'Cause MESTRE X is also poison, he thinks he is a Master and that's the highest that there is and that everybody should respect him, but failing to realize that respect is earned. You want respect from the community, but you're not part of the community. You want the community to come and kneel at your feet, but you

haven't given them any reason why they should even respect you, let alone kneel at your feet. You don't come to any of the events unless someone invites you because your arrogance is so high that you know like, "I'm not going anywhere I'm not invited."
(Data)

In contrast, Raca stated, "I just try to set an example for how I practice *capoeira* and how I look at it: ...people can kind of take it or leave it. "

to be able to have this environment... treat others how you want to be treated, so that any point in time, on your first day, what if Njinga is mean to you? What if I swept you every single time, what if I put my foot on you every single time? Do you think you'd come back? Did I have a little fun with you? Did I play, did I make you laugh? Did I show you where the danger was, when you did something to me? Was I laughing, was I jovial? Did I help you to find some understanding to some things you were a little confused about? Everybody gets a chance to do that... That's how we show what the expectations are I guess, leading by example. (Njinga)

after learning from MESTRE, I learned that there was a lot that I didn't know, and so I didn't want to lead people down a messed up path if I knew I didn't know some stuff. But ... he forced it on me *chuckle* he said, "there's no going backwards." "No Data, there's no going back." (Data)

he's a very methodical teacher. If you don't have it right... there's no free passes, I'll put it like that. So *chuckle* yeah, he's very, very involved. So a lot of trainers, coaches, whatever, we love to "do as a say not as I do." He's a "do as I do, and do as I say." So his practicality makes his *capoeira* more believable. (Rão)

when the image you see is - 'cause I'm not a thin girl either, like I'm pretty thick, so you see like the same person doing all the moves, you're like, "okay that don't even look like me," you're like, "I would never do that." But then, representation, then that just changes everything. (Mel)

Some individuals shared about the expectations in class:

my first instructor, they don't allow the word 'can't.' So when you feel like, "What the heck are you guys doing? Like I can't do that," they get, they will just sort of just stop the class, and be like, "No! There's no 'can't' here, you just have to try, and then you try until you can do it. You're not allowed to say 'can't' here." they're very clear about that expectation, and so once you kind of get over that, you try everything. (Student A)

he's not one to waste time... let's you make your decisions and he's like, "if that's the path you wanna take, that's the path you wanna take," and it's like, "I'll talk to you about it if you wanna talk," but he's not gonna be the one that's like, "hey hey hey" unless you're doing a movement and you're showing everybody. And he's a critic, he's a very strong critic, so he challenges you, which is a good thing. Because I remember when I

started doing my movements, I was like, “why is he, why??” the ego would be like “*shocked gasping noise*!” and you want to say thank you, because who’s really going to take the time to critique you, unless they want something better of you... [to] help you. So you learn that that is part of that, I consider that love, that care. (Muntu)

when it comes to leading, he’s been a great one. You know, my background was family in the other martial art and you always take care of those that take care of us. And you know, he does the same thing too, I saw it at the last *batizado* we were at, in MIDWESTERN STATE... he was constantly talking with MESTRE, you know, “hey, we’re gonna get breakfast,” “hey can I provide a ride for you,” you know to look after his instructor, and that kind of makes me feel comfort that you know, ‘cause we do the same thing in the Korean martial art, you know, we always look out for our instructor, make sure they have breakfast, lunch, and dinner taken care of, you have things planned for them ...that amount of respect and discipline that he has for his Mestres is...it’s welcoming. (Sim)

Some group leaders discussed goals for their respective groups.

the legacy that you leave behind, making better people, is what I personally strive for. And you know, better people in *capoeira*... they hold on to the skill set, they hold on to the knowledge, the history, but also you know, better people, just in life. (Data)

if I can teach them one thing that day and then tomorrow they come in and remember that same move, then that’s satisfying for me. Or like, even remembering a song, like if they go home singing “*o sim sim o não não*” that’s an accomplishment. (E)

What is my goal? for people to see all the things that they weren’t necessarily looking for. Like for example, you might be coming for fitness, but to know that you’re a leader, you didn’t come to find that out. It’s like “oh, yeah, I guess I am.” “I didn’t know that I was a role model either, I came because there’s a community over there, and I want to get a little closer. I want to know about history because I’m trying to find out some information about Brazil, or about Africa, or this is just part of cultural sense. Like, “oh what are these kids doing flips over here with this lady” and “what’s that about?” You came here for a modern dance class, “oh these kids are really great musicians, what do they do?” my goal, is to create all these connections. You come for different things, but again, to show you that you’re a leader when you walk in the door, you may not be interested *chuckle* but I’ll meet you where you are and try to make those connections. (Njinga)

Participants noted the travel opportunities afforded through their roles within the group. Ica stated, “It’s opened doors, like it has given me an opportunity to travel the world.” Game shared, “it’s given me the opportunity to explore so I’ve learned more about that. That’s definitely I guess a big difference, that I’m often not in a leadership role with many things.”

even as me traveling as a performer, I was still working. Of course I performed it and demonstrated it, but to be able to sit back and to see a ‘feature teacher,’ who you know, like normally Mestres do that, you know. And I’m not, I’m only Profesora... to be able to see that creation, it’s like “oh snap!” “this is cool,” and it’s not just to go to support my teacher... to actually really mold everyone to say, “yes you can,” “you’re doing something,” “come on, give me more! Give me more!” “yes!” that’s what it is. (Njinga)

In addition to the actual leadership role, participants discussed the value that they have for students. Terra shared, “making sure that your students recognize that they are valued and that their presence is so appreciated... that tends to disarm a lot of fears.” Tiba stated, “they appreciate each person and what they bring to the group, regardless of their level.” When participating at an event, Terra’s mestre said, “He’s like, “we are so fortunate to have you here and to have your energy. I know what you went through, and you being here, we needed that.”

Noa noted how welcoming his group leader was:

she was as a very welcoming person, and then to have all these other things, from the names, to just everything else that transpired both interpersonally between each of us as well as people that I have met in *capoeira*, and also the practice... I felt invited, I felt welcome. (Noa)

Data discussed the importance of his students’ progress:

everyone else improving helps me stay in the game longer, and keeps me more motivated to keep others in the game longer and to play more and you know, teach more, so that I can play more. And so, it’s all very selfish *chuckling* I teach so I have other *capoeiristas* to play with.

Group leaders and members discussed ways that higher-ranking individuals play with less-skilled *capoeiristas*:

even now, I’m a Contra Mestre, and like, playing like you know people who you know, might be on their first cordão... I don’t like *jogo* them and try to like dominate or anything...there would be sometimes when I’m like, “oh okay,” “they’re a first *cordão* but I can’t play, you know, too nice of a game or to you know, lax with them.” like “oh okay,” like they keep pushing me to make sure that I have to like, stay on top of my game too...I think those are the things that I think people need to remember, that try to embrace the culture of *capoeira*, and it makes like just the whole journey that much better. (Cava)

My game isn't about destroying my opponent, it's about keeping the conversations... 'cause I could overwhelm whoever, because I have a vast vocabulary that I could overwhelm them, but I want the conversation, so I keep trying to uplift the player and give them a chance to you know, express themselves, so that we can have this beautiful conversation together as we play. You know, as opposed to them being terrified because "oh Contra Mestre Data's gonna drop me." I might, but then again, I might not. (Data)

the fact that this person is a *mestre*, you just assume that they're gonna win, that they're gonna be the victor in the *roda*. And I'm like, you're a beginner, or you've been training for a while, why do you subconsciously just beat yourself out of having the so-called victory in the *roda*? Now if it's an old *mestre*, of course...you're gonna play accordingly. But if it's a young *mestre*, and you have some ability, you'll push what you can, you don't just accept defeat. I mean, the *mestres* that I had, they want you to – you know they'll put you in your place ... – but sometimes it could work out to your advantage, it could be your one win, and then it's done, it's like I could never repeat that or whatever the case is. (Zum)

He's also a bit mysterious ...he plays enough with us ... as to where you're questioning, "is he holding back or not?" He'll do just enough, as to where he'll keep a little of it in his bag. And now, that got exposed when we went to down to SOUTHERN CITY, the Angola group, we met MESTRE's workshop down there, I got to see him play MESTRE C and I got to see him really play... watching him really unfold out of that bag, I'm like, "yeah, that's my instructor!" 'cause everybody's looking like "whoa!" you know, we're not *angoleiros*, and so we have our own style. And he asked MESTRE C, before they went into the *roda*, "how would you like to play, *angola*, *regional*?" But MESTRE C said, "play your game," and I'm up there and I'm like "wow," and I'm seeing everything that he's teaching, that he has taught us and a whole lot more. And I'm just in amazement, and watch. (Rão)

He would tell us our stories, he would beat us up, put lumps on people's head, drop us hard, taught us stuff that was, disproportionate in response. Like, somebody would throw a *bençao* and he was like, *armada pulada*, and you're like, "but they only threw a *bençao*" and he's like, "*armada pulada!*" and I would throw it and he was like, "*Pula Data! Pula! Pula!*" "higher, higher! Jump, jump!" ...and then, I remember, he had us doing – there was like this little three-foot wall in the academy, and it was like a divider from one side to another. And he was like, "everybody get up there." We're all looking confused, like, "why are we up here?" and he said, "*Pula a bananeira*," and we're like, "*Pula a bananeira!?*" *both laughing*...he was like, "*PULA! PULA!*" And everybody's looking at each other, going *eyebrows raised, eyes darting back and forth* and we all jumped, and landed, you know, not everybody but we all landed, and he was like, "ahh... good," (Data)

Support. Participants discussed the importance of support and the group leader's role.

Junior stated, "If we have new members or new people come into to class to try it out, I may

support.” He added, “when we get the opportunities to like go to schools and such...I’m always there supporting.” Junior also shared that his group leader has stated, “I’m just all about being in this space and holding this space.” Njinga stated, “just being able to think about, from the perspective of, ‘this is not easy for me’ that student perspective, and just help them find that healthy struggle toward success, or whatever the overall goal is.” Ser noted, “I was looking at my phone to read a text that someone sent me a couple days ago. And basically what it said was, they were very appreciative of how I’ve been a support in their life.” Ica stated, “he [*capoeira* student] called me and we just talked for an hour, just so that he knew that I was there for him. Just being there for them is something that’s important.” Similarly, Njinga noted, “if I call [elders, formerly active group leaders] for any advice, they’re definitely pretty much there, and they’re part of my resources for everything.”

I give students this fun activity that they can express themselves through and then I also make time in my classes to have conversations, to talk about their studies, or encourage them and we talk about ways to manage anxiety. (Mandinga)

I can’t save everybody, but it I’m able to, if I’m able to help someone else, going through whatever they’re going through, through movement, through family, through showing them love, that’s again, family and building the community. (Ser)

When I took the mantel over... I had the purpose that I was gonna be like a big brother and let’s say, ‘cause I dealt with a lot of students in college; if they needed some food, if they needed help with you know when they got sick it was like ‘hey give me a call,’ if they needed transportation somewhere, people talked... we just have those conversations to deal with how we expected to be treated, how we expected to treat others around certain circumstances. (Muntu)

From the group member perspective, Student A shared, “I was always so amazed, again by like how accepting and open and supportive, that they [group leaders] can be to everybody.”

she’s always, she’s always very supportive of everybody, she’s always checking in on how everybody’s doing, she’s always the one who instigates those community building, she’s really the person, she’s the go-to person when it comes to building that community. I wouldn’t expect other people to do it, like I feel like she’s the one person who brings everybody together. (Noa)

he preemptively sets up these spaces, inside and outside of *capoeira*, whether it's extra training, or it's extra guidance. Like he has this thing called 'NAME' to help like, 'cause men of color at our school fail out at ridiculously high rates. So he set up a space for men of all colors to just come and talk about, you know, things that might be bothering them, or you know, whatever, and genuinely, most of them end up coming to *capoeira*. So it's like this, there's a lot of cross over in terms of work that makes it, that makes the bulk of it so much more rich. (Neef)

One way that group leaders demonstrated their support was through encouragement of students. Mandinga shared, "It will come with time, so I try to be as encouraging as possible." Muntu stated, "Benefits are that...it forms camaraderie, and I think I've hit on that, to the point where I'm pushing other people and I'm being pushed, encouraging other people to move forward." Ica noted, "when they're discouraged and show them, you know, when they get frustrated, like it took me two years to be able to do a handstand." Curtis stated, "just constantly reminding like, "remember when it was really difficult to like crouch down and to like, you know, *resistencia* or *cocarinha* or something, just really reiterating the progress as often as possible." Terra noted: "He [instructor]'d be like, you know, just keep working, you're doing fine.' You know, 'every time I see you you're getting better' so for me that was enough to, to keep going."

to put a student at ease, in my opinion, a good teacher can – just like in any school environment, an educational environment – a good teacher's gonna find a way for a student to feel comfortable in the environment, invited. If a student comes in, let's say, is overweight, "oh I can't do *capoeira* 'cause I can't do the flips," it's like, "it's not about the flips. Let me see you do your *ginga*," now that's cool, so you adapt the class in the time to make people comfortable. So that person that's overweight, they can still *ginga*, they can do *bençao*, and with some time, the more comfortable they get, the more they can you know, do different things with their body. (Zum)

Before corona hit, I had a non-verbal Autistic baby come in, oh my heart, he came in and some of the like the teaching and correction was, it's basically, "Okay stand up. Okay kick with this foot, kick with this foot, okay switch." Um, and then go play. La la la, let's play. And then it's more of a play time, it's more of a, let's, let's keep you focused and like little by little, as a matter of fact his mom sent me a video of him, maybe a month or so ago, doing an *aú cortado*, where it's like an *aú*, but one arm goes to the ground, and the forearm of the other hand as with an *aú*. (Ser)

most of my students, after they leave, they say they always hear my voice *chuckling* especially when they're in like a difficult situation. You know, 'cause I'm always giving my students that "yes you can, yes you can," and "get your ass up," "do it one more time," "again," and they you know, they can't, they say they always hear my voice, "there's no failure," "there's no can't" *chuckle* you know, "you only fail when you give up" and so it'll push them through. (Data)

I'm going to ask you to stretch a little bit beyond that space, but I'm not asking to hurt you. I'm asking to empower you, I'm asking to illuminate you. I'm asking you to reflect the light that you see. So that can be a deflection, where you're sending it to someone else, 'cause that's necessary at times too, or you're reflecting it because maybe I need some help too. And I'm going to do the best that I can, because Njinga knows that that's important, and even though I'm doing the best for me and that makes her feel good and she feels glory and joy and all the things that make you feel good as well, because I'm successful, that's the reflection. (Njinga)

Another way that group leader's demonstrated support was through patience. Do stated, "If you don't have patience, you're literally just gonna give up." Njinga noted, "of course, as age has come upon us, some things *chuckle* we have to be patient with." Tiba shared, "Our instructors will teach us different levels of new movements, for example, and they exhibit patience with us while we're learning routines." Mandinga noted, "I don't get upset and I don't say 'okay you guys aren't doing it right, let's just forget it today. I try to just be very patient with it.'" Rão described his group leader as "patient, but also wise."

a lot of people who do *capoeira*, they think when people teach *capoeira*, that they literally are born to do flips and tricks, like we're just naturally – but no, it takes a lot of practice, a lot of patience with any type of martial arts or any type of thing that you wanna do in life, you gotta have so much patience. (Do)

An additional aspect of being a group leader was guidance. Game stated, "if I'm going to a teacher, I'd like to get feedback, and you know, something that I wouldn't be able to get on my own, just guidance." Junior noted, "I was like, "okay, this means something right now, I'm meant to like guide, I'm meant to cheer... I can try to be like "yo let me try to express it and offer it [guidance]."

his role to me is, he's the teacher, he's a guide... a master guide *chuckle* and by master, he's knowledgeable, he's experienced in the *chuckle*, in the highs and the lows of *capoeira*. And so his role is to facilitate, to guide other people to develop while he's still sharing the art. (Muntu)

It's twice as good to have him as a *capoeira* teacher, because ... he's in the student education department so he offers guidance in that space as well to students ... to fix up their grades or to find balance in life outside of [GRADUATE] school, get their schedules together, and et cetera. And as a matter of fact, like he was the person that I sought last semester, and I mean, this had nothing to do with *capoeira* but I honored my exams this year which means I scored over a 90 on all my medical exams this year ... and I emailed him afterwards [saying] 'thank you so much' because his guidance inside and outside of *capoeira*, is massive. (Neef)

he's also become more of a nurturing mentor, like I'd say when I moved to MIDWESTERN CITY, definitely like I went from being like a phone call away from being able to train with people I knew and having like a consistent group to train with, to moving to a new city, don't really know anyone here, everyone kind of like poo-pooed my *capoeira* ... I didn't receive any kind of positive affirmation about myself when I moved here, and I just went through like a couple years of my confidence in my own *capoeira* like really getting eroded away ... GROUP LEADER calls it like picking me up by the scruff of my neck *chuckle* and kind of pushing me towards the *capoeirista* that I can be. And so he's kind of, he, our leader has softened up and become ... more of a nurturing role, rather than the sort of 'hard knock' role that he started out in. (Brandon)

I will be there for advice, you know, like stuff like that, or like or, yeah pretty much just that, just advice, just an advisory position then, because at that point you are adult in *capoeira*. And then at that point you keep going out and you keep learning through experience. (Data)

my role is to help the guidance of it [healing] ... – to create opportunity for recovery, healthy recovery, supportive recovery, give a good pace to recovery, because sometimes we drag our feet towards recovery. It's 'time heals all wounds' and that wound [can] be physical, or psychological, and so forth, it heals it. (Njinga)

In contrast, Raca stated his preference not to share advice:

I'm not on board with people looking to me for advice unless they want to. And I also don't necessarily care if they take it. *chuckle* Like I've tried giving like my good friends advice for a long time in my life and I'm just at the point – you know, people don't take advice sometimes, they just don't care. I don't give unwarranted advice very often, especially in the context of *capoeira*, everybody's got such a different experiences and background that they're coming from and you know, who am I to just be like, "you know what you gotta do..."

Within the role of being a group leader, individuals also discussed the importance of learning and continuing to be a student. Raca stated, “MESTRE very often say that they’re still students, it’s like, very much harped on.” Mandinga shared, “I went through the class, some of the stuff that they were doing, while it was very basic, I was getting pushed, so it was difficult for me.” Data noted, “there are times where I just want to play, I just want to be the student, I want to not be the one that everybody looks to for the answers, you know, I just want to be another *capoeirista*.”

I’m learning all the time, I learn with my students. I show them that I’m working on things too, I show them that there are things that are challenging for me. I went through all the progressions. Like reminding them that it’s okay to be working on things, it’s okay to be making progress. to be able to kick up from a squat to a handstand, it took me two years so they understand that it’s not just them that’s working on things. (Ica)
I expose not only the students’ vulnerability, but I expose my own. When I’m learning a new song, I say “hey guys here’s my new song.” I posted it on the wall, here’s the chorus. I’m going to go through it, I’ll tell you what the song’s about, and I’m working on it. I heard it and you know some of it’s kind of catchy, but I’m working on it, help me. (Njinga)

It makes me a better teacher because if I don’t know the answer, I’ll tell you I don’t know and then I will go find the answer and bring it back to you. So it makes me work too, it’s not just a one-sided type of situation. (Terra)

And I just keep leading and then allow other people to become leaders, which is how they become leaders, you know like, “you gotta do it like this,” like “no no no, let that person speak and maybe they can say something to the new guy that’s having a very doubtful day in a way that I can’t say it,” because they’re closer on the bottom of the totem pole. Like, “yeah, yesterday was real hard day, today is easier,” “Oh this is easy?” “yeah, trust me, you’ll get there” you know. *chuckle* (Data)

Member role. Participants discussed expectations of group members, ways that they contribute to the group, and the group member’s role as a leader. Ica noted differences in communication with group members: “The ones who come take a couple weeks of classes and then disappear are the ones who don’t communicate.” She added:

My expectation is for them to show up and they, my expectations for them is like my group communicates with me. So if I have a student that’s not there, I know why

because they communicate with me, the ones who stay are the ones who tell me why they're not there. (Ica)

Ser noted the influence of group members upon their respective groups:

I don't know why I'm such a big time person, I don't like to be late. Be respectful, understand, understand what *capoeira* is, understand your role in this, not as in 'know your role jabroni' but as in understand that what you do and don't do impacts the group. (Ser)

Participants discussed expectations for various levels within their groups:

I'm not fluent in Portuguese, so I need to see the *capoeira* movement performed before I can execute on them. However, my comprehension of Portuguese improved over the semester as I continued to practice *capoeira*, so I could execute on some Portuguese instructions without the movement having to be demonstrated. (Simba)

For dark green... it is more refined than when they first started. And then when you get to green-yellow, at that point for me, you should be able to play *berimbau*, you should be able to lead a song or two, you have to be able to play all instruments, and you're sort of used as an example to beginner students. Can you play people who are more inexperienced in such a way that you don't shut them down. (Greg)

Each person was responsible and accountable for your own growth, especially in this stage, as my rank – well 1: I'm supposed to be like traveling, getting more experiences in the greater *capoeira* world and starting to come up with my own school eventually and like starting to teach. And basically kind of treated me like a mama bird where I got kicked from the nest, and if I flew, I flew, and if not, the worms would eat well *both chuckling*. (Brandon)

Ser also discussed components that participants needed to know to pass their next ranking tests:

Part of our rank test is an essay, so it's not just movement ...it's not just you know, playing the *berimbau* or playing an instrument, but we also have to know the history, you know we have to research something. So we have to do like an essay on a Mestre, or, what's the history of the cord system, or ... how was *capoeira* in Brazil, you know, what does that look like, how was that in the past, what were some of the challenges they had to experience, so it's kind of a robust curriculum of movement, music, and education.

Individuals discussed the importance of offering support to the group. For example, Ole stated, "that the expectation is pretty much just that you know, we are all involved to the strengths we have, and working on what we're not as strong as." Simba stated that in his role, it's important "to participate and try everything." Junior noted, "if we have like shows or things that's coming

up, presentations, I'll make myself available." Mel shared, "to be a member of this group is to be there." Njinga stated, Often there is a senior student and senior student just means it's not your first day – who walks over to that doorway, and they see the kid, they see the adult come one 'hey how you doing? Welcome.'"

I would see GROUP MEMBER on certain days at school and I'm like, "hey I can't come this day, you need to teach this day," and I would sometimes tell him, like "okay I want you to teach this, and then you can teach music – whatever you want." (Do)

I think to be supportive because *capoeira*'s hard, and then when you're new and people are doing, you know, cartwheels and flips and on your first day your like, "no way!" So recognizing that ability is in everybody and just sort of helping people see that. that's kind of how I see my role, is to try to prevent people from getting too discouraged. (Student A)

I need to be there for the greater good of my group, to support my *Professora* and to be there for the ones who love *capoeira*. So I was there, and I was tired and irritable at the end of the day *chuckle* but we were there... so that what it means to be a member, is to be there, and be active, in your best capacity you know, 'cause everyone gives in their own way. (Mel)

We'll be like, "aw man, you remember when we first started doing these, and everybody was on the floor struggling," you know I'm like "ah my knees!" "my back still hurts!" I was like, "I had nightmares," and so they learn the back story to everybody else, and then they're like, "oh, okay, so it's not just me"... "and this is supposed to be this way, and at some point, I will get better." (Data)

If possible trying to find someone maybe they relate to more, so it's not just like "Oh I've seen the teacher do it but I haven't seen anyone else do it, I don't know if it's possible" but having like another student that they feel more comfortable with or more related to in terms of skill level and be like, "let's see how theirs looks". Okay, it may not be perfect but see how they've made this progress and do it, and it's achievable I promise. (Curtis)

Some of those same students, you know, after they train for a while, and they see beginners that come in, it's like, "wow." So they become like a strengthening body to the new students, like "hey" you know "five months ago I was right where you are." "I couldn't do this, and I couldn't do that" and I think that comfort level is a plus, for newer students. Because usually newer students, or anybody, when they look at what they normally see in *capoeira* with the flips and everything, that's just a deterrent. (Zum)

When we have new students [I] like try to kind of like get them into the roda in a way that's not terrifying, even sort of entering the roda as a new person is kind of tricky, to like, okay can you guys let us in now. (Student A)

In addition to supporting the group, participants discussed the group member's role as a leader. Tiba shared, "no one was ranked at the instructor level, so no one really knew that much but what we did know we kind of taught one another." Game noted, "I'm still teaching at a level, I'm not necessarily someone who's, you know, in a leadership role per se, with that." Curtis shared that the hopes to build his group "to the point where people are teachers themselves." Student A stated, "I'm one of the more experienced students, so then I try to support him as an instructor, by helping like lead the class, teach the class, um, help others but always of course with his permission." Njinga shared, "everybody gets to be a teacher... because they have expertise also." She added, "to develop the patience and also allow the opportunity when it's their turn to lead, that you are patient and learn their way as well, it's just another way, it may not be wrong, just different." Neef stated, "the upside is like, I become stronger in the things that I've already learned because I end up having to teach those. So I go over the things that I've already learned and that can only make it better." Ser provided the example, "One of the guys come up to me and say, 'hey I learned this song, is it okay if I teach it?' 'what!?! Of course it is!' *chuckle* 'when you ready?'"

I always try to encourage, no matter where they are, to also teach, to also try and take ownership of that movement or whatever they understand to help someone else grow and to learn... my expectations of all my group members are to, to be leaders (Mandinga)

with like GROUP MEMBER, he's like, my best friend, so I knew like whatever he was gonna do, like, I wasn't worried about that. And I always had trust in GROUP MEMBER because he was going to school to be a music instructor *chuckle* so I was just like, "I'll let you do whatever you want, like you know more than me." (Do)

somebody who is better at music can help the other student who is struggling with music, and that will encourage that student. then the person who is better at movement, I'll have them help the person who is better at music and that encourages them. (Ica)

I have one boy who gets so angry with himself if he can't it perfect the first time, like, "look, you know a lot more than you think you do. You've been training the longest with

me than any of the kids and I need you to go teach him to do this.” I’ll have him go do that and then he’s just all happy afterwards. Like he pays attention better, and it works for adults too. (Ica)

you know what’s crazy too, I’m like rejecting the stuff [being a leader] so hard, but it’s already happening oh my god. Not only with the kids on our group, but before the pandemic, we traveled, we were out there like, SOUTH CENTRAL STATE, EAST COAST STATE, everywhere, ANOTHER EAST COAST STATE, and um, little girls would come to me. And I’m like, “oh, oh lordy,” and of course I’m not gonna deny them in front of their face, but on the inside! I’m like, “ahh!” *chuckle* “no!” but it is me. (Mel)

while I am the leader of the group in terms of years, I expect my older students to not only work with students that are at their same level that have been training for some time, but I also expect them to work with the younger students, to help them develop. (Mandinga)

I’ll be the first one to tell you I’m not a Master, I’ll be the first one to tell you that, although I’ve been teaching. I have a background in physical education and I’m a personal trainer, so I have a background in health and fitness, but I also recognize the value of having someone else teach. One: that person get’s a clearer understanding of, “okay yes, my body knows how to do the movement, but how can I explain that to another person.” And then once they become Professors, kind of like what Contra Mestre was doing for me, is now they actually have that confidence, they have that, we don’t wait until you get to that level for us to say, “okay now you need to learn xyz,” we’re preparing you so once you take on this role, you’re there. (Ser)

The studio-owner walks in... this little three-year-old runs across the room, “hello! These are my friends,” and it was just “these are my friends” three-years-old... so you got that ability to say, to know that you are responsible for the next person, he didn’t know that she knew all of us, because he just started, he just got there. But he knew in the time that he was there, he had never seen her, and he was like, “Oh now is my opportunity, I get to be a leader...so those type of beautiful opportunities are like, “yep, I’m gonna go to class. Yep, I’m going. Yep, I’m going to the event.” *chuckle* (Njinga)

Participants discussed the additional responsibilities that group members gain over time.

it got to the point where I was basically leading the only two classes per week that were happening...I kind of started teaching just because there was nobody else to keep the group going in CURRENT EAST COAST CITY and I didn’t want to be in CURRENT EAST COAST CITY and there not be *capoeira*. And I guess, that roll continued to get more and more active until I finally took over the leadership position entirely of the local group because that guy was ejected from our group for bad behavior. (Raca)

I will also have the ones who are higher ranking, like they are not the Professors, the Professores yet, but they are higher ranking. And depending how big the class is, like if

it's a really large class, I'll have them break off into groups, and I'd be, "okay this is what I want you to work on, this is *vengativa*, I want you to practice those, and *mea lua* and another person maybe do a *cocarinha*. I want you to teach that to this group, go." "and I want you to teach that to this group and go." (Ser)

I thought that I could leave my academy in good hands, or what I thought was good hands, and I was like, "basically you just keep doing what I've been doing," "and then you can't mess it up." Well apparently you can *chuckle* because I had left, I left three times...the person I left in charge, just wasn't doing his job. And so I ended up coming back, just to make sure that our headquarters remained, I fixed the stuff, did some more training to that person so that hopefully it got better, you know, and then I was like, "okay I gotta leave now," and then I had left and went to MIDWEST CITY, because I had started a group in MIDWEST CITY, and I wanted to like you know, grow that group. But then that same person, it's just a personality trait, that I've come to conclude, that you know, they aren't used to having absolute control over stuff, they've always had someone over them. So you know, even with me still being a phone call away, they wouldn't use all the tools because they were too busy, they were in their ego state where they were trying to prove to me that they can do it on their own, when that's not what I was asking for. Like none of us stand on our own, you know, you're not a failure because you ask for your help, you're actually more successful because you asked for help because you got the help. You know, but if you sit there and try to figure, like "Oh I can do it on my own, I don't need to call," everything's burning down around you, then what do you do. (Data)

General pedagogy. Participants discussed general ways of teaching, including their own style or preferences and ways that they were taught. Common aspects of pedagogy included starting where you can, adapting to the individual, and an emphasis on the context of a movement. Zum discussed general aspects of teaching *capoeira* within the United States as compared to Brazil:

the teaching part, it's not politics, it gives folks an opportunity to explain and sometimes clarify some things... there are some groups that really try to make it seem like...this style is this, or this is more traditional, or this, that and the other, but some of those same people who push that agenda, like for example, when we were training with MESTRE B, there's a certain teaching style that a lot of *mestres* do in the United States, and it's not like that in Brazil. It's a different mind set, it's a different teaching, it's a different training, it's not, I guess it's not customer-based. I guess everywhere outside of Brazil it's more customer-based, so it's almost altered to please the customer. (Zum)

Muntu shared that he "enjoyed the instruction, I found it very rewarding... the care to detail from the instructor, from the Contra Mestre." A few participants discussed their experiences when working with children.

It gets me excited... to see the progress that people make right. I really didn't think that I would see, or really like, enjoy watching that, cause they'll come in knowing nothing and then in about a couple weeks, they're over here doing cartwheels, handstands, they're learning to *ginga* correctly, stuff like that. They're walking out of class singing "*o sim sim, o não não.*" Yeah, like actually teaching them, like watching them in classes is always a good thing for me. (E)

A lot of kids these days, people try to automatically label them as not being able to pay attention as well, but also kids still, just like anybody, it's human nature to want to be challenged, your mind wants to be stimulated... being the youngest, like it was always a challenge, because now I'm having to figure out ways to be able to try to get them, or I could handle myself while playing somebody who's bigger and stronger than me. (Cava)

In a lot of groups ... usually they'll have a separate class for kids. We don't have a separate class for kids so when they're old enough to actually start doing movement, we bring them in, right with us. So what happens, those same kids, when they play against kids their age, they're playing on a more mature level. They still don't understand the movement as much, but they're so used to playing with adults, when they're playing with other kids, kids are just normally out there having fun, they don't know why they're kicking but they're kicking and they're doing it... we don't, we don't applaud them just because they "this is fantastic," or we'll stop and say, "why didn't you kick," or "why didn't you do this," and they're looking like, "ohhhh yeah" (Zum)

Raca noted a lesson that he learned about teaching:

Some people might [lecture], but I try to follow our Mestre's advice and when I realize when I'm like explaining something for too long, or that I'm like showing things too often, which makes people stop and just watch rather than like actually participating in a meaningful way. I try to stay very mindful of that. And I think I've gotten a lot better, especially in the last couple of years. (Raca)

Start where you can. Participants noted the importance of students starting where they can. Mandinga shared, "You don't have to do everything that the class is doing, go at your own pace." Game stated, "whenever I'm teaching, I want to make sure that everybody, that they can get something from it." Njinga noted, "you can scaffold a lesson to get to a greater goal. So in that you gain other strength and flexibility, and people are sometimes surprised that they can do that, what they thought they could not do prior."

So the big goal is to make sure that each person gets something out of it. Um, we don't separate the class by super novice to higher level, age, we don't do that, we train all

together. So you may have a six-year-old in a group of adults. So what is it that each person needs to learn? And it's not just movements. (Ser)

I've been in class several times where it's like someone's first day and someone who has been there a number of years, and my goal is to make sure that everyone has something that they can work on, and isn't just necessarily teaching... the person may need experience, but making sure that everyone's involved and, you know, engaged. (Game)

Give me what you got, you know. If you can move, move, if you can't, you know, do what you can, just be the best you can, I think 'cause you know, have fun, 'cause I think when people are having fun, playing and having fun, it makes the experience better. (Ser)

Participants also mentioned that goals are not immediate, rather future oriented. Terra shared, "there are so many subtle things in all of those movements, that you can't just go from zero to one hundred." Student A noted, "just reminding everybody that even though it looks hard when the instructor's doing all these really crazy things, um, like that's not the goal for today." Curtis stated, "I basically try giving them, one of the things that I like to do like with regards to like *floeriros*, I'll show them like the final end result, like this is what you are trying to accomplish." Ica shared, "I give them a challenge and I know it's not something most of them can do yet, but I give them something to work toward."

A big thing that I kind of constantly find that balance of, and kind of constantly reiterate like, I'm showing you this not because you're supposed to get it today, but because I want you to have this because I want you to know that, "here's what it could be" and building that comfortability without just completely being like, "That's impossible for me to do, I can't do this," (Curtis)

If you can't necessarily do a move in the first class, you'll have an idea, hopefully you'll have something you can take back home to work on to at least take you to the next step so you're at least a step further than when you started (Game)

When I see people get frustrated with something, I think I'm like, "let's just back burner it. Just remember it doesn't matter if you can or can't do it yet, or if you ever figure out how to do it. It's just like you do your best, you get better at *capoeira* eventually. (Raca)

Adapt to the individual. Additionally, *capoeiristas* discussed aspects of adaption, including the way that they address a student and nature of classes or events. Student A shared,

“I’m always so fascinated by their [group leader’s] abilities to respond to each individual person and develop a unique relationship.”

it’s also interesting because if you tell an adult to tie their shoe, they might have a few different ways to do it. And so, by reducing the amount of specific instruction that you give, you can like find what somebody’s abilities already are. They can kind of bring their own thing to it – they might already know how to do something. I just told people like, can you do a cartwheel? And some just do it, some people might be incredible gymnasts and they do the most amazing things. Some people are like, “I haven’t since I was a kid” but they still can be on their hands a little bit. (Zum)

As a teacher I have to find that, so I’ll push and prod. You know, people who are really arrogant, I’ll break down their arrogance, like, “oh you’re nobody, you’re weak,” or whatever, but some people who need encouragement, you know, I’ll pull them up. You know, whatever a student needs, I try to find and use as a teaching tool. (Data)

When teaching specific movements, group leaders discussed the ways that they addressed movement with their students. Njinga shared, “some people need to be shown by example, that’s the physical aspect. Some people need to have the opportunity to create that learning opportunity, to create that example.”

It depends, it really depends on the person and that’s really just part of teaching as well, um knowing your audience. So, I have, I have some students where I can be really clear, really clear and short, “flex your foot,” “do this, do that,” “this is not right,” and they can take that. I have other students where I have to kind of finesse it, “okay that’s good, but next time you do it, flex your foot.” Or “what would be, when you’re throwing a mea lua, what part of your foot hits a person. Okay, well let me see that happen.” And if I need to sit there, you know, “okay hit me with it. Hit me with the mea lua, don’t play with it, hit me with a mea lua for real, or a martelo.” And so I, I’ll kind of tweak it that way. (Data)

With the little bitties, obviously we have like kids, and I don’t know if, maybe I’m kind of rough on kids too *chuckle*. Um, but I think that I’ll just say, “okay that’s good,” and just try to have them go through the movement. and just you know, if they’re good enough - ‘cause I want them to still enjoy it – if it’s good enough, like it should be, I’ll let ‘em make it. Sometimes I’ll say, “okay, well let’s play, and I want you to do this movement. And if you do it right, it’s gonna be effective. If it’s not done right, it’s not going to be effective,” (mm) and kind of that exploration. (Ser)

Group leaders and members described many ways of doing a movement. Game stated, “There’s not really like a ‘set’ way to do anything.” He added, “I can’t judge anyone’s ability to

do something, or like whether it's right or wrong necessarily because of how it looks and how it looks to me." Junior shared, "I try to create different ways.... I know that there's a lot of children in the next generation are walking differently because of that [approaching with different angles]." Curtis noted, "like 'this is the *one* way to do things' and just being like, 'I want you to 'just be your best self' and contribute." Zum stated, "the interesting thing is, you're trying to movement A, and incorrectly do it, and wind up doing movement B. It's like, 'wow! I thought I was doing this, but I wind up doing this.'"

If someone does something that's "incorrect," and I'm using my little quotations, that's because of now we have a teaching regimen of "this is what *ginga* looks like." Even though it's not going to be exactly replicated from person to person. But you have the style of, or the essence of. (Njinga)

Having a teacher that was like very absolute, I try to be on the opposite end of the spectrum. So I try to, I'm working again on this myself, and allowing for creativity and you know, it's not necessarily wrong, it's just maybe, not even what the best option would be, what could work at the time. (Game)

For me being a leader, you know, "these are your blocks, you build your own house," you know, "so this is how to do a kick correctly, but don't do it the way that I do it, do it the way that works for your body." So it's more about, it's more to teach people that they are learning for themselves, to improve themselves, instead of them learning because I want them to be really bad ass, or be better. (Data)

If I notice that somebody is getting discouraged, I just like, remind them that we're in a class setting and that everybody's making mistakes constantly, including me, just – there's no right way to do anything, right - and every time you do something 'right' in *capoeira*, it might be slightly different ways, different situations. (Raca)

Game further noted, "I've had teachers who have been like that [you should do it this way] and you know, upon further evaluation I realized that's not the best way to go; it can stifle the sweetening of creativity." Curtis concluded, "you can't do this wrong, you can only do this more right."

Participants also shared specific examples of ways that they made adaptations in the setting, for a particular group or person that they were teaching, and general approach to training.

we were training in parks, and like a COMMUNITY-BASED gym, and in like a basically an abandoned vacant like attic above a bar once. I think basically wherever our teacher could find a place that was free, or that he like knew somebody that could help him out or whatever, we would train there. So, most of the time I was learning it was not in like an academy setting. It resembled one so he was still teaching in that way but the walls were changing. It was a lot of the time in the park. (Raca)

We had a little girl, who insisted to come in the *capoeira* class, *insisted*, I tell you her mother must have been either a pushover or just as crazy as I was... Her arm was broken, and she's a little kid. Like not a tiny teeny tot, but a small person. So anyone falling on you could be a problem... you have value when people can modify and people can make you still feel like you have twenty arms and your feet became your hands and your hands became your feet and you're able to have this communication and invert your problems and your frowns to a smile. It's magical. (Njinga)

We went to a school once where all of the students were special needs, every student was special needs... we're seeing all kinds of physical deficiencies, and probably out of thirty students, maybe 12-15 want to do the movement or actually try the movement, and other students just sat on the side, but they participated in the music. So they were learning the movements...we showed them like some basic basic things, and they did the best that they could...but Cava and one of the other instructors, after we showed them a few basic movements, they played a little *capoeira* together, right. And after that they invited the students who they were showing the movements to, to join into the little small *roda*. These kids had tried to mimic what they saw Cava and the other instructor do - it was so awesome. There were a few instructors, there were some parents there and some school administrators, and they were all just blown away. I mean these kids, and I'm telling you, some of these kids were like, just physically handicapped, but they were trying their best to do cartwheels and *benção*. So to me, that shows the power of *capoeira*, and how it transforms. (Zum)

GROUP LEADER really teaches to, what his group needs, right. So, if, for example, I've had different classes where we did less physical training than what he had planned because one of us hit our limit sooner than we expected to. So in those cases, like we've made that switch from sort of his planned training class to, "well let's just all sit down and we'll do music for the next hour." And so I feel like he wants us to push our limits while respecting the fact that like everyone's limit is different...and that you're limit from day to day can be different...he does an incredible job with that. (Ole)

Individuals also provided examples of how they adapt movements for different levels:

For instance, *macaco*, I show a *macaco*, and I show what it's supposed to look like, and then from there I break it down, so if you can't do that, here's a way you can start it off. And then to encourage them, I show them practical applications for those precursor steps. (Greg)

Something that I've noticed is just letting people try things is the quickest way to convey the information. I can show somebody and explain to somebody how to do a *role*, twelve hours straight of taking class, I could make you draw pictures, but it doesn't mean that they're gonna be able to do it. So like, I've like bragged to fellow teachers of mine in the group that when I teach people *role* at this point, I just like, tell them to crouch down on the floor, and I'm like "now just like lean this way and let the arm and leg flop out so you're holding yourself up" and they do it. And then I'm like, "alright, then just stand up, and spin in a circle." And I show it one time, and then I watch the whole room do it – there could be like five new people, and they all do it. (Raca)

at the end of the day, the move, the move is the move. I mean, and we're all familiar with what the body can do and the possibilities, so it's like, "okay, from that move, maybe in a situation you could do this, that or that." And she was like, "wow, nobody ever showed that to me," (Zum)

Lastly, individuals mentioned various approaches to training *capoeira*.

my best friend... for her, *capoeira* is just like a work out, like that's it! *chuckle* So I think about her when I do give these answers, like this is from me, 'cause I do know some people that are like, "I'll come kick with you, but I ain't doin' nothin' else." and then there's all these other levels, there's levels to everything. I can even admit myself where there's some days like, "look, don't talk to me about nobody's ancestor, kay?" "I just want to kick the pads," *laughing* so I have my levels too, but overall it is what I told you. (Mel)

he [group leader] adjusted on what I was going through, and also kind of his, kind of his like view of his role in *capoeira*, and his view of *capoeira* in general kind of shifting, where he's kind of realizing that "hey, my knees aren't what they used to be,"... like "let me pass on what I know to people who can pass it on further, before like my knees give out." ...also I guess maybe he's gotten more of an appreciation for someone who's like, maybe not the best *capoeirista* and maybe doesn't have the best *capoeira*, but is able to generate a community around *capoeira*... his opinion about like what makes a good *capoeirista* also shifting over the years. (Brandon)

Context/application. Individuals also discussed the importance of how a movement could be used when playing *capoeira*. Rão shared, "He [group leader]'ll teach you, not only the movements, when to use them at the right time, and when not to use them... he's just as big on theory and music as he is on the movements." Game shared, "the movements, I guess I would try to expect that they're able to find something that conceptually makes sense, that they can take back and put into their game ... that's my goal, or you know, maybe musically." Cava noted,

“that’s another challenge of *capoeira*, is being able to go back and forth and know when to do, and not to do, and just adaptability and being able to always adapt within *capoeira*.” Ica stated, “A lot of times I’ll take what I’ve learned, I try to travel once a month to an event and I turn it to be something that’s applicable to our style of *capoeira*.” Terra noted, “some groups...they call moves different things and...there are animal games which influence a lot of *capoeira* now.”

I’ve been to some classes where the teaching style is more geared towards repetition, and certain movements, and not to say that there isn’t any value in that, but for me I kind of feel that in a classroom setting, you know, generally when I come there, I wanna do something that you’re not able to get, I guess, on your own. (Game)

When I’m with GROUP LEADER he’ll have different names for things than I’ve learned in the past. Like why you would flow into from another movement, I mean there is no real way to link it. It depends on who you’re playing with but, he’ll go over those things, like why would you come back this way when you just went this way and a person’s coming back this way. (Neef)

It’s more conceptual like understanding ‘this is the movement, this is how you use it’ and I guess when you look at it, it’s not the only application of this movement, there’s other ways you can do it, and also understand why. Maybe this has applications over here and may not be appropriate there. (Game)

Greater landscape of *capoeira*. Individuals discussed *capoeira* in terms of the greater landscape of other groups and the idea of community. Muntu stated, “me sharing *capoeira* here, there are programs for certain communities to allow youth, people from the community, from the neighborhood to participate in *capoeira*.” Do shared, “If ANOTHER CAPOEIRA GROUP posts something up, or something in ANOTHER MIDWEST CITY, ANOTHER MIDWEST CITY, we’re always down to support *capoeira*.” Greg noted, “as time passed since I’ve moved back, my sort of small, close-knit community expanded. It [*capoeira*] allowed me to meet so many interesting people.” Muito stated, “I have been told by like a MESTRE he’s from Brazil, that it’s like that in the States, but he’s like, “it’s not like that in Brazil.” He was like, “they’re so much more friendly and playful here.”

My main role is building the community... connecting the community, connecting with other groups and just building, building our family here... the way that I have my school set up and the way that I teach, and the way that I connect the community is like making sure that as I teach, they understand that we're one part of community (Ica)

Essentially like, she came here, she started up, she met me and a few other people, um, and it was actually like, years, time went on, more and more people started coming in. More people came and went, by then at the same time... her main thing was always trying to establish connections with any other *capoeirista* or any other *capoeira* group. (Noa)

As time passes...being in the community ... originally when I was in SOUTHCENTRAL CITY, but now I'm in CURRENT SOUTH CENTRAL CITY, having to like rebuild the classes and what not. But then, looking at the community here, and then also kind of seeing the need for *capoeira*. There are groups here, but they don't necessarily teach the way I teach or, they aren't like our group here, so I feel like it's a need for the community here for me to be able to bring my *capoeira* here as well. (Cava)

me and Mestre had a talk and he was like, "No Data, it's too much work, I don't want a big school anymore." I was like, "what are you talking about?? Big schools are *amazing*, we're global!" And he was like, "no Data, it's too much of a headache, I've learned some stuff," and he was like, "you're gonna learn some stuff too. You have a very large school now, you're doing fine now, but you're gonna learn, and it's gonna happen soon." And I was like, "don't curse me like that Mestre," and he was like, "No, it's the nature of things." ...he was like, "I got away from the tradition from how they ran the school," you know, under FOUNDRING MESTRES, and he was like, he wanted to do it like ANOTHER *CAPOEIRA* GROUP, ANOTHER *CAPOEIRA* GROUP, you know, have these super schools everywhere. And so he was like, "quality over quantity." (Data)

Throughout times of travel, participants also referenced *capoeira* as a point of interest and the ways that *capoeira* was started in their respective geographic areas. Mandinga shared, "I went there, got in the class, started doing the movements and it was a good class. I do a lot of training here by myself because again there's no *capoeira* on the island." Game stated, "I was supposed to graduate...I wanted to get experience in different places...I mostly wanted to pick places with *capoeira*."

I also spent time in almost all the branches that we have in the group because I spend, you know we have a branch in ANOTHER EAST COAST CITY, I had an internship – I almost picked my internship in EAST COAST CITY at the time based off where there was *capoeira*. (Game)

there are a couple of MIDATLANTIC CITY schools in here, like the Angola and like the other one that I had visited, like there are two schools that I know for sure. and then there's the group that I'm a part of. So like, they want to expand it and make it bigger in MIDATLANTIC CITY. So I guess just basically building that community and teaching *capoeira* to anybody who's open and willing to receive it. (Noa)

where I started teaching in MIDATLANTIC CITY, nobody knew what *capoeira* was until I got there... I have not found another Angola group in the state. MIDATLANTIC STATE was the same, there were no Angola schools in the whole state. (Terra)

my *capoeira* teacher, MESTRE NAME, was a pioneer in the EAST COAST STATE. And he arrived in the '80s and there was not *capoeira* around. He taught in the basement of bar, and then built the community... he had to leave to go back to Brazil, as you know, his mom was getting sick... we've had some time where we've had other teachers to sustain the group. (Njinga)

Participants discussed the connections made through offering classes and events in the community.

In the EAST COAST CITY school, there's a lot more children students, and so their parents just kind of coming in and just kind of every day, we're kind of spokes people and demonstrators for this culture right that's trying to be ambassadors for, just have a more of and will exist past us. (Curtis)

you see people like INSTRUTOR, PROFESSOR, INSTRUTOR, INSTRUTOR, Mestre teaching kids classes, MONITOR is doing her *bate papos*. Then you have SELF, who doesn't have a title, who's teaching these music classes, which have been growing every single week. (Terra)

what I've noticed about all of the groups, this is nothing personal against any of the groups, or any style, but *capoeira* Angola is more involved in the in-depth community aspect, they're more community-involved, or culturally and community-involved, from what, from the groups that I'm seeing. But keep in mind I've only been to two workshops, but I hadn't been to other workshops to experience. But I learned what the round, the full aspect, or the full spectrum of what *capoeira* should be from that experience. (Rão)

like every experience I ever had, with like multiple groups and like all along the East Coast. Cause I've been to like events in ANOTHER EAST COAST STATE, ANOTHER EAST COAST CITY... I've had people come those events from Brazil, from WEST COAST so like, the experience knows no geographic boundary, like it's people from all over. (Muito)

My goals for myself are basically to just have a really large community of *capoeira* around me. It's something when I started, I got like a taste of, but it's just kind of like, "we're out here in EAST COAST CITY so there's not gonna be the, very many huge

things going on. And, it always made me like jealous to see these video of like 50-60 things going on, everybody's really talented... *chuckle* when I came back from school to be in EAST COAST CITY, EAST COAST CITY had historically a larger presence than the OTHER EAST COAST CITY group that I was a part of, which only had 7, 8 people at any given time ... so my personal goal is like to have a lot of people doing it, because I feel like that's what makes it a healthy and diverse, and engaging thing to do. (Raca)

Within the greater landscape of *capoeira*, participants discussed nuances of being a part of a particular group. Some individuals also had experiences with more than one *capoeira* group. For instance, Tiba shared, "when I was in the MIDWESTERN GROUP, the group felt quite a bit larger to me and as a result it was more intimidating. Our group [was] the equivalent of like a satellite group."

I kind of, am in like a couple [groups]...like *CAPOEIRA* GROUP... that's like the *angola* style. And then I also train with my brother who does a *regional* style. My brother has his own group so those are the two groups here. And actually, another group *chuckle* that I go to regularly that's in the area as well, so there's a couple different groups that I kinda just do a little bit of everything. I'm not really committed to training with a specific practice. I kinda, I don't know, I'm older, I'm like, "I'm just gonna have fun and try everything." (Muito)

There are some styles, you know where it's lots of flips and it's really hard on your knees. your Mestre's sixty-something and he can barely jump cause he's been doing that for a while. You know, just the toll it takes on your body, for us. this is no disrespect to any other group, you know some people like that shit. It's just, I don't, I don't want to do it, but, even though that's where I started. (Terra)

Black belt magazine had an article, it was one of the first articles that I read promoting *regional*. It was like, "*regional* has 30 movements and *Angola* only has 12." why would I want to do Angola? *chuckle* I want to do the one with the most moves, until I realized that, every time you do a variation of something, it's not given a name in *angola*, it's like, you know, depending on the finesse, your finesse, you're doing movements that you don't, "stop the tape, stop the tape," "what are we gonna call that?" we're not naming everything. (Zum)

the way that I've played Angola games, are like slower, so you kind of, you have more endurance, you can keep going. Regional is like really fast and springy, it's hard to keep it up for more than like a minute or two. (Muito)

Data discussed his initial experience with his first *capoeira* group.

when I first started *capoeira*, the guy I trained with, we thought it was *capoeira*, 'cause that was the stuff we saw on early youtube, and it was like, "Okay well it looks the same, let's go for it," and you know we trained, it hurt, we were doing *capoeira* moves, but then we find out that this guy, he wasn't known in the community, and those that did know him in the community, didn't really respect him in the community and that's not a very great place to be. And eventually, we found this other guy named NAME, and he absorbed our group, and we thought "well okay, since he's in charge, he's Brazilian, he grew up on *capoeira*, his *capoeira* is very strong, cool. We'll be fine." And I'm very independent, because at first I didn't want to join his academy, I was like, "well why can't we just be ourselves and keep doing what we're doing," but our teacher wanted to be under this umbrella of protection. And I was like, "bruh, I come from MIDWEST CITY, I was part of gangs, I know what that actually means." *chuckle* And you know, his *capoeira* was strong, but he was, he taught us "tourist *capoeira*" where people do martial arts, and I was like, "I can't represent this," you know, "teaching to White people on vacation." You know, nobody wants to use this. (Data)

A few participants shared about their experiences when visiting other *capoeira* groups or attending events. Zum stated, "a lot of times if you go somewhere and you find some *capoeiristas*, it's just, if they came in the right way *chuckle*, if they came in the right way, it just, it just feel great."

I had no bad experiences when I went to other groups; I actually heard stories like, "be careful, some groups might try to size you up" ... I've heard that because I know some groups have a reputation of doing that. I've heard of some places where groups are not always welcoming to outsiders, or maybe at the very least like initially, they're just trying to see, look at you, examine ... "is this person someone that appears to be here for the right reasons" or whatever. (Game)

When we went to the *batizado* last year. So you walk in, and being a taller bigger guy, you're automatically a target. All the different groups of GROUP are all broken into different like warm-up stretch areas. You walk in like, and there's like, you can feel like the tension that's in there...I still didn't feel family, if that makes sense even though we were all under the same GROUP A umbrella. So, we're going to the workshops, cool, and everything, you know, him and I are staying pretty close, you know, where I'm still feeling pretty comfortable. 18:40 Him and I are the tallest and the biggest individuals in there, aside from MESTRE, I'm about 6'2", MESTRE is about 6'2". So yeah, this guy, he's kind of walking around, and you know, checking out my form or what not. (Rão)

They [students] weren't like, lucky, they owned, they owned me *both chuckling* like every time I my foot lifted up, they had me on the ground. 'Cause Mestre told them all ... - it was me and this friend, NAME – he told us, he told them, that "these guys from MIDWEST STATE, they don't think our *capoeira* is strong and they want to come up

here and play us.” And so he had called all of his students, and all of his students showed up . And so when I got there, he was like, “oh you’re NAME,” and I’m like, “yes Mestre,” I’m all respectful and I was like, “Yes Mestre, how are you?” and he’s like, “Go play,” And I was like, “go play who?” And he was like, “Everybody.” And I was like, “Mestre, that’s a hundred people over there.” He was like, “Yeah, there are.” I was like, “fuuuck,” and so for the whole weekend, I got beat up for a whole weekend. (Data)

it’s like, “okay this is, we can share this part with you because you’re not invested in our group,” you know, “consistently, but we can still share with you some things. And then when you get invested it’s like “ah this is the other part!” and I think that’s the part, I really fully understood it more recently... you’re like, “ahhh, yeah, I can share with you the general aspect, but for the rituals,” and that comes in with protecting your group, protecting your identity, protecting your, as I said, your, nowadays they say it’s protecting your brand (Muntu)

not like being familiar with the culture and the interpretation of certain movements that you’ll do in other *rodas*. And like you know for us, *benção* is *benção*, you can throw like the straight kick and it’s like, you can throw a straight kick and not call for like an entire fight. And you can’t do that in certain other schools, and on one hand, when that fight does come because you threw that *benção*, you’re ready for that fight and you’re kind of like, you can have fun in that moment. But that causes like a lot anxiety for kind of like everyone else around you, and thus it becomes hard to kind of like maintain that you know, do what you want, you know, it’s hard to remain unapologetic when *chuckle* the way you play is interpreted different in different circles. (Brandon)

CAPOEIRA GROUP is group that focuses on whatever *roda* we’re gonna find ourselves in, we’re always going to be able to play any other style. Like we are a group that can play with any other group. And it really shows in the way that they actually do play and the way that they actually do practice. Like, you constantly see that aspect of community building. We go out to different workshops, we go out and meet different people who are in that *capoeira* community, and it really, it’s all a part of coming together and linking up and just really connecting with one another. (Noa)

The other groups have huge marketing methods. Everywhere you go, I don’t care where you go, you see a GROUP O, you see a GROUP X, everywhere you go, you see some sort of Angola group. They have their marketing, or their own history out there. They have their own website. You know, we have ours, but on their website it goes a little more in depth as far as the history of their *capoeira* group. So that’s one of the drawbacks, is that I would like our history to be a bit more, a little more broadcast. (Rão)

In terms of the landscape of *capoeira*, some individuals shared about the politics involved interpersonally and between groups.

Other martial arts already look down on *capoeira* and African martial arts in general, because they’re so exotic and rare. And then, he [former teacher] only wanted our money, he didn’t want to teach us anything, he didn’t want us to learn anything. He had

his favorites that he would teach little stuff to, but he would never, he would never actually give us real knowledge to make us better, because he didn't want anybody better than him. (Data)

He [former instructor] had tiff with me I guess, like, that had got me thinking, you know, there's a lack of diversity in *capoeira* um, I noticed that definitely in the branch that I was a part of in WEST COAST CITY but it wasn't just my group, it was other groups as well. (Game)

I've met MESTRE and trained, and we trained GROUP NAME for ...about four years, four and a half years. And then it became very clear that the instructor was not okay with LGBT despite the fact that we had, I would say, 60% of our membership was LGB. He did a very good job of making us think that he was for a long time and then it became very obvious through a couple of different things that he was not. (Ole)

one guy, he came to our class, and he said we beat him up, so he had posted it online. This was when they used to have forums and I mean, the internet was lit up for like two months. And then when we got wind of it, I read it, and I was like, I said, "cava, did anybody ever come to class and we beat 'em up?" So I asked the guy about it, and he said, "well, I was being a tad strong when I said 'beat me up', what I really meant to say was y'all played aggressive." you know, um, and then that changed but it was too late, he had already put out the fight, so some of those was the challenges that we had to work on as well. (Zum)

I've noticed this even in the Angola group that GROUP LEADER is a part of – that there is a fair amount of ego and politics involved in a group's hierarchy that doesn't necessarily lend itself to, unless the Mestre wants to see change, doesn't lend itself to change *chuckle*. Which, it's weird to talk about because it's almost like a contradiction to what I felt within the *capoeira* community, on a roots kind of level, like a local group kind of level, it doesn't feel that way... there is kind of like tension between different groups, right? Like, there are definitely *mestres* who are like, "you can't train with anyone outside of my group, if you're my student, you're my student and that's the way that it is," Or you need like very special permission to like go train with another different group, GROUP LEADER's not like that. (Ole)

At our last roda, him and CAPOERISTA T, who is a one of the teachers of CAPOEIRA GROUP N, which is under MESTRE S. They get into a shouting match over CAPOERISTA T being playful with one of CAPOERISTA S's students. You know, it was at the pé du berimbau, T goes over and just holds his cord, he tries to aú in, we all start giggling, "ha ha ha", you know, dude looks back, kind of laughs it off and goes back to playing. But then S made it a thing, "oh that's unsafe, you shouldn't do that, blah blah blah," and I was like, "this has been done in every *roda*, and it's just being playful because you're not supposed to trust other *capoeiristas*." This is one of the prime rules of *capoeira*, misdirection, playfulness, trickiness, are all part of *capoeira*. And that *capoeira*, academy *capoeira* is so clean, so, White-washed, that they phased out that

‘everything goes’ in *capoeira*. In *capoeira* there are eye gouges, you know, head butts, elbow, knee, you know, like chops, like all this, but contemporary *capoeira* kind of removed that stuff out for like the sport and the game of *capoeira*, they forget that it’s a fight in *capoeira*. And, a lot of the older systems, like MESTRE S, CURRENT MESTRE, MESTRE M, MESTRE R, like all the older students, we still teach that stuff because that stuff is still needed. (Data)

A few *capoeiristas* discussed the politics of including rather than omitting the historical context and importance of the art.

that’s pretty common amongst most *capoeira* groups. It’s a touchy topic, and especially in America most of us are not built to actually have these types of conversations, so we’ll use common language, we’ll use common feel good language such as “*capoeira* is for everybody” “there’s no place for discrimination about *capoeira*” in general and that’ll be the end of it. (Greg)

sometimes I think when students visit our class, and we embrace both sides of that, we would get labeled as the group that only teach Blacks, or the racist group or whatever the case is and that was never it...I think the whole concept of slavery and how deteriorating that, that whole process was, is just a place where people don’t want to visit. It’s like, “I want to deal with where we are now, let’s leave that behind.” But then, to leave that behind is not to embrace what we’re talking about earlier [the history of the art] (Zum)

someone had said to me, I forgot who, but it was like, groups led by women and people of color tend to not have that issue and actually understand it more. And I kind of believe that, when I lived in the WEST COAST CITY, um I really liked the culture, the ... the people out there, everyone was on good terms, they would support each other and probably just kind of that friendly environment. (Game)

Within the landscape of *capoeira*, participants discussed their participation at other events and unity *rodas*. Ica stated, “it’s important to me to have my students participate in other events.” Tiba noted, “it’s helped me learn a bit about MIDATLANTIC CITY (mm) by coming to the events with the *capoeira* group.” Game shared, “it was nice because people were like, you know, I went to a bunch of groups and everybody was open and those people I still keep in contact just cause there’s so much *capoeira* there [WEST COAST].”

You have to think, what is the quality of the event, and who are we trying to appreciate, and how can we service them. That’s the goal. It’s not about how much money I can spend, how much flash. It’s “do you feel appreciated, do you know that your efforts, your

growth, your hard work, it's going to be magnified on this particular day." Okay, let's celebrate that. (Njinga)

we would have a unity *roda*, and it brings the community together...when we have the unity *rodas* we have like four or five, six different groups of *capoeiristas* who are represented. it's set up like three different teachers set it up and we're from three different groups. (Ica)

the third part of the workshop was the open *roda*... where I swear MESTRE C played every single person except two people - I was one of 'em. He's over 70-years-old and he played everybody and gave them the word, I'm like, "geez!" But it gave more richness to the *roda*, the fact that we had these conversations of community, of agriculture, of farming, of you know, the rest of the picture, it made the *roda* richer afterwards. Like it gave more definition and feeling as to why we do what we do, and the movements became more so expressions than attacks. (Rão)

we had a New Year's Day *roda*, last year... I think it was like four, five different groups present, represented, which was really cool, 'cause like we all do *capoeira*, so why don't we just do *capoeira* and stop worrying, "oh you're a part of this group so we can't be seen in public with you" *chuckle* ...like our styles are a little different, but it makes things more interesting, I think. (Ole)

Consistency/commitment. Participants discussed the idea of consistency over time.

Junior shared, "we train as much as we can." Simba stated, "once I'm back in school, I'll refocus solely on *capoeira*." Tiba noted, "it was just a group of four or five of us who started to like, who religiously came to the *capoeira* class." Noa stated, "anytime I had a chance and energy to help her out with class, I would do so. Sometimes even after class I would go straight to the adult classes at her other location and I would train there." Game shared, "my teacher, he's a PROFESSIONAL and he had gotten more and more busy, so the days that he wasn't able to come to campus and teach, I was covering for him." Terra stated, "I was teaching five hours a day, seven days a week, for an entire month, and I loved it, I loved it, every single second of it. If I could teach every day I would."

For students who are really committed, and they're always in class, I can see how they are definitely separating themselves from students who just come haphazardly, so there's growth for them. (Mandinga)

I have no idea what made me make this decision but I started going to all four classes per week that they were offering, I think for a year and half, two years, I didn't miss a single class. I was like, always there.. And yeah, I couldn't tell you like what the tipping point was for me *chuckling* (Raca)

I do so much things for people when I did *capoeira*, I didn't care just, there'd be a performance they'd be like, "hey can you help us out?" "I'm there." "we have a performance at UNIVERSITY," I'm like, "I'll be there." (Do)

Rão stated, "there are a couple of us that are in and out, I'm the most consistent down here there's a couple of other *capoeira* students that are in and out." Mandinga noted, "I tell students in my first class, or in their first or second class, I always say 'just keep coming, just be consistent, it will get easier.'"

Cultural Traditions

Fourteen different codes were identified for this domain including: passing knowledge/intergenerational; collective ownership; tribute/honor/respect; cultural connections; ceremony/ritual; music and language; naming; axe/ase; *na roda, na vida*; expression/creativity/art/conversation; belonging/congruence/ challenge/question/change; and ever present. Out of the fourteen primary codes for cultural traditions, three codes were discussed by all eight groups: history/roots (2.9), ase/axe (2.8), and naming (2.7), ase/axe (2.8).

Additionally, four codes were discussed by seven out of eight groups: passing knowledge/intergenerational (2.1), ceremony/ritual (2.5), music and language (2.6), and *na roda, na vida* (2.10).

History/roots. Game shared: "the culture and history of *capoeira* is important so definitely... making sure that that's always present. As of recently, I've been trying to really, really speak to the... the importance of the culture." He noted: "if the history isn't stressed as something important, then they're not gonna see it as important." Similarly, Muntu stated, "you gotta show people the value of the art." Curtis stated, "there's meaning and traditions that we're perpetuating." Terra noted, "I always talk about the history." Zum said, "if there were no

Africans, there would be no *capoeira*... It's almost like, you know, well 'let's say *capoeira* started with the enslaved Africans and after we finish that paragraph let's not visit that again'" in reference to some of the challenges he has encountered in discussion with others about the history of *capoeira*. Greg noted, "*capoeira* in and of itself was created by African slaves. And, so even amongst Angola spaces, that doesn't get spoken about enough."

When I'm teaching *capoeira* what's important to me is that not only do students have a great grasp of the physical movement, but I also like to talk about the history, talk about the resilience component of it that I think is very integral to *capoeira*. (Mandinga)

We taught the art based on our connection to the history of the art, so we never dismissed the fact that it started off with the enslaved Africans in Brazil, and we made sure that was embraced in the class...what happens so often, is people see the beauty of *capoeira* and where we are today, without really, when we talk about axe, without resonating with how did *capoeira* actually come to be (Zum)

It's really important not to just train it as like a physical art but to really understand why there's music involved and what kinds of things people are singing about and understand the history and context of it in general. (Raca)

When I see that it's passed down that you view it as important. If you're not passing that down - to me if you don't know it, that's also a big problem, but if it's you not passing it down, then it's just, yeah, it's another big thing. I feel like if you're a teacher, it's your responsibility to pass down traditions, especially in this art form, and knowledge, and you're doing a great disservice if you're not doing that. (Greg)

Tiba shared, "I definitely have learned the importance of carrying forth the history and the richness of *capoeira*." In terms of why it is important, Ica stated, "understanding the stories, understanding why we're doing what we're doing, why do we have this opportunity to train *capoeira*?" Noa stated, "you get the chance to actually practice an art affected by the African diaspora because it is an Afro-Brazilian martial art." Game noted, "the nature of it was an art form that was created by the people who are, you know, oppressed and underprivileged."

Through *capoeira* I've learned a lot - ... as a Black person, not having the luxury of knowing our true roots... for most of us, we couldn't tell you ... what part of Africa our Family comes from. But you can't go back, we can't go back three generations and actually be able to identify with somebody... we don't have that luxury. (Zum)

We focus too much on trying to change the connotation of the word [Black], versus ... going back into the history of what we were before we were labeled Black. And now it's causing me to go back further into my ancestry or roots, and see, "okay, what was it that we were before we came here, what was our diet before we came here, what was our style of living, what was everything, our entire construct before we came here, what was that?" So it's caused me to go deeper into African studies. (Rão)

Along with the general history of *capoeira*, individuals discussed aspects of considering the experiences of enslaved Africans who developed *capoeira*. Zum shared, "we'd talk about what slave-life might have been like, and for some reason that became uncomfortable for people."

Terra noted, "enslaved Africans ... endured all this torture to, just to have this art." Curtis shared, "we're practicing this for a reason and we have the privilege of practicing this when you know, this wasn't a privilege for a lot of people and this wasn't a fun hobby for some people." Njinga stated, "my ancestors knew that they must disguise this because their life depended on it."

it's roots are very bloody, and, negative, like slavery, like very much hardship. And you know, stuff in life is hard sometimes, so I have always thought that it's really cool that they took this very negative situation, and found some joy in life, in each other, 'cause I can't imagine what slavery would be like ... so, it's kind of hard to compare that to like, my life. (Muito)

I cannot help but think that that song was being sung hundreds of years ago, by these people who created this thing that we are able to do now, without worrying about somebody whipping us or you know, amputating a limb. (Terra)

When people would ask for a water break... I would say, "nah you can't go." and they're like, "what you mean?" and I'm like, "you can't drink water," I said, "because when, you know the ancestors of this art were out in the sugar cane fields or whatever, they had to work from sun up to down, and they didn't get breaks," And I said, "we're in an air-conditioned environment, we're just here for an hour and a half or two hours, when you leave here you can go to the mall, you can go to the restaurant, even before you came here, there were so many things you were doing, but for this moment, no water." (Zum)

It's not just, "hey we're doing *mea lua*, and then *rasteira*'s and *resistencias*" and stuff like that. No, we're, you got that history you need to learn, and because the road that was paved by like MESTRE R and Mestre, and Bimba, you know, any person that practiced *capoeira* in Brazil... it's a blessing for us to be able to do it now, because it was outlawed...people go to jail for playing, that's just how serious it was. (Ser)

Participants also noted the liberative history of *capoeira*. Ica noted, “This is a slave art, it was developed for freedom, it was developed for the slaves in Brazil at the time to be able to escape and to be able to survive and to be able to be free.” Terra stated, “*capoeira* is not the place to try and be cute because slaves weren’t trying to be cute, you know, they were doing this to survive, like going here, and like be free.”

why did it even evolve? why was it started? So without that input... it’s kind of hard for you to digest, I think you’re gonna miss a certain part of *capoeira*. And of course it’s not gonna make you a bad *capoeirista*... but you’re just gonna miss a certain piece of the puzzle and you’re *capoeira* journey will always be absent of that. (Zum)

It was developed, for people to come together, to give them a common ground, and to give them a safe space where they could train, where they could fight, where they could, you know work together to get out of something. (Ica)

On a personal level, Rão stated, “I’m a huge activist as far as *capoeira* being liberating.”

Ica also noted, “*capoeira* liberates so that, to me, is one of the most important things to convey to my students. It’s still for us to be free from whatever in our lives brought us to this point.” Terra noted, “knowing that they endured all of that, and you know, I think that might be something else that kept me going.” Njinga shared, “based on the history, based on the group of people who were moved, not by choice, they didn’t have the opportunity to give up on themselves. So ‘who are you, to give up on yourself?’”

capoeira always has been... and always will be a liberating art. You feel a sense of empowerment and freedom from being in, from practicing this art. And I feel, I feel a lot more liberated, like my, the way I look at things now, the way I treat things now, is definitely different. (Noa)

In addition to liberation, participants mentioned the martial nature of *capoeira*. Muito noted, “these martial movements are martial and can damage people.” Terra shared, “they [other people] come in, they’re like, “let’s spar, let’s spar,” and I’ve had to deal with that.”

So he like stands and stays still, and I'm like, “are you sure you wanna do this?” “yeah man, go ahead and do it.” So I kick him, and it was like the form was tight, I rooted my foot, like I was supposed to, turned with my hips and it sounded like a gunshot went off

when I hit his leg and he was hollering like his leg was on fire and he was like “ow ow ow! My leg! My leg!” and like, fell on the floor, and he kept apologizing. (Terra)

He [CIFU] used to laugh his heart out when he heard someone come to the door, “I heard there’s a guy that does *capoeira* in here,” and then he would just laugh, and point in my direction and I would always greet them like, “hey man, how you doin? You wanna train,” “Nah I come to spar, I come to fight,” and I was like, “alright, Cifu, are you okay -” you know “he came in here, he asked for it.” I was like, “Okay...” send people out all hurt. (Data)

In terms current relevance and safety, Greg stated, “*capoeira*’s application comes from the awareness you develop about your surroundings, and how you can mask your intentions to sort of get out of a difficult situation.”

capoeira comes from the struggle of Black people, it comes from the oppression of Black people...we also use *capoeira* to liberate ourselves and run to quilombos like Palmares and others ... I will always make sure that my students know where *capoeira* comes from. (Terra)

Relating back to the history of *capoeira*... it’s resistance ... it still relates to today. It’s not something that I think you can learn about and just kind of – as an art form I think that the mentality has to blend in with your overall awareness. (Game)

Ase/axê. Participants provided multiple perspectives about how to define ase/axe as well as examples. Junior noted, “it’s [axé] something that is an offering... it’s something that is universal...it transverses all things.” He added, “my relationship has changed with it over the years, it’s just grown, it continues to grow... even the way I spell it... it feels good and sometimes that word just comes out.”

if it’s a-x-e, axé, to me it’s more Brazilian, more like a togetherness and more like... it just has a more Brazilian feel to it. The a-s-e gives me more of an African vibe, it gives me more of like an ‘amen,’ ‘I’m in agreement,’ ‘I understand,’ ‘I feel you,’ like ‘this is slave-shit-type,’ like ‘we’re in this together.’ That’s what ase means to me, it’s like a spirit, that transcends generations and setting. (Ser)

sometimes I mean that energy, axé, yes, that way. But I also say ase, which means “and so it is” which is kind of the equivalent of when people say “amen” or “amin,” so I’m agreeance to it, I’m putting energy towards that, I want that to happen. So ase, yes, I agree, put energy toward that, let’s keep building together. (Njinga)

it's like a connection, agreeance, and it resolves... like in one moment, 'cause like you could say ase to something it's like in that one moment you're saying that "I connect with you, I agree with you, I resonate with you." But at the same time I'm like resolving with you...like a real deep spiritual connection as well, like, you can take it as far back as like an ancestral, a spiritual type of journey ... say it's a lot of stuff happening, and then being like, you might be going through like a cleansing or like a, maybe you had a reading with somebody, or like pertaining to *capoeira*, like you know, you just went through your *batizado* and your *roda* and all that, and like at the end you might just say like "ase."
(Cava)

CONTRA MESTRE actually put my cord on, and I like, I started crying in his arms because I didn't think that I A: deserved it, and it was just, it was so surreal to kind of have all of this stuff culminate. (Terra)

ase is just, it's like a confirmation, it's like being in touch ... it's like connecting those things that are external, with the things that are internal with you... a lot people say, it's like an agreeance, it's like... being plugged in you know to things that happen before you, it's like connecting to you know, your present... it's like an organic or spiritual way of saying of "hey we - I feel that, I feel what you're saying, I understand" on a deeper level. (Zum)

Junior shared, "If you receive ase ...you live your life in abundance." Mandinga stated, "axé is the affirmation, it's the confirmation of the life energy." Game, Junior, and Simba shared that axé is "positive energy." Junior added that "axé is that energy that ...we are all calling on." Greg noted, "how it's been used within my group, is it's energy." Junior also shared, "I try to express like the feeling, like how they feel inside their bodies...when they have a feeling of euphoria and joy, that's axe...even thinking about it right now, is creating like those goosebumps."

when I go home for the holidays and it's warm, um it's friendly, it's good to see everybody...the beautiful thing about *capoeira* is when you go train and you get that feeling every week. So every week it's like I get to go to the holidays. Like even though I only saw them a couple days ago it's like, "oh," you get that nice warm fuzzy feeling again. (Student A)

the axé that people generate, where they're feeling the goosebumps and those hairs that are on the back of their neck, and you're like "what is going on?" And it's this inexplicable experience of energy, but it's a good feeling, it's an enlightenment, it's an elation, it's built from a warm space, you can talk about it like the chakras are lighting up, depends on what your vocabulary is, you will see it differently. (Njinga)

Terra shared, "it's just that energy that is so, so healing. And it's good for your body." Do noted, "it's just how you move, your energy." Junior stated, "it just still transmits, transmutes, and

migrates so many different way... it flows.” Ica stated, “axé is when you’re in the moment, you’re in the *roda* or in the, at an event and you’re just, you feel the energy.” Terra added, “There’s this feeling you get when – and for me it’s from the music - when everything is alive.” Junior shared, “it’s a certain type of like, I feel like it just evolves that, that axé just grows even quicker and everybody in that space is on the same frequency.”

Individuals also discussed ways in which axe coalesces or is when they experience alignment with other individuals and in their surroundings. Ole shared, “through the focus of connecting, we really are able to build on each other’s energy.” Terra stated, “when everything aligns, you just have this beautiful thing, that nobody can explain, you can’t replicate it, and it takes over you.” Junior noted, “that’s that positive energy that came through and took you over.”

this is the energy we can create together, where are we going...it’s that sweet spot, where you get a good *rasteira*, there’s always that sweet spot, your like, “ohah yes that was the energy I needed, thanks buddy!” (Njinga)

It’s a very unique, unique experience to reach when you’re at a *capoeira* event. it’s that point in the *roda* when the music is on point, when the kicks are flying, the escapes are solid, the acrobatics are within the context - they’re not just for the purposes of lookin’ pretty. (Mandinga)

Like you can be exhausted, or you could have had the toughest day and you go to class, or you go to the *roda*, or you go to an event and you just have all the energy you ever need. Like you can just keep playing for hours like the crazy ones of us who just keep going and going and it’s like, that’s the axé (Ica)

you just, you feel, and I can’t explain it, I can give you all these round about ways of talking about it, but, I can’t explain it, it’s just this feeling that you know, you get goosebumps, and you don’t want to leave, and your voice doesn’t get tired, and your body doesn’t get tired, your hands don’t get tired – you are not of this earth when the axé is right. (Terra)

you think you tired, but then all of a sudden this person go in the *roda* and they do some stuff and you say, “I just gotta do *capoeira* against that person.” So it’s the feel good that I think a lot of people don’t have in their lives that *capoeira* presents, and once, once you’re really touched by it, it’s hard to break away from (Zum)

if you watch a good game of *capoeira*, you’re looking at it like, “oh my goodness, this is, this is theater, this is art, this is beautiful,” and you could just sit on the side and listen to the music and you’re like, “yes!” (Muntu)

they just started the *singing “ie viva meu deus camara”, and tears are pouring from her face and it’s not like quiet, you – like her body is jerking from how she is sobbing. That is what axé is, to me. When you feel that, in your whole body, to the point where you cannot control this outpouring of joy and to know that you get to be something that continues that message once you leave. (Terra)

I’m singing a song, and I’m saying thank you to the ancestors, I’m saying thank you to the people are here, “thank you to the Mestres that are all around,” and “thank you to my Mestre, and thank you to your Mestre, because our Mestres together have helped us to be these great children of *capoeira*,” and “oh it’s going to magnificent,” and “thank you to this Mestra here” and I burst into tears. I’m like, “what is going on?” And I’m like, “they’re gonna think I’m crazy, hold it together!” *both chuckling* And I’m like, “how do I explain this?” “how do I explain this?” and it’s not something that needs to be explained all the time, sometimes you just allow it to take you to where you need to go. And it was this magical release, where it like melted burdens or heaviness, it just melted off on me. And it was just a place of gratitude. (Njinga)

Case and point, there’s a rhythm that you play on the pandeiro or that you play on the atabaque, and it just becomes more like, it becomes regimented, like “one-two-three, one-two-three,” it becomes more of a, it seems like a war, a war cry, it becomes martial. And so it becomes where people are always thinking that way where it becomes attack, defend, attack, defend, but if you start playing it more theatrical, where there’s a pause, then it becomes more accented, it’s not just so ‘bah bah bah’ it becomes ‘bah, ba dah” and that adds to the energy, that adds to the axe. (Muntu)

to have that experience where that amazing swelling of energy is there, and a point of gratitude and appreciation for someone else’s journey, that as I look upward, or further along the path, to see where you’re going... to have that realization and that feeling, that inexplicable moment of *snapping fingers* that’s what it is. So it’s definitely, it oozes from your body in different forms... that’s what axé is to me. That magical creation. (Njinga)

I was there, I felt very fluid, I felt strong, I felt like everything was just aligned, like all the training that I’ve done up until that point, all the alone training, ‘cause I left CITY in YEAR and I’ve been doing a lot of training by myself throughout this time period and so it felt like everything came together. (Mandinga)

the kids feel it. They’re in there and they’re trying to mimic. They’re not old enough in some cases, to even understand what you’re doing but they’re trying to do the benção, the music starts and they’re just hopping around to the music *chuckle*. Then at some point, they’ll still tend to exactly what’s happening, as they grow and as they get older. So it’s almost like that seed, you see that seed just constantly growing. (Zum)

Nobody even knows that this *roda* is going on, there are people walking by on the street, on the side walk, who are going about their day, and they have no idea that there’s so much energy being produced on the other side of that door. That is what axé is to me. (Terra)

Individuals also talked about the connection they experienced through axe. Curtis shared, “It’s that energy...the trance that you almost get into at you know, a really poppin’ roda where it’s like, ‘okay, we’re just like all on this ride together in like a separate dimension.’” Ica stated, “It’s that everybody giving the energy and you giving the energy, that’s what it is, that connection to everybody.”

You are looking down on everything, you are able to see everything from everybody’s eyes, and, it’s so wild because *rodas* only need a floor, and some chairs, actually you don’t even need chairs, but to know that in this little space, where there’s so much going on the outside, that does not affect what’s going on in this *roda*. (Terra)

when we’re connecting to the axe, we’re connecting to the ancestors, we’re connecting to stories, we’re connecting to stories of other people, friendship, and our life experiences, and experiences of others as well and you just kind of ball it up, in my opinion, ball it all into that one word and just digest it. It’s really internal, but you still, it’s got that external factor that we just feed off, almost like a, current, it’s not the electricity, but it’s what the electricity creates. (Zum)

I went to take a Panafrikan dancing and drumming class from a professor at EAST COAST UNIVERSITY ... he was using that word but not way it would be pronounced in Portuguese, so I was hearing it for the first time like outside of a *capoeira* context ... the way he talked about it was, more engaging to me because it was more just like the connectivity between people and things. (Raca)

the last time I worked the summer camp - I’m going to try to not cry. One of my favorite songs is *beira mar*, and I was like the head RA so at every single of the meals, I would give announcements at the end. So at the last Friday, the last meal we were going to have... I went up to the microphone, and I conditioned the kids to know, that when I pick up the microphone, they all had to get quiet in the cafeteria ... I waited for everybody to get quiet... one of my students got up and said, “Alright guys, let’s do it! *singing* *beira mar io io, beira mar ia ia*” like, *sigh* my entire class got up, and sang *beira mar* to me, it’s one of my favorite songs. And I like, I dropped the mic, and I started crying, and I like went to them, in their circle and started singing with them, and then the rest of the school had heard enough and they started singing too, and it was like, that moment, that moment is also axé. (Terra)

In contrast to experiencing the energy of axé, individuals also noted what it is like in the absence of axé. Student A shared, “I just try to keep going, just like start yelling and you know when the energy gets low it’s like ‘time to do push-ups.’”

there are low days. And when they’re low days, they’re low days, we keep it moving, we keep the same energy going... we’ll go through it, and then you know, the next day or

next time we meet it's much better... every day has it's highs, lows, and in-betweens ... whenever that happens... we keep going, we keep movin'. (Noa)
there are some days where we're like, tired, like Monday, we're tired *chuckling* and the energy of the *roda* like shows it and we just do Bengela games *chuckling* and we're like doing slow songs ... those are not our best days. One of my friends, he like started mimicking like an old lady around the *roda* kind of thing, and then like, my friend did it too – they were making fun of our lack of energy that day and just how we did not feel like we were able to perform *chuckling*. It was hilarious like these two old ladies walking around in the *roda* *both laughing* (Muito)

there was one time when we went down to SOUTH CENTRAL STATE... we were getting it, you know and the energy started to go down a little bit. And the person who was running the *roda* was also a woman, we made eye contact and she was like, "Pick it back up! Pick it back up! I can't!" *chuckling* So we bring the axé, we are the axé-bringers if that makes sense. (Mel)

When there's no axé, the class just dies, everybody is just like, "oh I don't want to be here," ... If you got good axé, everybody is happy, the class goes by quick, like that hour goes by, or two hours sometimes just cause you got good axé, you're just so into it ... that time just flies by. Those are the classes that everyone wants to be in so, that's what I try to do. (E)

Participants described the general axé of their groups and their respective roles. Ole noted, "I feel like axe is the spirit, it's the spirit of the group, and not like, any one individual, it's collective." Student A shared, "I feel like it's something that kind of flows through a group and between the members." Ole added, "if I stepped away from this group, it would be felt, like there would be a shift in that spirit of the group because every one of us brings something of ourselves into it." E described his group as "having good vibes, right, being in a happy mood, having a good class, good energy, like we say always good axé right, good energy." Student A stated, "when I think about the groups, it's just a fun time, like everybody has fun, everybody is friends."

It's a little bit different for every group – the way that everybody interacts with each other, um the way the relationship is specifically, like you know the goofy group, or the really serious group, like the group that likes to have fun (mhmm) and so it's, I think what you're, I think it's a little bit different for everybody but it's just whatever energy that binds that particular group together. (Student A)

They are an energetic group, very funny, a very funny group. Um, very quirky, as a matter of fact there's like a diversity of like different energies that you can get from this group, because everybody kind of contributes in a different way. (Noa)

Everybody kind of just brings their own thing, it's kind of like a potluck. so like, I guess everybody just brings like their own energy, it depends like on the day versus like the group, there's no overall energy... it varies so much because some of my groups are less structured cause they're small. When you're really small, you get very comfortable with each other and maybe allow each other to, be a little bit more mischievous, and a little less reigned in than with a larger group where you have to keep everybody a little bit more ah, together in line. (Muito)

It's usually good energy... [GROUP LEADER] usually picks up the pace when he finds that students are super engaged...and he'll slow it down when he finds that people aren't as like they're doing too much and they're not breathing or they're over thinking...it varies because there's so much variation in terms of level of skill set. (Neef)

We rarely clap ... it's something that I personally feel sort of takes away from the natural axé... so we rarely do that, but it's important for us to sing, project, and keep the energy going for the people that are participating in the roda. (Greg)

When I come home to a GROUP NAME roda, everything just like clicks into place. Um, like all of like, like my anxiety about not fitting in kind of eases away and just *capoeira* is with them because really fun and really energizing...when our Master was like teaching this song and he was leading the rodas, there was just this exuberance, this like really positive energy, that he like filled the room with that you really can't get everywhere. (Brandon)

We are known to be like, the turn up team *both laughing* We are known for that, not only, like in the roda, we just like to play games. But even musically, the energy-wise, I know there's a few moments where, myself and my Professora, we're jammin in the roda, we're not even playing an instrument, we're not even playing a game, on the side, getting' it, you know? And everyone's like – “oh we love your energy when y'all come.” (Mel)

We have a lot of fun, cause like my brother's group is like less um structured in a way, like we're not as serious as, you know, where some schools will like wear belts and make certain certificates you know, like a very regimented academy style. (Muito)

In terms of their roles, participants noted that it depended upon whether they were actively instructing or learning. Muntu stated, “I think it depends on the position that you're in as to the responsibility of the axe, or what is it that you do with the axe.”

I am organized, I'm like super organized, or I'm assertive, I'll put it like that...so whenever anything needs to happen, I'm the guy who says, “okay, how do we, let's do it,” and I don't put any brakes on anything. While everybody else kind of sits there and

ponders, I'm like, "okay let's make plan, let's do it. How do we make this happen?" So I'm the 'get it done' guy. (Rão)

I'd say I'm still like relatively young, and I've got like, I'd say a lot of physical endurance when it comes to *capoeira*. And I'd say that when I get knocked down, I still get back up. And I *chuckle*, and I kind of have this, I guess it's perseverance, but there are a lot of times I get knocked down in *capoeira*, and I guess it unlocks the kid side of me, where ... you'd get like tossed around as a kid, and you were like, "Woo! Again! Again!" (Brandon)

depending on my role, and what I mean by that is it depends if I am one of the instructors or I am a student. If I'm just a student I think that it's easier in my role in the axe, 'cause my role to the axe is to give as much energy as I can and to push and continuing pushing so I can develop and grow. (Muntu)

My personal role in creating it?... I never thought about that, it just is, axe just is, when it comes to you just accept it *chuckle*. It's everything, the music, the playing, the atmosphere, I think I'm just following the rhythm, honestly. (Mel)

some days... it's a huge responsibility because... the way I'm looking at it is from being an instructor... from hosting rodas, from organizing *chuckle* gatherings, and then trying to get other people to see that it's bigger than even yourself. (Muntu)

Individuals discussed the influence of intention upon axé. Junior stated, "it does create intention, I think that's like what resonates... it's all about finding how it correlates to somebody." Data noted, "it's more like, qi, or chi, or spiritual energy, and it's just another tool, what you do with it, dictates how it's used."

that axé, that energy that's put into it [tuning and blessing instruments] you know, those, those mean something, that means something... we didn't want anybody to like come and abuse the space because this was connected to, you know, a bigger ceremony. (Junior)

keeping in mind that it's the lifeblood, everything that we do in preparation for setting up the roda is also contributing to the axe as well. And having those type of everyday, ritualistic practices, in my opinion, are extremely important, because it all feeds off each other. (Greg)

I can have good axé, generally that's what we want with axé, and it's like you can wish that upon somebody else, you can use that positivity to build something. But you can also have bad axé where somebody's had a real shitty day, and then they come in, and it kind of infects everybody else in the room. And we've all been around those people where the person just comes in and the room just gets heavy and dark and their 'woe is me' turns everybody else depressed...so, axé, is very neutral, it's just what you do with it determines the outcome. (Data)

just the same, if you were to use it in a negative kind of way, you know, it's hard for me to come up with a negative idea... I don't like to put that type of words out there for

anyone, myself or anyone, that I wouldn't want someone to grab...anything that I can think of as negative, I don't even want to really finish the idea to formulate it, so I know you're asking for the negative of it, you wouldn't use it because you don't want the negative to happen. (Njinga)

I have that mentality, of "Oh I gotta have good axé" cause I don't wanna bring in the roda, cause I felt like if I had a bad mentality, then it would kind of rub off, on the roda, and then like "... it's gonna kind of mess up the roda" or it's not gonna be good. (Do)

In addition to intention, individuals discussed how they learned of axé and ways they teach about it. Do stated, "I remember asking my second teacher, it was MESTRE NAME when I was in his group, and I was about fifteen, and I was like, "Mestre, what is axé?"

I learn[ed] ... about axé via New Orleans and Vudon, or voodoo, so that's where I learn from... growing up and like being around people pouring libations, that's kind of where I found out [what] axé was. I think that's why like my first image of it is being at a ceremony and an elder pouring water into a plant. (Junior)

I never really understood what axé meant but I would say it anyways, because everybody else said it in *capoeira* they would all say axé, right, I mean I was young ...what I got out of it, it could mean like, "hello," "goodbye," or a sign of respect kind of thing. So then, yeah, a sign of respect so just being respectful to one another no matter where you come from. So yeah, like no matter who I meet, "axé" right? that's what I got. (E)

that's one of those things I'm still learning more about, I know people say it a lot. I can't think of I guess like a story, cause it's not a word that I often times use in my vocabulary, like I don't usually say it very frequently... I almost feel like it's sometimes corny at times *chuckle* because it's one of the ways that people use it (Game)

my group leader basically says, or the way that I interpret it is, axé is science. It's not mysticism... it is very much like, follows the principles of nature, follows the principles of ... cause and effect, something happens to you here, it's going to be here, you put the time in it, then you're gonna get that...so the energy is basically what you put into it, and how you nurture that energy. (Muntu)

Ica stated, "teaching about it ...depends on the student." She added, "if I take them to an event, and they're like, 'What just happened?' like *chuckle* and like, they understand in the moment... especially when I explain to new students ... why they need to be participating in the *roda*."

I feel like I don't actually teach it, it's sort of ever present... it's always there ...so the lesson that I try to impart with regard to conversations surrounding axé is mostly bringing awareness to it, or at least that's how I have tackled the notion of axé (Greg)

We end every class with it so some sort of, that closing ritual that ends with 'axé' ... I don't know if anybody's ever really explicitly said anything besides like, it's the end of class, and then you do the thing 'axé.' in addition to something at the end, it's something at the beginning. So, using axé as a way to sort of set the tone to begin class and then at the end it's a sort of appreciation for class. (Student A)

Finally, participants discussed the role of music in relation to axé. Muntu stated, "the axé...really is from the way you play the instruments, and Contra Mestre shared that with me too, the way you play the instruments can dictate the energy ...and the mentality of the people who are participating." Muito noted, "the axé changes with the person who is singing and like the game occurring at that time." Sim shared, "the axé of the group is kind of tied to the music that's being played, especially when you're in that roda situation...if the music is not strong, the axé is not strong."

When people are in sync, that's dope, but when people don't sound good and there's ten, twenty people and we all sound horrible *chuckle* and the only person you can look at is the instructor who leads the class, like, "you're supposed to be helping us. And we look ridiculous." (Do)

we had an event not too long ago, and the music just felt broken, or you know, it was monotonous ... you can kind of feel it ... everybody was still playing and you know, we're making the best of what we had... compare it to some of the best events we've had, definitely you notice that the energy is different...having that foundation will improve the axé of the group. (Sim)

I can't tell who the teacher was or whoever was playing on the track, but something about it was really, was really special and everyone in that space felt the uniqueness of that energy and that moment and so we played that track, just over and over and over again (Mandinga)

You can tell like the emotion I guess between the people 'cause you see the kind of game they're deciding to play together, or the kind of song they're singing, cause certain songs are for more like a *Bengela* game ... some songs are for a bit more energy, or even some songs have that element of caution, like, "you better watch out cause somebody's out for blood." (Muito)

Naming. Another important cultural tradition discussed by all eight groups was naming.

Noa shared, "giving each other a *capoeira* name. That's always been an enduring tradition of *capoeira*." Muito stated, "I kind of want one just cause like everybody else has one, so it's like kind of weird a little bit, I think when you don't have one just cause everyone else does." Njinga

noted, “some people just want a name, even though they know that everyone doesn’t just get a name.”

some people I genuinely like do not know they’re real names, like I only know their *capoeira* names because like I’ve never asked. Like they’re like, ...“this is ANIMAL” I don’t actually *shaking head* know ANIMAL’s name, but I’ve hung out with him like thousands of times, but his instagram name is ANIMAL, his *capoeira* name is ANIMAL, everything ... so for me I feel like it’s like, because I know why people have *capoeira* names to begin with in terms of the history like for me it makes me feel more like part of the community. (Neef)

Participants discussed the ways that naming occurs. Tiba stated, “we have a naming *roda* in the studio.” Terra shared, “there are people who get names because of you know, something that they are made fun of.” Similarly, Muito noted, “usually the Apellido is... usually they make fun of you with them so I’m like, ‘you know, maybe it [not having a *capoeira* name]’s for the best’ *chuckling*” Njinga stated, “normally it’s those moments in class. Some children, they want to name themselves, you know Njinga has this cool name, and all of these other kids have these cool names...that’s in some of their language. It’s interesting.”

naming within in my group is actually very sacred. For the most part, I haven’t thought of any names for my students yet, only because I’m still getting to know them...since I’m leading a group, it would be okay if I wanted to give my students a name, but typically that’s usually reserved for people who are *Instructor* or above. (Greg)
as long as you get your *guerreiro*, your warrior’s name - in the tradition of *capoeira*, it’s at a *batizado* under the guises of Mestre Bimba, it is normally something that, that is an attribute, a direct reflection of what you do, or the direct opposite, but it’s normally an incident, or an accident. (Njinga)

I always wait until the *batizado* to give a person a name for the first time, that was important, and even with the group of students who as I was saying, that have been training for over a year, for sure I could give them some kind of nickname, but I’m waiting until we can have a *batizado* and I can do it properly and people can be recognized. (Mandinga)

like there are moments where, well come to find out that there’s a lot of people who have a *capoeira* name and a lot of it’s attributed to them by their Masters or their Teachers and it’s always usually based on like whatever, like from your best quality in the *roda*, from like your best quality as a person, or like any kind of weird thing. (Noa)

I didn't want to rush it either. 'cause you know how some people be like giving names, 'cause you're heavy set, or because of your dark skin, or because they like pick a physical aspect of you and like exploit that. Like, "don't rush, don't rush, take your time." (Mel)

Our Mestre gives it to 'em... but everybody doesn't have a *capoeira* name. GROUP LEADER, I think Mestre R gave GROUP LEADER... I believe our Mestre gave him his name. Contra Mestre C got his name from Mestre R, because he has dreads, and he used to wear his hair like this *showing pigtails* and he sings like incredibly well. And so, he called him an old singing ANIMAL. (Ser)

I always looked for things that were unique about their characteristics in terms of how they carried themselves, not so much the physical piece but more so, you know, how they were in class. And so if they were very disciplined and um always on time, I would call you *soldado* or I would call you 'soldier'. (Mandinga)

Ica shared, "I take a really long time to name anybody ... it has to be something about who they are.... for me it has to be personality, it has to be something about who you are." Data stated, "Generally, I look at their personality, I try to see what kind of person they are, how they carry themselves, their *capoeira*, their dedication, you know, all that stuff." Curtis stated, "I think the reason for the name is I tend to be rather elusive and sometimes doing things that people don't expect."

I would really give you names that spoke to who you are, not just focusing on what you looked like... in the past I have always tried to, it's almost counter the culture of *capoeira*, because I always try to pick more positive names. Especially with our young people, I didn't want to give them names like 'bananahead' you know like that's not what people want to be called by the street. (Mandinga)

I know for some ... there's kind of a big meaning behind it, or some signature moment that leads to someone being given a certain name, but I don't recall there being any special moment or anything. It was just one student who thought my name should be NAME and Mestra seemed to be okay with it, so she was like "okay your name is NAME" *both chuckling* (Tiba)

my first group of students actually gave me my name... they said we want to call you NAME, and I said, "why?" They said, "A: you're Black, B: you're agile, C: you're intelligent" but I guess was the most important reason, because I didn't have an academy that I was affiliated with, I would teach in like a wifebeater and some *capoeira* pants, *abadas*. They said, "when you move on the ground, your back muscles ripple like an animal that's about to pounce on something, so we want to call you NAME." (Terra)

when she came in she was eight. She was sassy-mouth... she would talk all kind of crazy to people, you know I was like, "Ooh, your mouth! ANIMAL," you know, and that's

what stuck. It's like this vibrant COLOR, these different hues of COLOR with big ... eyes. And so she's a very beautiful, you know young lady now, was a very beautiful little girl, but she just had the vilest mouth. (Data)

I got my *capoeira* name because supposedly I moved like an animal, like an ANIMAL. ... an odd thing, ANIMALS have always been a lovely animal to me, and when I used to play basketball I always used to imagine that I moved like one. But, in the roda, I never saw myself moving like that. (Muntu)

I was doing *armada*, but like I was never good at it so I used to avoid doing them all the time. As a matter of fact, I would just do the spin to make it look like I was about to throw it, and then I would throw something else so most people never caught on to the fact that I couldn't throw an *armada*...but I remember like he [GROUP LEADER] kept watching us and so I had to do it, and I would always land weird *shaking head* or like my leg wouldn't come all the way around. And, I remember one time I stumbled, and he said something under his breath, 'something something' in Portuguese and then he said 'NAME' and everyone started laughing that understands Portuguese and I didn't know what he said. And I said, "What does NAME mean?" and he said "it means CREATURE" ... but the idea was like, I was a little clumsy at first, so yeah they call me ANINMAL, or CREATURE ... I was hoping that it wouldn't stick *shaking head* but he kept calling me ANIMAL and it just stuck and I was like "damn." (Neef)

it was in class, I want to say before, like a couple weeks before my first *batizado*, and like it was, it was interesting because I didn't like necessarily like self-identify as TRAIT or anything *chuckle* ... so, I guess that was, that name was like a little drop of, gave me a bit of self-awareness about myself, and yeah, it was, it was cool (Brandon)

my *capoeira* name is NAME, which everybody, their first thought is, "Is that racist?" *chuckle* or they actually say that. But what happened was, I was training with my instructor and we had accidentally bonded each other at the same time and crossed shins and then he was like, "Oh man, that hurt! It feels like I just got hit with a stick!" and then he was like, "It feels like I got whacked with a NATURAL WEAPON" then you think yo're like a NATURAL WEAPON, you're like a punisher so it's like, now it's kind of like a threatening authority, but not in any kind of real like scary way. (Student A)

He was like, "yeah, yeah, you're CAPOEIRA NAME." I said "why?" And he said, "well I knew a Mestre who was very powerful and his game was very strong, you know he just had this, this essence about him. Like you could feel him when he walked into a room." He said, "I feel like you could really grow into that, that's a very powerful name and I want you to have that." ... to have something that's like insanely powerful, when I think about my name, I'm like, "you know, this name carries a lot of weight" and it's not something that I can ever ever take lightly. (Terra)

my *capoeira* name is NAME, translation. If you *chuckle* hang around me, especially in *capoeira*, you'll be like, "why is his name NAME?" 'cause I play so much, I do the most ... when I'm in class, there's somebody new, they'll ask me how long I've been doing *capoeira*, I'll say, "eh, maybe three months" and that's my answer every time I think. "I've taken an online class." (Ser)

there was a moment I guess when I was playing, I was relaxed, I was chill, I elongated myself and I never played to like take advantage of anybody, and I play with people . I'll also go for takedowns whenever I see them but I won't force them. I'm a really relaxed kind of person... and then in addition to that, I also apparently also have distinct eyes, so whenever I'm playing I'm very calculating – I look for various different opportunities where I can, so them MESTRE decided to rename me, ANIMAL, which is TRANSLATION. So, I ... look at ANIMAL as this sense that I'm basically stuck on an island and I travel back and forth, so I'll visit EAST COAST CITY and CURRENT CITY. (Greg)

my first teacher... he said because I was always there, and always ready to help, like an INSECT. But then he also said... something like “the INSECTS are needed, and without INSECTS, you don't have anything.” Like they're such a small role, but without them, like life would not be how it is. I even have - I even have an INSECT tattooed on my body, my mother adopts this INSECT aspect of me too. She buys like all these INSECT t-shirts and shit. So like it's definitely been accepted *chuckle* (Mel)

While many participants had *capoeira* names, some participants did not. Simba stated, “nobody in the group has them yet ... [I'm] ignorant to the process.” Junior shared, “I haven't received a name, I haven't received it and I'm cool with that.” Muito stated, “yeah... I don't have a *capoeira* name yet. Cause usually they're kind of given to you, usually by your like um, Mestre, or your Professor. So.” When asked if he has named anyone, E stated, “I don't even got a *capoeira* name myself. *chuckle* I think I had like six names, I think it was, or more, I'm not sure.” Ole shared, “*chuckle* I used to, but it has been left in the past *chuckle* and I have not gotten one since. GROUP LEADER says that he has something in mind, but ... he hasn't told me what it is.”

there's nobody in our group that has a name yet. And I know GROUP LEADER, he's very particular about that. So, in my head I'm like ‘damn, you guys don't have names’. Like I just feel like there's one piece that's missing... like in my old group that I used to train in, it was cool to call someone by their name, you would never call someone Mike or Dave, like. I don't even know if I would call them that outside of *capoeira*. (Neef)

Beyond the name itself, individuals discussed what it was like to receive their names including negative, neutral, and positive experiences. Muntu shared, “I didn't like it because... everybody's name describes some aspect of them, but mine... it doesn't seem so exotic... but after time, you're just like, ‘alright.’”

it was a little embarrassing, I was like “damn, is this gonna be my name?” cause I know people have really cool names and I really wanted a cool name and then I got ‘ANIMAL’ and I was like ‘damn’ like *both laughing* But, eventually ... I was like ‘that’s my name’ and people are like ‘that’s your *capoeira* name?’ and I loved it cause I felt like I got it from like my family and or like the family that I eventually acquired and so like I think my name on SOCIAL MEDIA is Dr. ANIMAL. (Neef)

Curtis stated, “I think it would have changed more if I hadn’t like already been to like a lot of *batizados* ... like if it was related to my graduation I might have felt a little bit more different about it.”

I wouldn’t say that I treated gaining a name as a sign that was being kind of more connected in a certain way. But I maybe I feel that way because when I received my name and things, it wasn’t in anyway connected with my first *batizado*. Cause I definitely remember having more of that feeling after my first *batizado*, than I did at the naming, when I received my name. (Tiba)

In contrast, individuals shared about positive experiences when receiving their *capoeira* names.

Muntu also shared, “I felt more authentic *chuckling* like, ‘I have arrived!’ ‘I have a name now!’” Mel stated, “I felt like I was part of the team, like my first group everybody had names and I was still going by like, my Pagan name and shit.”

the name definitely felt like a membership card, where you know I got to tell people like, “hey! I’m NAME!” um, now I didn’t have to just give like my government name or anything like, yeah, it made me feel like I was part of the secret club. (Brandon)

I was flippin out, I’m like running up to people like, “Yeah I’m *CAPOEIRA* NAME!” Like I am the NAME of *capoeira*!” People are happily pissed off, like you know, “I’m so glad you got that name, but fuck you for having that name cause that’s an awesome name” it’s almost like I’m now a real part of the party. Even though... I don’t have a title to my name, like I’m not a Monitor or anything like that, but ... because I’m the leader of the chapter, they’re like “oh yeah, that’s *CAPOEIRA* NAME,” like “he’s alright” you know “he’s legit.” (Terra)

I got my *capoeira* name at my first *batizado*. And I think that because of the situation, I was just stoic, just observing and just like, “okay I’m in this moment,” and I think that may be one of my tells, when I’m ready to fight, there’s that *serious facial expression* I may not fight well, but I’m ready. (Ser)

While *capoeiristas* had varying experiences with naming, Curtis summarized by stating, “if the name got forgotten tomorrow, I’d be like, “I’m still a *capoeirista*.”

Passing knowledge/intergenerational. Seven out of eight groups discussed the importance of passing knowledge from one generation to the next. Ica stated, “it’s been preserved, and it’s been passed down through generations ... to be taught to us and for me to be able to teach it to my students.” Mandinga shared, “It’s something I’m passing along to my children.” Junior noted, “this next generation is always looking up to the next people.” Curtis noted, “some of my friends were ... almost historians so like at any moment they’d just be talking about another *mestre* from super long ago, or traditions, and I’d be like, “what is this?” and just sit there and listen.”

I knew that I couldn’t teach or continue teaching in MIDWEST CITY until I went down and had conversations with my Mestre... I wanted to at least know that I was still following the theories and the ideologies that my Mestre was wanting to continue from his Mestre... those were things that like I know I received, because I know my [midwest] teacher didn’t (Junior)

I really have to take this stuff in, because... I’m responsible for other people, you know, and how they learn, and are interpreting *capoeira*, and at some point, they’ll be passing this on... so, the weight of the responsibility got a lot heavier, because I was like, “If I mess up, then they mess up, and if they mess up, the next people mess up and then the overall image of *capoeira* would be my fault for introducing that weakness in everybody’s training,” ... I just thought of that and I was like, “Oh fuck!” *both chuckling* (Data)

the club atmosphere really helped me and the fact that there’s such turnover with students in college ...you realize how quickly the people who used to be the teachers or leaders of the club, graduated and they disappear...at this point it’s like engrained that you want to push things on so if you disappear, graduate, or get hit by a bus or something things don’t just like die with you. (Curtis)

the main thing is to develop teachers *chuckle*. To share the art and the beauty of it, or the truthfulness of it as much as possible. And the style of it. And then share it enough where there would be enough people to carry on the mantel and be able to carry on what is the art of *capoeira*, how it is to be played, and how it – how you can develop it in other people, and help other people to share that light with others. And yeah, you’re responsible for whatever you share with them, that’s the philosophy, and unity. (Muntu)

when I was doing *capoeira*, my whole focus was just to keep *capoeira* alive, teach not only the martial art of it, but the aspect of the history, the philosophy, the music, and like *CAPOEIRA GROUP*, my Mestre was very strict on history, the philosophy, and especially like the music background. (Do)

choreography was something that we passed down through our group , the basic frame of it. But of course things are flexible, the more that one can do might differ than what someone else can do. So you're still able to work within the environment, but still with creative expression. (Njinga)

Do shared, “*capoeira*'s always gonna be there for us... That's what's so beautiful about *capoeira*, is it never stops, it keeps on going.”

Music and language. As briefly aforementioned in relation to axé, seven out of eight groups discussed the importance of music and language as a cultural tradition. Terra stated, “these songs are, the music is the lifeblood of *capoeira*. Culture is built into all of that.” Muntu noted, “when you listen to the songs...a lot of times ... questions, like ‘where does it come from? Where is the history? What has been passed down and passed down as a form of ritual?’”

it's critical for us to know the music and to know the language and to understand what it is you're saying and why are we singing what we're singing and what is the relevance, where do these stories come from? (Ica)

when you listen to the songs...a lot of times ... questions, like “where does it come from? Mandinga noted, “it [music] is something that is very unique and is a foundation to *capoeira*.” Raca shared, “another reason that it's important to focus on it is because it exists, right?” He added, “when I'm in person playing that music and listening to it, and like sitting in the *roda* singing with everybody, that is what makes it, the liveness of it.”

my Mestre was so hard on us about music and then when I seen other groups ... they were like ‘no we don't care about music, we want you to flips and cartwheels’ I'm just like, I would explain to other teachers like, “hey man, if you *chuckle*, if you worked on your music, people would not care if you're not doing flips.” (Do)

He [GROUP LEADER] teaches music in a way that really has helped me feel more confident with it and is... I think even more important than the training of movement style. There is so much oral tradition that's been kept alive through the music that having someone like GROUP LEADER who can, not just understand what the songs are, but also be able to help, to help me with the obstacles that I have with my own voice, and my own kind of mental blocks with singing. I just really opened up I feel, the rich musical tradition behind *capoeira*, that I haven't had before. (Ole)

Individuals also mentioned the context of the music, as Tiba stated “we communicate with each other through the music.” Terra noted, “the music is so important, because you can't feel that on

that deep of a level if you don't understand the context of what you're doing." He provided the example:

the people that are playing, like "alright" okay, I hear it, I hear it, and then you hear people start to deviate into harmonies, it's like, "Oh shit!" like "alright, alright" and then somebody sings a verse that goes with it, and then they're doing a chama and it's just like "whaat in the world is happening right now!?" and knowing what it means. (Terra)

With respect to context, Greg provided an example of specific lyrics to a song:

for instance, *canarihna d'alemanha*, when would we sing that song, "the German canary killed my curio," which is a native bird to Brazil. The song itself ... is usually sung... when you have two people playing in the *roda* and one of them is like trying to do like judo in the *roda* while the other person is still doing *capoeira*. It's sort of like an additional commentary, like what's going on in the *roda* and why the leader is bringing attention to it. (Greg)

Participants expressed interest in on-going learning of music and language. Terra shared, "there are people who say, "oh you know we're in COVID right now so I haven't been training You got music, you got learning Portuguese, you got learning your history, like don't gimme that bullshit." Student A stated, "I still try to like study and read up on it, work on my Portuguese so I'm like always trying to learn still." Tiba noted, "I think as a *capoeirista* that I need to really value that [music], and ... learning the language."

I definitely practice a lot of music. I've read multiple books on it, because of um, especially learning the fact that it's from our ancestors. It's, I feel more connected with *capoeira* than any other martial art that I've taken. I've taken wind chung kung fun, I've taken tae kwon do, I've been boxing for almost 17 years, and I feel more physically, mentally, and spiritually connected to *capoeira* more than anything else. (Rão)

And even in the instruments, now I see, as I'm developing as a *capoeirista*, the purpose of, the role in playing the music, and really understanding the toques and how the toques are supposed to be played, like I said, what are you invoking? (Muntu)

Some individuals discussed how music was incorporated into their classes, as previous discussed the role of music in relation to ceremonies and rituals. Simba stated, "[we] sing and play instruments at the beginning of every class."

[we] always playing music at the end of the class. We always wanna play music, we always wanna teach them about the roots, it's not just movements, or teach 'em a little something about *capoeira* for real, not just sweating. So to end the class, always music. Or even teaching the instruments. (E)

we always try to teach the lyrics, like a lot of us barely know Portuguese, especially yours truly *chuckle*... then like we get the chance to learn the intonation and then we try to sing along with it. And everybody gets a chance, everybody gets a chance within that. So you can't run away from it, you're always gonna sing the verses, it's tangible... everybody gets a chance all around. That's usually been consistent. (Noa)

Participants also specifically mentioned learning the berimbau and singing. Mandinga shared,

“on Sundays I play the berimbau.” E stated, “if I hear music I'm always telling GROUP

MEMBER or my other friends, “we should grab our *berimbaus* and just jam at the lakefront.”

Zum noted, “my son, he tricked me one time, he was playing the *berimbau*, and I'm like, ‘man, you finally figured out how to balance it!’ but he had the top of the *berimbau* on the ceiling.”

I remember being in college once...I was looking as we were running laps around the gym, I was looking out the window and I was like, “aw somebody's playing the berimbau,” so I just like left out of there and I had to go to see who this person was. And it was kind of cool, it was actually somebody we knew from like a long time ago, and we like reconnected with him, but ... if I hear the berimbau, I'm going to go wherever that sound is no matter where I'm at, I have to. (Cava)

E stated, “singing, ... I used to hate that when I was younger but now it's like ‘whatever’ so like, yeah I guess it made me open up, so that was a good thing.” Student A shared, “singing is important” and added:

it's important because you, I don't think anybody assumes that they can sing, or not most people, *chuckle* or hold a rhythm, or play all these weird instruments, or like you think your pinky's gonna fall off with the berimbau. (Student A)

And when it comes to singing, and the realize that - 'cause everybody says, “I can't sing,” it's like “hey we not trying to put a grammy-worthy song together, we're just trying to sing.” just contribute to the ambiance of the roda, or whatever the case is, even if you don't know the words, sound it out, make it sound like , you know just don't be making like that weird sound when the music stop *chuckle* (Zum)

Professores, Instrutores, they're coming up to me like, CONTRA MESTRE was like, “*sua voz rapaz!*” you're voice boy! “*sua voz e boa!*” I was like “oh my god, what??” and PROFESSORA she was like, “your voice,” she said, “when you started singing, the game, went from here, *hand near chin* to here *hand near temple*. She said, “you need

to keep that up because that's what you're going to be known for." And sure enough, that's what I'm known for: singing. (Terra)

Ceremony/ritual. Participants discussed group-specific traditions, general *rodas*, and *batizados*. Junior stated, "You have to hold a certain sacredness to it." Zum shared, "seeing ritual, ... it brings them all together. Then we talk about, what do all those principles mean, what is humility, you know, what is strategy, and we talk about those during class." Raca noted, "when the opportunity arises I guess, or if somebody asks a question... people will be like, 'why do we do *chamadas*?' and obviously that's like an answer with a lot of culture behind it." Junior shared, "when I met my Mestre for the first time, he looked me in the eye, ... he basically was like, 'you know about *candomblé* don't you.' I know of *Candomblé*, but like I don't practice *Candomblé*."

learning the other spiritual rituals and being introduced from some of those *mestres*, those who are willing to listen, because not everybody follows the ritual of *capoeira* when it comes to the spiritual aspect of it. So those encounters and their expression of what goes on and then their sharing... that's where they're sharing the rituals. (Muntu)

Participants also shared about their group-specific rituals, or routines. Mel shared, "when we first went to our space, the studio, before we hit the floor we have to say "*salvé capoeira*" so it's like we're announcing our presence to the group, a little small thing that I like." E noted, "I like when they all line up at the end of class especially when the kids do it, what do they say – '*SALVE CAPOEIRA GROUP!*' and they go '*Salvé!*'... I like that, I think that's pretty cool." Tiba noted, "we'll say '*salve*' and send everyone well wishes together." Similarly, Ica stated, "one of the biggest things in our group is, you know, we say *salvé* at the end [of class]."

they [another group] would share part of the ritual of the group because when you join, or when you're around other *capoeiristas*, there's a part that you get when you're *estranho*, which is when you're a stranger, and then there's a part that you get when you're part of the group, and it's always more when you're a part. (Muntu)

we go through those [*paciencia, lealdade, malicia, tecnologia, persistencia, humildade, estrategia, sabedoria*], those are ours, we call those our seven principles of *capoeira* in

class, and we'll do that after every class, and then we'll tell everybody, in honor of those before us... whoever's leading the class that day, when they say "*capoeira*," everybody else put their right hand over their heart, and they'll say, "iê" and we'll do that three times. Then after that, you know, the leaders, or whoever's leading class, they'll go through the whole line and just shake their hands and that's how we exit, every class. (Zum)

the reason I mentioned the *bateria* and the way that the *roda* is navigated, we preserve these traditions um, for reasons related to the deeper constructs so that you can go into it, if you want. But at the surface level you could just be the person who just goes and you're like, "I don't know, the *berimbau* went down so I just know that's when we shake hands and I go in and play." (Raca)

the music is definitely a huge part. It definitely gets us all together and gets everybody excited... I don't know what it's called, but the song that we do at the end that like pays tribute... I would say that's very important; we do that after of every class as well. everything else in the middle may change, but those two things are the most consistent, I think are a huge part – our start and our finish. (Neef)

At the end of class we ... give tribute to our ancestors of the group and of greater *capoeira*... that's a big one for me. And certain things like, the only person who can lead it, is in full uniform, so our group shirt, our group pants... I just respect that traditional ritual that we do have. (Mel)

With regard to *rodas*, Junior stated, "the first game to me means a lot." Noa shared, "as far as like the more meaningful traditional stuff, always the *roda*. It's always the *roda*." Muntu stated, "ritualistically... we used to meet and play, and then kind of stuck with going to that location. So that's kind of the ritual that has been continued on."

It's an interesting difference I suppose in culture cause in Angola ... you go to the center of the *bateria* where they're playing and usually in Angola they see that you're going to buy in so they end their game... in Regional *chuckling* you kind of, just like, you go to the center to ask to buy in of course, but like then when you go in, you ... just like, hip bump the other person out which I think is even considered rude, versus like Angola. Like Angola groups, it's like you know you ask, and then you let them finish and it's very respectful, Regional we're like "uh!" *both chuckling* "I'm in here, go away" *both chuckling* "It's my *roda* now." Like, not exactly like that, but I can see like a stark difference in culture in those two things, 'cause *regional*, we're going fast and it's like, "there's no time for this, you might get kicked." It's like, you get in, you get out, they get out, like, "everybody move so they don't get kicked." (Muito)

one of the biggest traditions that I've personally enjoyed, is that at the end of the event when we're all just sort of socializing, a number of us will go to like a small room and we'll just start playing *capoeira*, no music, nothing. And over time, people will come in, they start to play, they start to get involved, it becomes bigger and bigger, and then all of a sudden there's a second *roda* going on. It's incredibly informal, that's one of the

biggest cultural traditions that I've personally experienced in my group that I don't want to see go away. And it doesn't even have to be a *batizado*, it can be at the end of an event, sometimes it's been like at the end of a class. (Greg)

Participants also discussed the importance of *batizados*, as Curtis stated, "definitely the *batizado*, there's usually a *maculêlê* performance, a lot of references to cultural stuff in the performance."

Ser noted, "we have our *batizado*, so basically our rank test." Data shared, "Our *batizados* are always on June nineteenth, for Juneteeth, the *Dia de Liberação*, ... our first *batizado* was in 200..5 I think, and we had one everyone year except this year."

Na roda, na vida. Seven out of eight groups discussed ideas from the *roda* that apply to life, and vice versa. Game stated, "being able to navigate that both in the *roda* and in life, that kind of idea ... resonates with me, and, like that's part of capoeira." Junior noted, "that circle, that circle is, it doesn't just last in the *roda*, we carry it with us." Njinga shared, "Sometimes it's not necessarily the sequence, you know, sequences are important in the conversation of *capoeira*, and survival tactics outside of the *roda*. You know, you're going in the *roda*, and in life also, that's *capoeira na vida.*"

my MESTRE, he says "How that person is in the *roda*, is how that person is in life." And so if you have a very boastful person, a very violent person in the *roda*, they're very aggressive, that's probably how they are, how that person actually is in life, and so you get to choose how you interact with that person. Are you going to go head to head with them, or are you going to redirect their negative energy, or you know, you determine how you want to engage with that person. And so, you are developing yourself in accordance to how they are playing... in the *roda*, in *capoeira*, you learn what kind of person you want to be, and then you hone those skills, and then you take those skills into the rest of world, into everything else that you do. (Data)

I think my group is a microcosm of *capoeira*, and the world. So there are people who cannot afford classes, there are people who would love to be with *capoeira* every day, as well, as some days they're like, "i'm tired" you know, there are some who ask a million questions and some who think that they know everything. It's a microcosm of what the world is. (Njinga)

it's a lot of eye opening, it's a lot of ignorance, it's a lot of intelligence, it's like, "how do you approach it?" And then that comes right back to your daily living, how do you deal

with society, the same way, and how do you listen to certain truths, even if it's coming from a source that you don't want. (Zum)

for respect the traditions, it's like that age-old, like you're existential crisis, like "who am I?" remember where you came from, remember what work was done before you, and to respect that, and kind of like live that dream. But then also, what was the second one I said? Practice inclusion, just like the passion, being in person, helping, being that light in life. (Mel)

when learning *capoeira*, you learn that things happen, I think even with the *ginga* ... I used to teach *capoeira* at a place where they did Afro-dance. And come to find out, the *ginga*, the three-step movement which is the basic philosophy of *capoeira*, is that you step forward and step back and step forward. And I was in the Afro class, it was like, "oh! This is a tradition that things push back, but even if they push back, you gotta keep moving forward." And so it was like, even the *ginga* in that philosophy, like no matter what, things may come against you and push you back, but you don't stand there and stand still. (Muntu)

I think it [group philosophy and regular life] just mirrors it... that's kind of how I was brought up, was you know, my parents being like that, just looking out for family. Even the Korean school that I'm at, it does have that similar camaraderie of, "hey I'm feeling sick today, would you be able to cover class for me?" even though it's like ten minutes before class starts. You know, "I got you, I'll take care of you, I'll do whatever needs to be done for the good of the school." And I think it's just you know, I gravitate towards people that are like that, that are willing to sacrifice this for you know, the good of the group or the good of the family. (Sim)

we want to be able to thrive in life. We want to be able to not just float. And the process to do that, I shouldn't have to put someone down. So I'm not going to just kick fast because I know you're not as fast as I am, then we don't get to have a conversation. And at some point you're going to start wanting to talk to me, because I keep talking. So we have those conversations, how can we get along, and then how can you add spice to those conversations in a respectful manner. And how do you respond when someone is giving you spice. And the spice is that you don't, maybe you're uncomfortable, they're too close to you, maybe you're not comfortable with the move that they did. "I have knee problems, did they know? Why were they sloppy, why -?" How are you going to respond to them? (Njinga)

most of what people learn, or even math, or whatever it is that you do, can be incorporated into the *capoeira* life, and vice versa. You know, I always ask students, one of the things that I try to tell them is, "never get trapped in a corner of a circle when you're playing *capoeira*," they say, "what do you mean, a corner?" I say, "well, when you're in a corner, it's hard to move right?" They say, "yeah." So, "a corner would be when you're playing *capoeira* in the *roda*, and you're right next to the *bateria*, you can't go back, you can't fall on them, and the way the person is moving it's making it difficult for you to go to the left or the right, it's almost like being stuck in a corner." So I say, "don't get yourself stuck, you know in that position, be so close to the edge of the circle, where you can't maneuver around, so just stay closer to the center or whatever, or just keep moving." (Zum)

Participants discussed specific examples of how their experiences in *capoeira* related to their lives. Tiba shared, “after getting through the qualifying exam, I learned to start to try to apply the same kind of mentality that I did with *capoeira*. Like, take your moments of achievement wherever you can get them.”

like in *capoeira*, it’s like, why am I so afraid ... to speak publicly, like I’m not gonna die. I just went in this *roda* and I did this thing and I did a trick I didn’t even know I could do until today it went. Like, where else can I do things like that? It’s like this *motioning hands stacking on top of each other* stacking, and just trial and error that I think is really cool. Like I think the biggest thing is like not being afraid to fail. (Neef)

a *ginga* is like a movement, like a constant movement to keep, to keep yourself protected from an adversary. You can do that at work, if you like have a job, you can do that there. It may not be like the physical *ginga*, but it could be like a movement of like, your plan, your strategy and like that type of thing I think is always, that *capoeira* is constant thinking, constant analyzing, constant application of what is learned. I learned that I move this type of way, I could get it. I don’t want to get hit, so I’m not gonna make this particular move. (Ser)

capoeira has, in many aspects, influenced how my life, how I have responded to scenarios, from career options, I think I became a better instructor or teacher, not only in *capoeira* but as a math teacher, also in my encounters with, in relationships. (Muntu)

we not only talk about *capoeira*, but we talk about other aspects of life together... I do feel more positive with tackling other aspects of my day-to-day life. ‘cause even when I went into the exam the second time, I can’t say honestly that I felt that confident about physics *chuckle* but I still, I was still getting some confidence from *capoeira* ... and that pushed me through. (Tiba)

Individuals mentioned ways that ritual or *capoeira* movement is present in their daily lives:

there’s two [rituals]: the one about when you first enter, and announcing your presence; and giving tribute to the ancestors as well, because those two have become part of my daily practice... I’m naturally a shy person, and *capoeira* has shown me to, not only announce myself when I walk in a door, a *roda*, can be seen as a door as well. So introduce yourself in whatever space you’re in, make your presence known. (Mel)

Like I was just in Guatemala... I think like Lake Ataclan ... and I was this roof and I just found myself doing the *ginga*, like because I, I didn’t do anything else, like I was doing the movement, like I was turning like I was going to throw some kicks – I didn’t throw any kicks – I was just moving and I find myself like doing that when I’m cooking sometimes like I’m just doing a *ginga*. Or sometimes I find myself singing a random song, like maybe there’s a little bit of inception and I find myself singing it... As far as *capoeira* goes, yeah I find myself kind of moving, like I’ll swing back and forth sometimes if I feel tight. It helps me relax. (Neef)

Mestre, his piece of advice on my game is that it looks like I'm trying to do five different things all at once and I need to just like slow down, and just like take my *capoeira* one move at a time. I found that *chuckle* in life, I'm, I guess like constantly trying to multi-task. My mind isn't necessarily in the task that I'm doing at the moment; I'm always trying to ... hold like five different trains of thought all at once. So like the *roda* has been like this microcosm where I can plainly see the patterns and behaviors ... that have been like holding me back kind of globally, and that's been very helpful. (Brandon)

I always use the example of *malicía*, especially for working people, or kids too, it's like, "you ever told your mom that you were going by your little girlfriend house but you actually went by your little boyfriend house? That's *malicía*." *chuckle* you know what I'm saying? Or if you're on an interview, right, you go to the interview, you know what you're getting into, you know at the end of September there's a job, or position, career, that's promised to you but it doesn't start until September, but in the meantime you need to work. So you go to this interview and there's people asking you, "well we want some people that's gonna be here for the long-term." "oh sure, I'm, I've done some research on this company and I'm sure that I would be here till I retire," but you know, come September, you quittin'. (Zum)

I feel like, whether it's in training or when it's like playing *capoeira*, I kind of keep getting back up for the next beat down, *chuckle* or the next really hard thing and when it's done correctly, it is my hope that I encourage the people around me to keep going and keep doing *capoeira*. Sometimes I'm afraid that you know, that maybe it comes off a bit, like the wrong way, like it might come off as kind of like show-boaty, or something like that. But like, when I do it right and I guess I'm moving from a place of axe and not like anything else, then that's when all the pieces come together and I can encourage the people around me to keep going with *capoeira*. (Brandon)

I feel like there are a lot of nuances that I pay attention to now and it's only because of how I sort of learned to handle myself in the *roda*. And I've been able to sort of apply those concepts into my everyday life, in some ways, a practical sort of self-defense. (Greg)

Identity

Six different codes were identified for this domain including: student/learner; most marginalized/least mainstream; most important when doing *capoeira*; being a capoeirista; function/influence; and connection/congruence. All participants discussed their identities through creation of identity diagrams, as previously detailed. Furthermore, all groups discussed what it means to be a capoeirista (7.4), and seven out of eight groups discussed the connection or congruence of their identities with *capoeira* (7.8).

Being a capoeirista. Participants discussed *capoeira* in terms of it being a lifestyle, commitment or dedication to training, how a person plays and their personality, growth, relationships, and meaningful aspects of being a capoeirista. Game noted that one of his teachers shared, “some people kind of go to *capoeira*, they get in the *roda*, and they become a *capoeirista* for an hour and a half or so,” meanwhile, participants discussed *capoeira* as a lifestyle. Student A stated, “I kind of feel like you can see it... sometimes like people try it out and then you can sort of tell...we kind of say it a lot, it’s not for everybody, it’s such an encompassing lifestyle.” Simba stated, “It’s not just a martial art... [it’s] more than a language and a way of life.” Tiba shared: “what’s coming to my mind is really valuing the commitment to *capoeira*.”

that was me as a *capoeirista*, it’s the fact that I finally had taken classes, I was finally on a consistent path and I started learning, really learning things, and I guess it became official when I got my first cord. So then, yeah, so I feel like I became a *capoeirista* when I finally got that first cord. (Noa)

Mandinga stated, “now as I’ve been training now for thirteen years...I train six days out of the week... it’s a very integral aspect of my life.” Njinga shared, “*capoeira* is how I walk... it’s every day, it’s not something that I can do without... to me it’s not something that’s only physical movement, but how we move within society, how we move within family.” Cava noted, “like I’d be doing it all the time... everything I do is *capoeira*.”

I think you can tell pretty early. Like some people come to class and then they’ll hold out for another class or two and then they’re just like, ‘this really isn’t... ‘ like they have that look And I think someone who really embraces it, are just kind of constantly smiling, constantly excited, constantly waiting and trying to get into it. (Student A)
but I felt like a *capoeirista* when I found myself consistently and I found myself training to the point where soreness was a thing, and soreness had to be overcome I feel like when you finally overcome the soreness of an activity, that’s when you become that person, you become that basketball player, you become that football player, you become that martial artist, you become whatever it is you had to deal with, you had to deal with the initial ordeal and still came through, then you become that thing. (Noa)

when someone transitions into like the onlooker to this art and like a participant that’s like such a beautiful transition. They’re not just that bystander just watching the *roda*,

and they're like, 'I can't do a ton of things, but at least I can vouch for and feel like 'I'm a *capoeirista*' ... like that transition is amazing. (Curtis)

I like to say that there's two types of people that's involved in *capoeira*. It's like, you have *capoeira* students, or people who take *capoeira*, and they can be really good, just awesome. And then you have *capoeiristas*. The difference, for *capoeiristas*, it's never separate. For the *capoeira* student, it's something that they like to do. And for a *capoeirista* ... that's not the case... I like to say that *capoeira* is that little piece between my inhale and my exhale, that's where you'll find my *capoeira*. that's not much space. (Zum)

I just don't really separate it from me, like, when I play my game, it's just my expression, it's my story, I feel like it's an inseparable part, like I don't become a different person. I become like more me. (Muito)

we practice these things as well, we learn about the history of *capoeira*, we learn about the culture, we learn how to interact with other *capoeira* groups and how to respect the Mestres, so it's definitely treated as a way of life. (Tiba)

Participants also described the importance and variety of elements encompassed in the art form.

Some might kind of like pick and choose... elements they like about *capoeira*... I had a teacher that will ... teach you how to be effective in terms of like, how to kick somebody and like interactions of the game. But when it came to the history, of like, you know, there was nothing, there was no substance there. They didn't know the samba, they didn't really teach their students... even the basics of *capoeira* history, they wouldn't teach their students about the Mestres, it's like, "okay, this is our lineage" and that's it, nothing of the greater scope of *capoeira*. And like a Mestre of *capoeira*, for me, is a number of things. (Game)

for me personally, my first experience with *capoeira* was a class where I was thrown in, I got the music, there was some *roda* time, there was partner work...it's about the music elements, in terms of music and singing. There's also the dance elements. (Game)

to really understand the importance of not just learning movement, but really understanding how to engage in a game with someone, and how to come and properly play a game, how to have a respectful *roda*, and engaging with another *capoeirista* in a *roda*. (Tiba)

I see being a *capoeirista* as having the responsibility for ... this culture that we decide to take part in, 'cause for me it's not just fast kicks and *esquivas* and *rasteiras*, like yeah, that's part of it, but there is that whole spiritual, there is the tradition part, there is the ancestral part, there is the respect part, there is, even like this whole uprising that's happening, that, that's been such a strong theme in *capoeira* since it started! We are responsible for preserving *capoeira* for what it really is. (Mel)

Participants discussed reflections about themselves and others as capoeiristas. Curtis shared, “for a lot of students that I’ve been teaching lately... I’m not the first person to introduce them to *capoeira*, so I’m helping hone things and building that comfortability, but they already, from my understanding, all feel like *capoeiristas*.”

like when I travel – I haven’t done this in a long time – but I used to when I travel, I would bring my uniform and I would try to visit another school and try to learn, like you know the new songs and different sequences of movements so I guess being in *capoeira* is always looking for opportunities to grow and become a better person and *capoeirista*. (Student A)

for me it’s ... twofold: so it’s improving myself and my like, abilities, but also my worldview... and especially now in, especially now, because there is a lot of racial injustice that I was aware of before this year, but the past few years have really helped to remove the rose-colored glasses, if you will. And I feel like that has made being a part of *capoeira*, being a *capoeirista*, that much more important, because, especially as a White-leaning Latino, it’s, because I pass, right, I feel like it’s even more important to be involved in *capoeira*, because there are so many things in our society in the U.S. that are stacked against racial minorities. (Ole)

The first day I knew I was a capoeirista, was when I met *PROFESSORA* for the first time...so it’s like, as usual, it’s like only *Mestres* and like the titled cords can graduate students. So I’m playing for my first cord ever right, in my first group there was no one who looked like me, nooooooo one, and I was just kicking, I’m like, “whatever.” And I was supposed to play another *mestre* at the time, but my *Mestre* at the time who was at the berimbau said no, and called *PROFESSORA* from across the room to play me for the first time. And I looked at her and I was like, “what!?!?” ... and she gave me the business *chuckle* the business, embarrassed me so hard, the whole room was crackin’ up ‘cause like she has the locks and the features, and I’m like, “oh and she can move too?!” “okay, so I can do this too.” So that’s when I knew. (Mel)

some *capoeiristas* more than others like to be very tricky. I’ve met a lot of personality, a lot of tricky people where they’re like - and then they kick you the other way that you’re not anticipating, they’re trying to get you to look this way. So that’s adds a lot of personality and attitude ... I have never heard of seeing that in other martial arts. (Muito)

In addition to how individuals play or approach *capoeira*, participants noted the importance of their relationships with other *capoeiristas* and the role of *capoeira* in their lives.

She [student] like put a picture on SOCIAL MEDIA and was like wearing the shirt like under her hoodie like a white training shirt and like people noticed and commented. You know, it’s cool that people feel like affiliated with something and they want to like share it outwardly with the world. (Raca)

I'm trying to like find when that moment was, because I remember for a while feeling like I was someone who did *capoeira* but wasn't exactly like a *capoeirista*. Oh, I feel like it was um, when I did *capoeira* in ASIAN COUNTRY, it was like my junior year of college, I did a spring semester abroad in ASIAN COUNTRY. And while I was over there, I trained with a certain, GROUP NAME, over there. And like my LANGUAGE is enough to survive over there, but I, I am and was far from fluent. And despite that, I was able to go to these *capoeira* classes and um, I remember like, like people would talk at me for like maybe a couple minutes about something. And like I would just like be able to pick up the gist of it, and there was just like this...like deep level of understanding with these people, even though ... I didn't have like that great a grasp on their language. (Brandon)

My fondest memories are not so much of, you know, being in the *roda* or doing this fancy move or whatever, but it's the after fact, you know, when the event's over, you're just getting along, you're just talking about you know, the good time you had and just meeting afterward for drinks and just sharing stories. (Sim)

I don't mean to sound corny when I say this, but I don't know what I'd be doing if I didn't practice *capoeira* like I would probably just be hanging out with people and I'd be having a good time and I'd have a decent time and life and I'd just be like "yay" *chuckle* at the end of it, "Woo! That was a good ride" *chuckling* but ... I don't think I would have been involved with anything really community centered I'm sure if it weren't for *capoeira*. (Raca)

Honestly I think the coolest thing is um, like being able to share it with others...I wasn't in a group yet. I couldn't afford it so there was a guy at a gym that like I used to see him do it and I used to ask if I could come train with him. And there was another gentleman there, he had two kids and he definitely couldn't afford *capoeira* but he loved it. So, when I could afford it once I finished my masters, I started doing it at like a legit, actual gym. And every time I came back, I recorded it and then him and I would like, one of his other students that couldn't afford it, we would go together in the gym that I would work out at and we would go over some of the movements ... like I thought that was huge. (Neef)

we're flowing, just like with real kind of like angola style. I went into like, what is that – aranha, just like out of nowhere and had that like really flow when it was time for me to come back to the U.S. I had a goodbye *roda* with everyone (awe) and it like felt really good because *chuckle* I think like the only friends that I made during my study abroad there who weren't American were the *capoeiristas* that I met, and I was just like, really thankful for that. And I think that my ability, like *capoeira*'s ability to like connect me with these people despite the language barrier was the experience that had me like, "okay, I'm a *capoeirista* now." (Brandon)

Connection/congruence. Individuals described their connections to *capoeira* through an affinity for the art form and the historical African roots. Raca stated, "I wouldn't necessarily say it's my role as a teacher being important to me it's just the fact that I'm doing *capoeira* that's

important to me more so than most things including family.” E noted, “I’ve actually seen that a lot with ANOTHER GROUP MEMBER... when he first started coming and then he started progressing and more and more I could tell like, he really got into it.” Zum stated, “the only thing that brought me to *capoeira*, when I found out, ‘oh it was developed by Africans, okay I can’t do kung fu anymore I need to do *capoeira*.”

A lot of people can say you go to work a nine to five job and they’ll hate their job but I literally go to work and I love going to my job because I’m always teaching something different and I’m teaching something I love, and that’s just martial arts in general. (Do)

To be a *capoeirista* is definitely very important for me because of the fact that again, the first aspect of African martial arts, it’s you know, getting a chance to practice something that I am very passionate about ... to be able to learn more about the African diaspora as well as like the, just overall just this particular art that has established itself for many years. (Noa)

it’s ... a practice that involves... the music, the dance, the martial arts element, but more so, I’m learning more about the philosophy, I’m starting to read books about this and *capoeira* and I feel like the philosophy of it is something that resonates with me. (Game)

Simba shared that he experiences a “stronger connection with African world [which] allows for creative expression and new ideas like ballet.” In addition, he stated he has a “new experience of time and connections to the universe” through *capoeira*. Terra noted, “It’s made me feel like there’s still a connection between Black people and something Black people created because, Black people, to be honest with you, we aint got much left, *Miãõ*, that hasn’t been taken.”

Through *capoeira*, that was like my reconnection to anything that had any African roots or African culture to it. So it’s kind of gotten me involved in other aspects of African culture, you know drumming and African dance. And though I don’t speak different African languages, I’m familiar with what certain countries speak. (Zum)

If I go into the *roda*, the breakdown was explained to me as far as the inversion of going into the *roda*, that there’s a possibility as to where you may get an instinct from the ancestors. And every time I go into the *roda*, and there was one time I told INSTRUCTOR R, especially, that I actually felt that connection. (Rãõ)

For some reason there is some disconnect, where I can’t sing the same way in English that I can in *capoeira*, and I feel like it’s because you know, I’m not, you know, very religious... but I feel like there is something immensely spiritual about singing songs that

come from people who look like you... epigenetics! Like the trauma that's passed down through generations and that might be why I sing these songs the way I do or why it feels so good, like the vibrations in my chest. (Terra)

With *capoeira* I've been able to embrace a lot more of who I am, and not the specifics, but it still gave me a general idea to be interested in, you know, as people from, within the African Diaspora, here's different aspects of what we've done and who we are, and how we've come to be American and the conditions that are still happening in Africa. Or you know, why we do the things we do, or don't do and you know, what residue we have from slavery, and what residue we have from the things our parents did or couldn't do. (Zum)

What it means to be a *capoeirista*... aside from the connection from my ancestors, that's what I feel like I get the most out of *capoeira*, in general, is the connection, with something my ancestors left, for us, you know. I feel like I'm still getting more in tune with... where I could be because a lot of my fitness journey and my career currently come from a European ... construct, when I got introduced to *capoeira*, it was something completely different... what it's caused me to do actually, is like look up the different religious beliefs that came from *capoeira* before they came here, which was the Yoruba construct, and the Candomble. (Rão)

Healing: Interpersonal

Eight different codes were identified for this domain including: welcoming, inclusive community; fun/enjoyment; knowing each other/connection; safe space; ever present; and uplifted/supported. Out of the eight primary codes for this domain, three codes were discussed by all eight groups: welcoming (4.1), family/travel (4.4), and knowing each other/connection (4.5). Seven out of eight groups discussed two codes: inclusive community (4.2) and safe space (4.6).

Welcoming. Participants discussed times when they have felt welcomed, and the importance of welcoming others. Terra stated, “as a teacher, you have to make sure that your students feel like they're welcome.” He added it is also important to “mak[e] sure that your students recognize that they are valued and that their presence is so appreciated. And, that tends to disarm a lot of fears.” Neef shared:

with *capoeira*, it's like everyone's so welcoming that it doesn't matter what group you go to, even if it's very different than what you've learned, they're more than willing to be like, “oh where are you from?” and “what's your name?”...like they're very embracing.

Tiba stated that when she started taking *capoeira* classes, Mestra “made a point to make everyone feel welcome, no matter what their level was.” She also shared, “the group that I’m with now, it’s very friendly, and very intimate.” Noa stated, “It felt good being in a group that was very welcoming.” He added, “from the time that I know that when we started, it started out really small. And the way that it was done was, it was pretty much like a very welcoming environment.”

When Junior was visiting his Mestre in Brazil, he stated others invited: “‘hey, we’re all going to train together; here, come over here, let’s have dinner,’ saying ‘let’s talk’ or they were just like, ‘yeah, come down to the neighborhood.’” Junior also stated, “I like met everybody and got like introduced to the whole neighborhood.” Mel shared:

my current *capoeira* group culture and why I joined this group was because it’s more of an open and accepting friendly environment. It’s not like, “oh this is what we do, and don’t nobody else -” no it’s not like that ... It’s very inclusive and we learn so many things under the *capoeira* spectrum which keeps us in that friendly light.

Terra also discussed an experience in which he attended the first event with his *capoeira* group.

Mestre gives up the berimbau, he walks all the way around the *roda* to me, he like takes me by hand, pulls me up, and like gives me this massive hug. He’s like, “yeah go change, we’re having a *roda*, yeah, come on!”

Rão stated, “it was like a welcoming moment, you know the hug afterward, it felt authentic, like, “okay, this is my group, this is my family.”” He added:

I’m good, yes I’ve got the clearance, I’ve got a blessing from the Mestre ...it’s like, “yeah! I’m here now!” So after that I mean, we played ‘til about midnight, I swear. The longest open rodas ever, and then they partied afterward ... but my moment came with MESTRE in which I look forward to playing him again.

Sim also recounted when he met Mestre and felt welcomed.

meeting MESTRE NAME, he's the one that gave me my name. And I got it, you know, he didn't see me play, it was just through conversation. We were just having a simple conversation, he spoke a little Spanish, I spoke zero Portuguese. And we were just, actually INSTRUCTOR walked up and he was like, "maybe this weekend we can give him a name," you know pointing to me. And he just looks at me, and he just says the name, and I'm like feeling this warmth around me and you know, I feel it, you know. So, it's just having that welcoming feeling of being a part of a new group and family, it's, it's incredible.

Zum stated, "part of the class environment is just making everybody feel welcome. And, and no bullying, and you know when there's kids involved, you try to teach them, just some basics of being decent and growing up." He added:

As far as making people feel comfortable, to me that comes with instruction, and it comes with the atmosphere of your class, where nobody's trying to make somebody feel that they're actually incapable of doing the movement...and everybody chimes in and, you know, helps the next person move from point a to point b.

Similarly, Cava shared:

making the students feel comfortable and accepted and to not single anybody out even if they may not be able to do a certain move for some reason, and making everyone feel welcome, 'cause on the first day everyone's gonna look awkward 'cause certain moves in *capoeira* is just not natural... not something you wake up doing every day. If you can make someone feel comfortable doing it, or even laughing and joking with them and letting them know, "you know, we've all been in this position before," just helps everybody feel a lot more comfortable to keep moving forward.

Muito stated, "groups are very friendly, very open and very welcome and it's a very close feeling like where, it feels like you instantly have friends like you can join the group, and everybody's so welcoming and open." As far as welcoming others, Tiba stated she thinks about "how I treat new people and bring new people into the group, that I'm doing my part to make sure that the group is welcoming." Terra noted that he focuses on "making them [students] feel like they're a human being, and making them feel like they're a part of the space". E stated, "just make them feel comfortable, cause if they feel comfortable, they're gonna feel welcome and if they feel welcome, they're gonna want to keep on going."

Family/travel. Many participants discussed family, moving, and travel. E stated, “I’ve said it before, I feel like *capoeira*’s, the people that I’ve met in *capoeira* is like family to me.” Ica shared: “it’s building a family more so than just having classes, cause it’s not just a class, it’s a family of people.” She added, “it’s definitely given me family. It’s given me my family, like my brothers and sisters in *capoeira*. It’s given me my significant other in *capoeira*.” Game shared, “It’s also affected my life in terms of that’s how I met my girlfriend, she’s you know, she’s training with the group, and so that’s how I met her.” Junior stated, “my teacher, his children call me tio.” Mel noted, “like they’re not even my *capoeira* group members, they’re family to me. Even those kids, those are my kids too...they’re my brother and my sister.” Curtis stated, “I definitely felt like part of a family.” Noa stated, “It’s like a family, it is a family almost.” Greg noted, “it was sort of like an extension of like, a second family while I was there.” Muntu stated, “the benefits have been building relationships that have spanned beyond local borders, sharing with people to the point where they’ve become kind of like extended family members.”

Student A stated, “*capoeira* is sort of like this culture, a big family, everybody’s doing the same thing, so ... like it felt like even though I’ve never met these people, it was like I already did.” Muito shared:

It’s like, family, like you have extended relatives, it doesn’t matter if you don’t know them, you’re still welcomed by them cause they’re your family. It feels like that even if you’ve never met before, your still embraced as part of the family.

Sim noted, “being able to talk to MESTRE like he knew me already... just that energy of just feeling like you’re part of the family when you’re just meeting for the first time.” Similarly, Junior shared:

For me, I'm just like, I feel family in y'all, even though I haven't met y'all, you know, via face to face. that's kind of, kind of what I get out of it, like an extended family that ah, speaks Portuguese.

Student A also stated, "I always encourage my students, or like my students are just scared of traveling around, and moving to new towns, and I always tell them, "There's nice people everywhere. You just have to find your family wherever you go."

We kind of describe it as my *capoeira* family, like when you bring somebody new to *capoeira*, like, "oh yeah, you want to try *capoeira*? I do this martial art. Oh and you can meet my *capoeira* family." And that's like how um, a lot of people in my group would describe it. Like, they were going to ANOTHER EAST COAST CITY to meet the rest of the academy and they were like, "I'm so excited to get to meet my *capoeira* family." (Muito)

I can't say every group, but most groups, our group in particular, it's like a family... everybody's close-knit...I can recall times where we had students who would bring their kids, you know, babies, babies who are still drinking bottles, and I found myself instead – you know one of the other instructors was teaching the class and I'm on the side, feeding the baby with the bottle... sometimes the kids would come, not a lot, but sometimes, and kids just running all through the roda, and as class is going on. (Zum)

my family, my brothers, they reminded me a lot of myself in terms of personality and stuff, and GROUP MEMBER, who is one of the members, like really cool guy, he kind of gave me a history of *capoeira* from the Angola side, so our group, we practice Angola Sao Bento Grande...he was telling me about how he basically brought *capoeira* to SOUTHERN CENTRAL CITY and just the, really is the family aspect ... it was really like, "we're just family." (Ser)

basically within our training, within ourselves, within each other, with making the group stronger, so the philosophy I feel from the group is you know, first and foremost, we're a family and we take care of each other, we push each other, and we try to just improve each other. (Njinga)

In contrast to individuals who identified group members as family, Raca stated

a lot of people talk about like their *capoeira* family and their brothers and sisters and whatever, and I don't really look at it that way because family means almost got a negative connotation in my mind.

He clarified that his *capoeira* group is considered to be his “chosen family.” Do also stated, “I just think *capoeira* is like, at the end of the day, it’s a family. Like, it doesn’t matter – anywhere you’re at, anywhere you’re at, you’re always gonna have a family.” He added:

capoeira is just a family, not just – like different groups...it’s kind of like funny to me, like *capoeira* groups are like Crips and Bloods and different gangs but at the end of the day, at the end of the day besides the whole killing and stuff...we unite, as one, as a family.

In terms of moving and travel, Tiba shared, “it’s helped me find like a friend group, it helped me find a family.” She added, “even as I’ve moved around I’ve found new *capoeira* groups and it’s given me a new, a sense of community outside my work environment.” Student A noted, “moving to MIDWESTERN CITY was kind of the same thing...’I don’t know anybody here either,’ and so, coming here and finding the group, GROUP NAME, so that was really helpful.” Muito also shared:

when I moved to EAST COAST CITY it was helpful because I had lived in DIFFERENT EAST COAST STATE, so I came here for school and I didn’t know as many people...it was just nice, that you have this already pre-made group of people you can hang out with that you already have something in common with, you can already hang out doing an activity.

Student A shared a similar anecdote:

capoeira I think has been great ... so I started in college and then I was with a group for a few years in SOUTHWESTERN STATE and then I came here to MIDWESTERN CITY. So, I think it’s helped me a lot in so many ways because I’ve moved around so much... so transitioning from SOUTHERN STATE to SOUTHWESTERN STATE, um it definitely eased the transition to have like a group of people who I already knew were kind of like-minded and it was almost like there was already a family there.

Ica stated, “he [other instructor]’s one of my big brothers in *capoeira*. He moved here because his girlfriend is here going to school so it worked out like “hey we get to run a school together again.” Greg shared: “after I graduated, then moved back to MIDWESTERN CITY, one of the first things I did was I looked up other *capoeira* groups.”

Student A stated, “what I learned from *capoeira*, is that everywhere you go, there’s a family there waiting for you. You don’t have to make sure you have family there, you just have to find your people.” Do shared: “every *capoeirista* is, ‘Oh I’m traveling with MESTRE’ and it’s a blessing to travel itself ‘cause obviously you’ve only got one life and you wanna see the world as much as possible.” Muntu stated, “in you’re in here and you need a place to stay, you got you know, you got a door, you got a floor, a bed, something like that.” Junior stated, “how we’ve been traveling over the years, we always stay with family... we don’t go to hotels; the hotel is a last resort.”

there’s been different places I’ve been, and I’m like, “yeah I’m gonna go to a hotel” and they’re like, “no you good.” there’s been times that Mestre gave me the key to the academy, just like, “you can just stay in the academy.” (Do)

I just received a message from ... another *capoeira* teacher, and she said, “do we know anybody in this town in WEST COAST STATE?” and of course we’re like, “why?” “there’s supposed to be a doctor that’s there, that’s the best of the best in this particular disease she has.” One of the other members of the group says, “oh I lived there for ten years, what do you need? Need a place to stay? I got you, give me a minute.” And you know that your friend’s gonna be okay, you know that your friend doesn’t have to get a hotel and this and that. “I just need a couple days,” whatever it is, but you can make those arrangements, that’s a huge, huge network. (Njinga)

Junior stated, “something that I’ve always had, was being able to like, see and explore the world.” Mandinga stated, “over the summer I went to university for a writing conference but also the headquarters of *capoeira* group is there.” Tiba stated, “we also travel a lot together to different events.” Do shared: “a lot of *capoeiristas* who are in EAST COAST STATE, ‘I wanna travel, go here, I’m gonna go to Peru, I’m gonna go here.’”

I traveled different places and I tried to find a group first, so you know different workshops where we’re sharing, whether it be in SOUTHEAST CITY, MIDWEST CITY, SOUTH CENTRAL STATE, I even, MIDATLANTIC CITY. I was even fortunate enough to go see Mestre, Graõ Mestre João Grande in SOUTH CENTRAL STATE. (Muntu)

I became really close with the school that was established in MIDWESTERN CITY HERE before I started teaching and then I even took that community to like other cities in STATE, so I traveled to like CITY IN STATE, CITY IN STATE, CITY IN STATE, I even went to CITY IN SOUTHEASTERN STATE, A DIFFERENT CITY IN SOUTHEASTERN STATE, ANOTHER CITY IN SOUTHEASTERN STATE, MIDWESTERN CITY, ANOTHER MIDWESTERN CITY. (Greg)

I never would have gone to Brazil or Africa without *capoeira*. I...have a place in Kenya where I can go and I can stay there because of *capoeira*. I have places in Europe that I can go and stay because of *capoeira*. (Ica)

I travel a lot, and whenever I do travel, I get to engage with, I always find a community to engage with. Like, I lived in Germany an amount of time when I was a student, and one of the ways I ended up making friends was taking *capoeira* classes. And in fact, Germany was where I got a stable foundation on what differentiates *capoeira regional*, *capoeira contemporânea*, and Angola. And I'm still really good friends with all of those people. So *capoeira* has allowed me to make friends all over the world in a number of different ways. So the woman who I saw her last year, and I was able to go to the school that she trains with now, and I was able to talk with them and engage with them – it was awesome. (Greg)

when it was time for me to come back to the U.S. [from Japan] I had a goodbye roda with everyone and it like felt really good because *chuckle* I think like the only friends that I made during my study abroad there who weren't American were the *capoeiristas* that I met, and I was just like, really thankful for that...*capoeira's* ability to like connect me with these people despite the language barrier was the experience that had me like, "okay, I'm a *capoeirista* now." (Brandon)

I think non-tangible benefits would be, to be able to have the experiences of traveling to meet people that don't look like you and share spaces that may not have been raised the same way you have been raised, but you have this one common thing, a whole thread that weaves you together with people that you would never *chuckle* be friends with, or stay at their house, or have them over, you know. And it's so cool to be able to do that. I've had students who have traveled with me, or who have used my name to travel to other places and receive the benefits of *capoeira* and family, not just traveling and "I'm in a strange land," to have the benefits of an extended family member that's a phone call away or you know a facebook away. That's a huge benefit. I have family virtually everywhere, everywhere. (Njinga)

Do shared, "at the end of the day, *capoeira* is a poor man's martial art because you're just traveling. You're like that hippie, you're just traveling, and you're seeing the world, and it's beautiful."

Knowing each other/connection. Sim stated, “just being able to have that connection with somebody, you know, inside the roda and outside the roda, that’s what *capoeira* is.” Zum noted:

it’s a real social art, that has so many dimensions, even without the, you know if you’re not being taught the fight, maybe it’s just the music, it’s just being around positive people that just keep you just turned on.

Junior stated, “We’re getting to know each other, we’re getting to like share.” Ole stated, “I would definitely say the philosophy of ours is to connect.” Ica shared: “I’ve had a student tell me that, in the past, the student was just like “it’s good to be connected”. She added, “the benefits are that it brings people together, and it makes people feel like they’re not alone.” Game stated, “I know some people that come to *capoeira*, *capoeira* can you know be the only social circle that they have.”

I think that there’s also the healing in sometimes people don’t realize where they are broken or harmed in their spirit, energy-wise, where their opportunity for leadership, or their opportunity just to have an audience, where people, or a person, is listening to what they’re saying. (Njinga)

Of course it was the community, but I also think it was the fact that I had a person who really did listen to me and help me through it. I think that’s, that was the real main thing that helped me through a lot of my situation, helped me through a lot of my problems. (Noa)

capoeira’s done a lot for me like it allowed me to make friends growing up in CURRENT CITY I was always sort of like a loner, I never got on with anybody, it’s a specific kind of culture here. And if you sort of like deter from that culture any type of way, it does sort of like, it sort of isolates you in a sense. (Greg)

For me personally, it’s made it more poignant to be a part of it [*capoeira*] because I’m not a straight White guy in the U.S. So we’re you know, I’m, I look White, which helps me pass, but I am Latino and, in a homosexual marriage... already being the minority in some parts of the U.S., certainly makes the community behind *capoeira* feel very welcoming because it doesn’t matter, for most groups I would say, it doesn’t matter who you are or what you are outside of the *roda*. (Ole)

we were renting space from a MARTIAL ART school and that guy, he was a real cool dude, Cifu, Cifu NAME, he was a, he was born, he was like born in the ‘60’s, grew up in the ‘70’s, very you know, pro-Black, Black Power, Black Panther, you know, and I think we was a member of the Nation of Islam, you know so, Black stuff? Check check check

check check. *chuckle* You know, he was a real cool dude, and probably one of my biggest supporters in the beginning. Like he made sure, like, you know, “you can do it,” like “don’t doubt yourself,” you know, he just really helped to uplift me. (Data)

Simba noted, “Benefits are experiential, deeper connections that are more focused and meaningful because they are sustained interactions.” Game stated, “you end up building a relationship with these people and you try to be encouraging, you know, help them, you become friends at that point.” E provided the following example of a social connection made through *capoeira*:

I always remember, he came in a couple times, what was it I think like a picture day or something, and he gave all of us a photo of ... yeah I know. *both chuckling* He gave one to me, to OTHER TEACHER, and GRADUADO.

Tiba shared, “Luckily with things like *capoeira*, I’ve found other circles over time, I’ve found other people to connect with over time.” She added:

I really like that [small group of regulars] because it just helped me to get to know each of the members a lot better. we share and kind of talk about things other than *capoeira* while we’re stretching together and I’ve always really liked that... that’s felt like a really great benefit to get to know people.

Student A stated, “if the members aren’t connecting to each other or with each other in a meaningful way, then you lose students and you don’t have that sense of belonging that’s so important.” Curtis noted, “that belonging, if you can finally see or feel that you’re a part of this family rather than just like, a visitor, that’s really the goal.” He added:

for the day-to-day classes... something I try to pass on is a lot of that language and understanding of Brazilian culture because I think it’s different, and trying to understand that, why certain things are the way they are can really help, especially people of color, to try to find some type of belonging.

Similarly, Njinga stated:

They [students] find it healing in their thinking and their purpose and their reasoning in what they do, to realize that they have an effect on someone else. And also, that effect may be big or small, it’s sometimes unrealized how you impact each other. So there’s healing in that relationship building.

Rão shared about his experience of belonging when playing a Mestre in the roda during their *batizado* weekend:

my test came, I'm in the back roda, minding my own business, playing with a couple of other amarelo's, verdes, azuls, it's cool. I do a *parafuso*, and there stands MESTRE, not standing, he walks into the *roda* with a *parafuso* - I'm like, "okay -" I'm like, is he, the first thing that goes through my mind, like, "okay does he know that his *roda* is over there?" So I'm like, "okay, it's do or die." ...everywhere I went, I mean he literally... he read me and I'm looking at his red shoe that he had on at every step, I'm trying to avoid in every aspect. But ...we ended on a *parafuso*, at the same time. We went simultaneously into each other, so if we didn't look at each other before we let those legs go, it would have been, he said it would have been *maculêlê*, we would have met shins, and possibly broke our shins. But we ended on the same movement, and for some reason, with that game right there, I felt like, "I belong." It was kind of like an intro to, it was my first Mestre play. (Rão)

Ole discussed the importance of physically gathering and stated, "one of the hardest parts about this who pandemic situation, is that we can't get together in person... that is such a vital part to the energy of *capoeira*, is being together." Njinga shared, "she [*capoeira* student]'a mom of two kids, she's working full time and she was looking for something to kind of connect her... she told me that it gives her that connection, but it also gives her that spiritual connection.

capoeira, for a lot of people, provides that community of people. In that sense, it means a lot, because it can be, you know, the foundation that you go to for tough times, or you know, encouragement, and those are the people you're building relationships with...so that's the healing aspect I would say of, you know, in terms of interpersonal connections. (Game)

she[*capoeira* student]'s specifically written to me, and some of my friends outside of *capoeira* that she's met through me, that we're like her favorite group of people to be around. And we don't like see her all the time but she's hung out with us. (Raca)

For like the benefits, there's like a social-emotional health, of just being able to talk. A lot of times we just talk about 23:00 our personal lives too cause we're like just friends. Like you get to meet a lot of really great people, really friendly, really great people that you can make great friends with and that they're there to like listen. (Muito)

we're like a family, legit, so we'll laugh together, we'll cry together, we argue, we fuss and, when it's all said and done, we'll hug it out, we'll eat together... So if you're in the group where... you don't have all those experiences, then that's not a group that I want to be in, 'cause it's really authentic, it's really organic. (Ser)

through *capoeira*, I've had great opportunities, from professionally, or we would say occupationally, and I met some wonderful people. Actually, I met, *chuckle*, I'm not in this relationship, but I met, actually two very pivotal relationships through *capoeira*, it wasn't intentional that way. But just because I was doing *capoeira*, it put, it broadened my social surroundings, my social circle. (Muntu)

I'm going for my doctorate in neuroscience right now, and there are a couple other *capoeiristas* in the program as well. And, um, like I have a lot of other friends within the, like within the graduate program, but these two other *capoeiristas*, I kind of have this unspoken level of community with them, because of our link in *capoeira*...like it feels really unique because on one hand, it enhances our connection, our familiarity when we do stuff, like our, the neuroscience that we do is way different, like of one them does FMRI stuff, another one does like cells in a dish, and I do like spinal cord work. But we're really familiar and have each other's back when it comes to like more general neuroscience outreach deals, *chuckle*. And when we're there, and we're at these different events, we catch each other up on how our *capoeira* is going (Brandon)

we went to MIDWESTERN STATE, MESTRE had to go back to MIDATLANTIC CITY, but we were there with MESTRE T and INSTRUCTOR D... neither of them spoke much English, but we were sharing stories. Like they were sharing stories of you know, how this *mestre* took out this *mestre*, and it was... just having that time to share and just enjoy each other's company. I think that's more so, at least being a part of this group of what *capoeira* means to me is having that ability just to enjoy each other. (Sim)

Everybody connecting and being on that same, that same current...and then having that same energy...like with new students and whatnot, everyone feeling connected and together, so whenever someone feels awkward or whatever, like everybody shares the same experience, at the same moment, whether you're new or you've been in *capoeira* longer. Like in that moment, everybody's sharing the same journey and experience together. So if you're a new student, like I might not be a new student, but I'm sharing this journey with you, you know, to help you grow and excel as well. (Cava)

Several individuals talked about training together and then continuing onto other activities, such as eating or spending time together. Junior stated, "We do things outside of training too. We might gather and be at somebody's house, like listening to music, playing music, having barbeques." Greg shared, "one of the biggest things after classes was after class we used to go get food and we would just socialize and eat." Game stated, "like the club members that I would teach, they sometimes would spend time after wards eating together and stuff like that." Noa shared, "we always socialize, we always try to find ways to hang out with

each other, outside of *capoeira*'s, you know outside the *capoeira* time.” Tiba noted: “you spend quite a bit of time together and in almost no time you feel like you’re really close friends *chuckle* from spending so much time together training and stuff.” Ica stated, “we go to class, and then after class we stand in a circle and talk, and then we get kicked out. So we go outside and then we stand in a circle and talk.” Game shared, “often times people incorporate that into their lives and have parties and they’ll invite people from their *capoeira* group and friends just end up being made.” He added, “people can often times, grow close with community.” Mel stated, “we went to the park, it was outdoors *chuckle* and our goal was just to do some workouts, but we wanted to play when we’re together. “

There were always people who came to class and just left and did their own thing, but I feel like the people who did never really stuck around. But the ones who part-took in this sort of communal aspect of simply just going out to get food together, those people stayed. (Greg)

I don’t know what other people do, most of the time I think they just do Netflix or chill, or I don’t know, go out drinking. I’m actually not sure what other people do cause *chuckling* *capoeira*, and we do that too, we do the drinking too. Like, I don’t go out to these types of venues like it’s always just *capoeira*, so I just, I really like just having people to just play with, like when you’re a kid and you play on a playground, like, just having friends to play with. (Muito)

I think if we had our own space, sometimes it’d go like, it’ll go way over time, you know just trying, because of the enjoyment, you’re having fun, you have other things you want to teach, just like a conversation. It’s like, “oh one more thing before we go, da da da da,” you start talking. Then another person say, “I know we supposed to be leaving, but let me say this last thing” and it just keep going until you realize, “you know what, my wife said I have to be home at a certain time,” *chuckling* “you know I have to go home, I have to pick the kids up from the babysitter, I really have to leave, I’m already like ten minutes late.” (Zum)

The culture’s kind of like a family, social community. The reason why I’m saying that is because it extends outside of the classroom, like people, we check on each other, we gather and go to events occasionally, or you know, throw barbeques, and hang around, tell stories, talk about what’s good in our lives, what our focus is outside of what’s happening in the *capoeira* circle. (Muntu)

We train, we got movement in, and it was after class, like “okay, well let’s just go get something to eat,” “what??” *chuckle* “yeah let’s go, what are you guys doing?” you know that’s really what happens often, “okay, that’s fine, let’s go hang out.” Or even when class is over, we don’t go get something to eat, we’ll just talk for maybe an hour, two hours about just life in general. It’s really, it’s really community. (Ser)

the camaraderie is funny, I’m gonna tell you this story... I had the ugliest game that I’ve ever had in *capoeira* and the guy I was playing was actually at the same dinner, the same, and I met him before a long time ago... and it ends up that we would get into fights, when he was doing *capoeira* it would be heated, so our *capoeira* was so heated. It was so heated that the Grand Mestre was like, “yo, stop stop, stop.” and I caused this, ‘cause I was the instigator... ‘cause it was to a point where we would have fought... I end up giving him a ride to MIDATLANTIC CITY, cause I was going that way. So...I’m on a four-hour trip with an individual who I just got into a heated physical confrontation with. And we’re having a conversation, and honestly speaking, we were actually able to talk through that experience. So, and we were able to see what was the ‘cause... that became a friend, so that is a benefit of *capoeira*: you think that your encounter would just be negative where you just make an enemy but you can make friends from people you have physical encounters with, altercations. (Muntu)

As a part of social connections, participants discussed support and celebrations. Noa stated, “they genuinely care about what I’m doing. And like we all generally care about what each other is doing, like how are we hanging in there, you know, like that kind of thing.” Tiba noted: “right now we’re doing it by way of zoom, so sometimes after classes we’ll sort of stick around on zoom and talk about how life is going and kind of encourage each other, that sort of thing.” Ser stated, “when one of the members had a baby, we got stuff together, ‘here you go.’ She didn’t expect that. ‘I know you didn’t, *chuckle* you’re family, so this is what we’re gonna do.’” Noa shared, “they genuinely did care about my well-being, and they cared about like what I was doing for my life and hoped that I could improve upon my life, take care of myself.” Ica noted, “they become comfortable with each other, they’re all from different places, they’re from all different walks of life but they all come together because of *capoeira* and they support each other.” Njing stated, “well we definitely celebrate holidays, every birthday that we can celebrate, we celebrate together... so *capoeira* is known for partying a lot in our academy.”

It's just trying to make sure that ... at least with the experience that you've got other people there that are falling off horses, seeing if you can get them back on their horses too. And so, the saying in the Korean martial art that I take, you know for every 100 students, there's only one that makes a black belt... the goal is always to try to get those 100 students to stick with it with you, so that when you test, you're there with 99 other classmates of yours instead of you by yourself... I guess that's another thing, is just making sure you're not there by yourself and pulling everybody with you through. (Sim)

seeing how it touches other people, is motivation for one: to keep going. Not saying that I ever lost motivation, but like, like when you see like how it affects other people, like it makes you want to just do it more, keeps you inspired and motivated to keep pushing. (Cava)

we have a Mexican guy with us who, he was with me when I was teaching at a college, and he had leukemia and he almost died. We was right there with him... he couldn't go outside. And we made sure that he had a berimbau and he could keep playing - you were talking about healing - and he's, and I think it helped him. His parents, his family, was glad that we could come over and see him and talk with him and whatever the case is, and he's 100 percent. (Zum)

I'm kind of a private person, and so, my father, like my biological father became an ancestor about a year ago...when I came back to class, the hugs that I got were just a little bit warmer...But one thing that my mom told me, over a decade ago, is sometimes people need to give for them. And so, where I was in mourning, I had the grief, I understand the value as to my classmates, my brothers and sisters in showing love, like, I would have been just like, "okay yeah whatever." But, I also recognize that feeling, showing love, like that, that's healing for them too. And so that's growth, that's healing, that's something that makes people feel good. And, okay yeah, I can give you a hug that's two seconds longer. (Ser)

we also sit there and support one another as we go through each accomplishment in our lives. We have like, one kid, he's too old to obviously be in the kids classes, but he is in like our teen/adult classes. And you know, like he graduates this year, so we were ready to come and celebrate, you know at his graduation party, for everybody to come. (Noa)

the healing part, I think it's just built in, and it's based on who's teaching the class, the environment, the aesthetics of the class, if it's a feel good environment, versus too much testosterone, and it's not so commercial-based and let me just teach you these things and we'll laugh sometimes and we'll go out and have a beer." but, you know, what's happening in your personal life, you know, "I feel sorry for you," but that's as far as we gonna go with it, you know you go home, I go home. (Zum)

Contra Mestre ...video called, just checking on me, and MESTRE called me, what, a couple of weeks ago, maybe last week, just to check on me, it was like, "okay, how is it going, how is the Mrs, tell me about the kids, like how are you really feeling, like what's really going on." It's not just that superficial-type thing of, "oh how are you doing today?"

Oh that's good, well I just wanted to say hi," no no no, it's like really deep, a really deep vibe, because *capoeira*, it can be healing. (Ser)

Birthdays are another good tradition, and just celebrating with one another, just to let them know that no matter what is going on out there, "hey, we thought about you." Then there's the drunk *capoeira* rodas, *chuckling* where we get tore up, and do *capoeira* in the dark *chuckle* ... just kind of like, those, those celebrations, being with each other *chuckling* (Data)

another thing that we kind of, my brother picked up from the *capoeira* group we did, in undergrad is the birthday *roda*. I don't know if other groups do that, yeah, it's tradition right, they sing the song and everybody plays the birthday person. (Muito)

Let's say we're celebrating your birthday. Of course, we'll have a *roda* and whatever else, the festivities of the day that you like to do... Anyone else in the group want to tell her how great she is and what they appreciate about her? "Well you know I like how she does her kicks when she plays with me, I think that's really cool." That means something to somebody. "Oh I remember when she taught me how to do a *aú* under a *mea lua de frente*, I remember that lesson." You're like, "oh snap, I did teach you that. We were working together in a group, but I didn't really think I was teaching you. But oh you remembered, that's cool." So you have an opportunity to not just have a focal point where maybe it's teacher to student, but it's your community that's celebrating. You're part of our network, so this is something that I just think is a really really amazing benefit, an amazing tradition that we have, is just celebrate each other. (Njinga)

Participants also discussed the longstanding impact of having connections through *capoeira*. E stated, "GRADUADO, I still talk to him, ANOTHER STUDENT, we go way back, and then we're still super close and we're still doing *capoeira* when we can. We sometimes get together and just jam." Ica shared, "it's being there for your community, being there to support the kids as they're growing."

I've seen some of the kids who were kids, who have kids now, and it's interesting, you know that they have come to the center with their kids, and see that we're still doing the same thing . And they'll be, "oh I remember, I remember Mr. NAME when we used to be in here doing it." And they'll do the ginga that they remembered from 8, 9, 10 years ago . But the fact that they, that it had some impact, that they still remembered, just to see it, even if you don't participate anymore, to see it on the screen, or to see somebody doing it, to be able to say, you know, "I know what that is." (Zum)

Inclusive community. Mandinga stated, "It's a way to connect and build community ...an opportunity to connect." Noa noted, "there's a high value on building community as well as

linking up and connecting with other *capoeira* groups within our community.” Ica stated, “it’s community. Without that, it would just be dancing around. For me, that’s what keeps me in *capoeira* is the community.” Game shared, “I’ve watched beginners, you know, definitely become engrained in the community and often times make it a bigger part of their life.” shared, “for me, having a sense of belonging and just the general community, that’s the biggest benefit that I’ve been able to take away from *capoeira*.” Muito noted, “I’ve absolutely loved it [*capoeira* community]. It’s kind of why I’ve been doing it for – ten years.”

I was really close with all of the people that I did martial arts with, so I did Northern Shaolin Kung Fu, I did akido, tae kwon do, Kali eskrima, krav magat, I did a number of martial arts that were offered at HIGHER ED INSTITUTION, but what kept me interested in *capoeira* was the overall community. (Greg)

after we made a trip to ANOTHER EAST COAST CITY for ANOTHER GROUP LEADER’S... grand opening of the branch down there. She like road tripped down there with me and this other guy and she like sent me a card on HOLIDAY after that...just being like, “thank you for helping me stay safe” ... I just think that’s a good example of the way people feel as part of the group here...included, valued. (Raca)

it’s about the community aspect for me. Like for the other martial arts, I was looking for more like, the body, like the heart and the body, the skills. And I am looking for that as well because *capoeira* has a unique style, but really what I’m looking to get out of *capoeira* is more of the experience of the culture, the community because that’s not really within other martial arts. (Muito)

the physical aspects of it are important, but it’s the being together and the music that I think really brings it together for people, at least for my group, for me personally. That, there is, no matter how, no matter how good you are at the roda, at the game itself, the physical aspects, you know you have people who could play for an hour straight and you have plenty of people who can’t... I think one of the nice things about the group that I’m a part of right now, is that it is accessible to anyone because there is something about *capoeira* that anybody could do. (Ole)

there’s like this camaraderie outside of the classroom that we have... There’s people that, who probably under other circumstances I probably would never speak to them, if I’m being honest, but because I know them in that space, I know why they behave the way that they behave and so like... a lot of people don’t genuinely like him on campus because of his demeanor, but that is his demeanor and because I share a lot of his energy in *capoeira*, I have the utmost respect for him outside of *capoeira*. So if anybody ever says anything, I’m always there to defend him... it almost feels like when I played

soccer, or in college, like the same type of like, fraternity feel or sorority to be inclusive. (Neef)

Within their *capoeira* communities, individuals discussed facets of diversity. Student A shared, “I think value-wise, it’s great because students are so diverse... you learn a lot of being inclusive, appreciate diversity and things like that.” Mandinga noted, “it’s a great way to build community because there are students from a variety of backgrounds and we can all sit around in a circle a discuss different topics that they are studying in class.” Tiba stated, “I’ve gotten to meet people from different areas of the country, that’s been really cool.” She added, “*capoeira*, it took me a lot to really appreciate this, but *capoeira* served as a way for me to be around a diverse group of people in a way that I wasn’t as a grad student.” Muito noted, “Angola is more... in my experience, they’re super super diverse.”

there’s not too many people that are of the same culture in our group...like there’s a girl from Russia, a girl from Jamaica, there’s a girl from, I think Dubai, like it’s a very mixed culture. So everybody brings their own thing. So it’s not, it’s not what I’m accustomed to in my previous groups, but um, it’s very much nuanced for where we’re at, what we have, and who we are. (Neef)

it’s an Afro-Brazilian culture so ... you might think that people are Brazilian, like that identity, or African, would be more interested... we just found that very interesting, cause like we’re all different kinds of Asian. Like I have the Korean, and one is like from Singapore and then like, some people from India and um, where was she from, she was Mongolian and Japanese. (Muito)

we have a couple of PhDs, an MD, we have people who are going to school, people who, you know have their bachelor’s and are working, we have people who are like “yeah I’m done with this job and I’m gonna quit”, but like it [*capoeira*] brings people together. (Ica)

there are lots of different backgrounds. Some with martial arts training in other fields, and some with none, some with very different kinds of training. There are those of us who have more musical background than others and I think of a lot of it, at least per group, it depends on the strengths of the teacher, and the other members, and whether or not that teacher is open to other members sort of help to lead the group. (Ole)

capoeira allows ...for men women and children to come together, and to have a voice, to express themselves. So I think the benefit is the fact that it allows for unity...reiterating the diversification you know, for people to unify, and to be accepted. (Muntu)

In addition to valuing diversity, participants discussed their role in allyship. Junior specified, “i’m here to support too, cause I believe in that [women's rights].”

She’s here because she wants to train, she aint in here trying to find a partner. And how do you even know she likes guys to begin with. I want you to know that when things happen, know that we got y’all too. (Terra)

My Master has, what we call ‘quaint racism’...we’ll call him on it too, ‘cause when was it, he went to, an ASIAN COUNTRY or ASIAN COUNTRY, he came back talking... He was like, “yeah they were sitting there talking,” and he started doing like the “fake ASIAN LANGUAGE” and we were like, “whoa whoa Mestre, Mestre,” we were like, “Mestre, that’s not cool,” and we were like, “no man, no no no no, you are a Mestre, you have to set the example.” And he was like, “you’re right, you’re right.” And he hasn’t done it since then. (Data)

we had one of our *capoeira* sisters make mention, “oh you know how it is, Mexicans in the car and they all dog-pile in.” And we all stopped and was like, *chuckle* and just gave like the dirtiest look, like, “how dare you, as a minority, say some left out of the park bullshit, and especially since we had visiting Mexican capoeiristas. And we’re all like, “we don’t do that, we don’t do that shit man.” ... so call people on their bullshit, but don’t destroy them. Tear down that stuff, but don’t destroy the person. So that’s what we strive to do. (Data)

Although *capoeira* typically includes a hierarchal organizational structure, participants discussed the lack of elitism within their groups. Terra stated, “I always start with A: thanking people for being there, because I think that’s the most important part.” Muito shared, “my groups in general are more casual cause it’s not like a big academy, they’re not ... charging money for the courses, we’re all just kind of doing *capoeira* together and more of an experience sort of thing.”

there isn’t this feeling of I guess elitism in the sense that the leaders know much more than us and there needs to be some separation in that sense. We actually kind of all feel we’re equal in the group. (Tiba)

a student at EAST COAST UNIVERSITY who had done *capoeira* for a couple years... asked one day like, “so what does your cord mean? How long does it take to become a mestre?” like “are you gonna be one” ... I was just like, “I have no idea, like when I was younger in *capoeira* I though like, ‘I want to be one day and I don’t know if that was just a recognition kind of thing or what, but like at this point I don’t even care. Like I hardly at all care about like my rank and title, next rank or whatever, is or ever will be. (Raca)

they were having a roda, and ... I'm singing a ladainha, and I happened to be sitting next to a female Mestre, Mestra, and she allows me to, you know she pushes the roda to allow me to run the roda, great, no problem, you know. I'm like, "awe," you know, "so sweet." No big I's no little u's and so we were working together and the music is beautiful, the instruments are not arguing, they're talking to each other, there's an appreciation of sound, and silence, the chorus is, has a volume that swells the room, and you could see the room breathe. (Njinga)

it I wasn't sure how to interact with him... like he's like my teacher, he's like my *capoeira*, ... one of the department heads and he's, like in terms of rank I'm not supposed to be friends with him cause there's a separation...and that changed. I was just like, "That's weird." Like I feel, like he talks about a lot of things that I'm interested in, like I'll throw out things into the atmosphere and if he were to grab it up like 'oh cool' so we definitely connect there. Like he writes and I write, and I love to draw and there's like this whole creative space that he operates in. (Neef)

He was like, "you know, just call Mestre." And I was like, "I'm sorry, you want me to call *who*?" You want me to pick up the phone and call this man? *chuckling* ... and he's just like, "he's a regular person, he's actually a very nice guy." And I was like, "well can I email him instead?" *both chuckling* (Terra)

they're very friendly, it's not like other martial arts where you have to – where there's this very big gap of like, Master/Student. Like they don't insist that you call them, a Professor, or Graduado, whatever their name is or anything. Maybe it's cause they're not Mestres, I don't know. I would describe the relationship as very ... very friendly, and more, like less of a gap. Like when you're a child in school, "Mrs. Smith," like Mrs. Is a very formal term, and a very ... rigid way - I've seen some dojos where it's very militant like, where you're like, "hm" the way you're sitting in rows and moving together in a very specific way. (Muito)

Safe space. Junior shared, "I definitely believe that it does create a safe space. it does create a safe space for all of us...[for them] not to feel like they're about to be judged." He added, "he [mestre]'s all about healing and holding this space and being here for my community." Ica noted, "I love to pull my students into that so they can understand and experience it in a safe space."

sometimes, I just don't want to talk, I want to listen, sometimes I want to observe and I don't feel like kind of forced, I can socialize in the way that feels most comfortable for me at a *capoeira* event. (Tiba)

we try to make it a safe space and like there's enough of us there who are higher cords that like if someone gets out of hand, we can pull them back out...I try to just provide a safe neutral space for people. (Ica)

sometimes because of *capoeira*, and I think because of our *capoeira* mind set, I've had kids, even if like if I'm doing substitute teaching like where I live, I have kids just open up and just start telling me stuff. And I'm like, "whoa whoa whoa, I'm not -you don't need to share this with me." But I think, we just, most capoeiristas just have this nature about themselves that's calming, relaxing, and that comes from training and the environment that *capoeira* creates. (Zum)

Raca noted, "I'm not gonna like laugh at anybody or be like, "You're not good enough" at this . It's literally just a no-judgement zone." Ica shared, "for me, it's given me a safe space ... to express myself."

people will say, I hear it all the time, you know "I don't want to do *capoeira* because" you know, "I'm scared, or I don't want to embarrass myself" or "I can't do the movements that you can do." Ain't nobody judging you in here. Terra

it's just comforting, to you know be a part of something like this [*capoeira* group]. Like in the other style that I'm in, you know, there is the same kind of similar feeling, and you know, I think going through the ranks and getting to the level of that, you know I kind of missed being that beginner again, being able to make mistakes again

Critical issues. Participants made mention of numerous ways that they engage in critical conversations, community outreach and efforts moving forward. Tiba stated, "I like that the kind of leaders of our group make that effort to connect us with the community." Mel shared, "when things were normal ... we had a police brutality one [roda... like the month of march we do a Women's roda."

one of the things that we're addressing as a group now, is how to be more about DEI. how do we reach out to the underprivileged, and to BIPOCs [Black, Immigrant, and People of Color], and you know the Latinx community, and the LGBT community, and just trying to make it more diverse. (Terra)

with my young people, for sure, it was a way to have those critical conversations and we talked about issues of race and racism, inequalities within CITY. We talked about food deserts and we talked about the importance of resistance and protests. (Mandinga)

the cool part is, is that it's real... we're having ... that conversation with them [kids in the *capoeira* group], like, "this is probably what you'll see." And so, when they see it, you have an appreciation of you what have...we're not doing it to say, 'we're better than

somebody and all of this' but, you see the, these individuals, you see our people like this. You don't have to follow the same road, you have opportunity, you, you have, I think it makes the younger ones more circumspect of their surroundings and their environment and give them an opportunity to see it, so they can make informed decisions versus an adult saying, "don't do this, don't do that." (Ser)

children come up, "Njinga it's just like when, oh the holocaust happened. They were fighting for their freedom." "oh okay so they practiced in the sugar cane" "Well you know in the holocaust, they also got in trouble for just being gay." Or "in holocaust, they got in trouble, just like the Black people got in trouble just for being Black." We can make these parallels for young people. (Njinga)

when we see certain things going on in the world, like we are very active about it, we definitely talk about it, we definitely have that discussion with each other. And what we end up doing, by our own merits, by our own effort, we will find ourselves getting involved in something. And then we always do have a conversation. (Noa)

because of recent events, we have started to talk more about how to integrate more activism into the *capoeira* group, so we've talked about ideas of maybe donating to a charity in our area, or ways in which we could serve locally. (Tiba)

we have people who are now more sensitive to racial issues. We've always had a group that was pretty conscientious about the history of *capoeira* and um, racial relations as well as economic disparities among groups, because our group has always worked in inner city areas with children and adults who are marginalized. We provide free shows, and shows at cost, so they know that this is all fundraising for our batizado and things like that. (Njinga)

there's a space for Black voices within *capoeira*, a very important space and it's a space where those of us who aren't Black, or haven't faced racial social injustice, should belong and listen because ... that's where *capoeira* came from. *capoeira* came out of exactly that, that exact racial injustice, social inequity...my identity as a capoeirista has really evolved, and I count myself very lucky in having a Black instructor who understands and respects where *capoeira* came from, what it's role is, and how it can contribute and relate to the struggles that are happening to this day. (Ole)

I also saw that people were more politically active, even now I still follow them and I'm friends with them on SOCIAL MEDIA and they've done so much. Like I know all of them have been to rallies ... when that when Trump got elected, they had a roda and we spoke about it for a while and took time, and it got emotional for some people speaking about, you know how they felt about that. (Game)

In contrast, Greg noted the lack of conversations within his group.

Conversations about police brutality and women's rights and issues – everybody within my group acknowledges that these issues are a problem however we've never actually

had, we've never actually had a forum where we as teachers and leaders within our group actually speak about them.

As far as outreach efforts, Tiba shared, "we're thinking about how to increase our activism."

What I'm learning about our culture is how in-depth it is about community more so than just the martial arts aspect and you know that everything that makes everybody else looking like, "oh my god they're acrobatic, they do this, they do that," but how heavily *capoeira* can, should affect community. Rão

the extent to which we've been connected to the greater community is by participating in events, like doing a show for a Black history program, or doing a show for like a multicultural experience festival. (Tiba)

that in previous conversations with INSTRUCTOR and like going to random events, we kind of try to do outdoor demonstrations at different events and kind of just try to spread the good axe with each other and with... whomever is out there. I forget, we went downtown some years ago, it was for, I guess somebody was being honored, and we just played outside, played music for a while. (Sim)

we do a good amount of community outreach where during the holiday season we go to LOCAL TRAIN STATION and give out care packages to the homeless. I know there's also some kids who train with us, where we do things for their school, like plastic bag fundraisers or other things they look forward to. (Mel)

I know something that GROUP LEADER'S done before that I know he did with our previous group, that tended to be more organized by my husband when we were a part of that group was a good deal of community outreach. So doing things with school groups... we've done some stuff with the public library system...there's definitely, being able to bring *capoeira* to a larger audience to community events. (Ole)

We had a little thing going a couple of years ago, called *capoeira* cares... this was the brain child of one of our members, the Contra Mestre's mom, where we'll get food together, like we'll get donations... and we'll have two sets of packs, we'll have a hygiene pack for men, a hygiene pack for women, and we would go into the community, go into Tent City, where the homeless population is and just ride around. "here you go," bam, "here you go," "here you go." We'll take the kids, so that the kids have an opportunity to see their community, and give back to the community. (Ser)

back when we had our academy, it was in an under, yeah, where were placed in Latino community, and it was, and so we were kind of, our *capoeira* was on display and accessible to this demographic that maybe wouldn't have gotten the chance to be exposed to martial arts. There were a lot of neighborhood kids who got a chance to try *capoeira* and it was great... it taught discipline, and it feels really cool to be able to do all of the gymnastic movements. And this was a chance that was given to the children in this community, as opposed to maybe doing it in maybe one of the more bourgeois parts of the city, like maybe our instructor and our group could have ... raked in a lot of big bucks

for providing this to a community like that, but we kind of kept our center of operations in a community that could benefit from *capoeira*...in a more disadvantaged part of town ... where we were like more needed. (Brandon)

Moving forward, participants discussed their intentions regarding community involvement. Rão noted, “within our group ...we’re ...trying to start an urban beautification project... but I don’t think we’re community involved enough as far as the origins of *capoeira* are related.”

seeing that, you know a group of people, not even just one group, multiple groups that like came together and like hadn’t um, were politically minded and were... taking a stand on these issues that were important to them, was really great to see ... I just want to see more of that I guess. (Game)

one goal that I’ve been trying to impart on each and every single one of my students, so that we do pay attention to the socioeconomic issues that are happening to people of color in this country, as well as in Brazil and all across the world because *capoeira* in and of itself is a rebellious art that fights oppression and because it has that type of history, it’s still applicable today in modern times. (Greg)

we have that freedom to give something, you know it may not be monetarily, but you know we can give our energy, we can give our time, we can give our commitment, and just be there for whoever needs us. (Sim)

the thing about this work, it’s an on-going process, you’re never going to stop. You’re always going to get better with regards to having these conversations, and you’re always going to be able to enlighten somebody, but it’s never going to end. (Greg)

Healing: Self-Development

Sixteen different codes were identified for this domain including: vulnerability; humility; efficacy; open to new things/adventure/exploration; empowerment/liberation; insight; health coping/better functioning; expression/creativity; better person; physical benefits; general growth; achievement/excellence; perspective; goals/direction; and personal challenges. Out of the sixteen primary codes for this domain, four codes were discussed by all eight groups: empowerment/liberation (5.5), insight (5.6), healthy coping/better functioning (5.7), and physical benefits (5.10). Seven out of eight groups discussed general growth (5.11).

Empowerment/Liberation. Participants shared about general aspects of empowerment, and specified experiences as far as building comfortability and/or confidence, persistence and resilience, leadership skills, and liberation and social justice. In terms of general empowerment, participants shared about their experiences and their observations about how individuals became empowered through *capoeira*. Zum stated, “And little by little, for some people, you just shed that, and it becomes where you can focus, and like you said, you can feel empowered.”

to empower people with how they feel about themselves is a big plus, and hopefully that resonates with how they want to take care of their physical body. Not “i don’t feel good about myself,” “I want to make sure my body feels good.” that doesn’t mean that you’re gonna eat better, but you may decide to exercise a little more, you may pay attention a little more to different aches and pains, and then, *capoeira*’s like, I mean it’s like a full-body work out. It’s cardio, exercise every muscle group, then you know, you toss in the music and when you think you didn’t have energy, the music just brings back more energy. (Zum)

we did a performance, like two semesters ago for a bunch of people. It was the first time I’ve ever performed *capoeira* in front of anybody and I was super nervous ...[that] definitely helped me grow as a person in that space, ‘cause it’s like if you do it in front of people who are like not as good as you, or haven’t been doing it as long, like you look cool so you’re not as nervous. But if you do it for people who have never seen it before and may or may not have any intentions of doing it, now you just have to impress them period. (Neef)

Like GROUP LEADER tells me to always stop holding back so much. You know, and just like let my kicks fly, you know there’s always just like, and in life, I’m always second-guessing and triple and quadruple guessing things that I’m going to say, and just like going over and just like overthinking so much that, as he says, “if you over think too much and hold back, you’re going to end up hurting yourself physically,” and you’re just like putting, like that puts too much strain on yourself . And I’ve noticed that, well him saying that, I noticed that’s like consistent outside of *capoeira* in my personal life, just you know *chuckle* saying what you think. (Brandon)

I was also able to stand up, or respond to or talk to someone who physically hurt me. And I think, you know the language is “you broke my ankle” not “I got hurt in the game.” Don’t give me that crap. “You broke my ankle,” okay you don’t want to say it. Even if you don’t admit it, I will remind you, “you broke my ankle.” And how we are handling this...it may be my ankle, it may be my mental and physical and spiritual struggle to come back to a sense of normalcy if that is possible, at that point no one knew, but we are on this journey together. We. ‘Cause I didn’t get here by myself. So whatever level of responsibility of “you broke my ankle” or “I allowed my ankle to be broken by you”

which just sounds crazy in itself, however. Language in itself is important, language is important. Whatever that gray area is, we need to understand that my tomorrow includes you in a closer way. And my today, it includes you also, and my journey, it includes you. (Njinga)

in the beginning, he [student] would come to class with his cousins, and he would just stand around. he was doing the movement, he was doing the *ginga* and he was doing the cartwheels and stuff, and I videotaped him, and his grandmother came to pick him up, and I showed it to her and she just broke out into tears. She just started, she was just like, "he doesn't do anything." she said, "can you send that to me, so I can send it to his dad, 'cause his dad needs to see -" but, outside of *capoeira*, he was that, that silent, stand-off kid again. (Zum)

We had one ASIAN kid, like he had impeccable timing, skill, and he would not give up. We would push him so hard, and we would like tag team, keep him in the roda, ANOTHER GROUP MEMBER would hop in, I would hop in, ANOTHER GROUP MEMBER would hop in, and we're all different sizes, so he had to learn to play in chaos against different sizes. And his mother was so terrified and then at the end of it, she was like, "I have never been more terrified for my kid, but I stopped, and he was holding his own against adults," ... and she like started crying, and then I was getting all choked up, she was like, "I have never been to the point where I knew my son, he would be okay." and she was like, "Thank you for that... he might have been thirteen at the time... he was a fat little chunky kid, but we played him like he was an adult. You know, 'cause in life, they're not gonna treat you like you're a kid, and you're intelligent. And you need to learn, and know that you are more than you are right now. And you will be more as you get older, as long as you don't forget. (Data)

I had NAME, this little girl, she thought she was ugly because she was very dark. And so, all of her, I guess, I wouldn't call them friends, but all her little friends would talk about her because you know, "she was so Black, she was so dark," she just hated her own skin. And so, that's when I started teaching her about the Orixás... Yemanjá and Oshun, and Oshun... all except for Yansa, all the Orixás carry mirrors, you know and the mirrors, they watch their own beauty, or they're looking at the universe... at some point I was like, "The Universe is all black, you look up at the stars and you see only black. And is that beautiful or not?" and she was like, "it's beautiful." And I was like, "okay, then, so how is that more beautiful than your black skin? It's just as dark, and you get to carry yours around... there's nothing wrong with you," just to introduce her to the concept that she is not ugly, especially because she's Black. She's not ugly because she is not an ugly person. And you know, her aunt's in the corner, sniffing and crying and yada yada. I was like, "I don't really do this stuff to make people, like be boo-hooing", like this stuff, is simple to me. And I just try to get people to understand that and see that in themselves. (Data)

Participants discussed comfortability and confidence pertaining to both self and others.

Game stated, "It [*capoeira*] also helped me be just like more outgoing and just more um, I think I

had more leadership skills, more confidence.” Student A shared, “I would get a lot stronger than before, feel like more able, more confident.” In relation to training alone, Muntu stated, “the benefit is that, that you’re courageous and you’re confident, that your path is your path and you’re not going to second guess it.” Terra noted, “*capoeira* is the only environment where I feel comfortable singing.” Data stated, “Actually, it [leadership role in *capoeira*]’s the foundation, because I wasn’t always confident, and I don’t know how confident I am, but I’m more confident about trying than just being confident in general.”

Me personally, I’m a very quiet, reserved, I try to keep my head under the table, I don’t want anybody to know that I am responsible for anything, but being the group leader, I’m sort of pushed out of my comfort zone. In addition to sort of taking me out of my comfort zone, being able to take the reigns as a leader, not only just *CAPOEIRA* GROUP, but in the midwest, within the midwest *capoeira* community. (Greg)

I feel like I was really shy growing up like I didn’t really talk to many people but, it just gets me out of my shell a little bit...workwise it’s always good too, cause you’re not really shy, you can talk, you can speak up, you can be assertive, when you need to be, and patient. (E)

At first you know, like you’re singing, part of a group, you know so you start to develop your voice then, at least that was my path. And then when you start to lead songs, you know at first it’s kind of awkward like, *quietly* “oh sim sim sim,” and everyone like belting after you and you start to get to, to really hear your voice for who you are and get more confident in it. (Mel)

before *capoeira*, I felt very ... like ostracized, I guess I didn’t fit in very well. And I felt like I really needed to like, bend my own observed reality to kind of like fit in with everyone else. You know there was kind of a lot of, there were a lot of things that, confused me about people. And I had like a different way of like seeing things when it came to a lot of stuff. And thus I felt like I couldn’t really just like say and be kind of like that authentic self. And kind of encountering the unapologetic-ness in the context of *capoeira* has allowed me to kind of I guess reclaimed that, kind of that confidence in my own reality I guess. (Raca)

I’m what my students see when leading class, so all eyes are on me, and that’s - while that’s a lot of pressure, on my personality-wise, it’s something that I’ve over time, become increasingly comfortable doing. And I’ve been able to like extend it to other opportunities, such as like my job, my outside job, and other aspects of my life. (Greg)

I'm 39-years-old and I'm more confident than I've ever been in my entire life. I don't feel like I have to be anything else, anybody else, yeah, I honestly cannot say that it has been – aside from being hit sometimes, I've been hit three times up top because I was being lazy on my legs (ah). But other than that, no I have no negative connotation about my *capoeira* experience, nope, none (okay). It's been the most liberating thing that has, I mean, literally, confidence, not caring about what everyone else thinks, things that I've insecure about my entire life, I just literally don't care about it. (Rão)

I would say definitely the sense of, kind of, confidence or more comfortability and essentially reiterating to myself what I've learned. Like the progress I've made and be like, "Oh yeah, I think I know some stuff" or like constantly building that personal understanding. (Curtis)

In addition to experiencing more confidence themselves, participants shared about their observations of others gaining confidence. Muntu stated, "the *capoeira* culture has been more of a... guidance. It's been more geared upon, more so developing youth to acknowledge their own identity and become more confident." Raca shared, "I guess for the members in CURRENT EAST COAST CITY, I've noticed I guess like a sense of confidence and pride that, you know I don't know if it wouldn't have been there if they weren't training *capoeira*."

All the time, I use everyone else to let the other person that might be new, that's in their doubt stage, you know like, "yeah man, the struggle is real, it's supposed to be, if life was easy, everybody would be – or something, but we're all struggling so you can do it, come on come on come on... It helps to build their confidence in the pack. (Data)

for me, the leadership or the self-confidence comes from that, where they can actually be in an environment with adults and. Like when Cava was younger, he could do movements that our old bones couldn't do it was good to have him around, it was like, "cava, do that move again," it was like, "hey that was good." and we would say, "i'm not trying that." (Zum)

And even like, another one of our students... like is always wearing like a *capoeira* stuff, like carrying a berimbau. I gave him a hoodie a long time ago, like it looks like Eddie Gordo clothes. I thought it was like super cool when I was like seventeen and I basically almost never wore it...and I gave it to him and he wears that like all the time. Like he put the *CAPOEIRA GROUP* patch on there and he's just always wearing it and so I think that people just really get that like sense of confidence, like they have something to be proud of. (Raca)

the person that's shy, it wakes 'em up, 'cause you have to sing. you have to get in the roda and play, you have to, and those shy people, or people who have stage fright, it

helps them to overcome that I think. You know especially if you're doing a performance out in front of people, "oh we're gonna perform," at some point they'll get to a point where they get excited to go on stage, they've finally found that comfort zone, they've found their spot. (Zum)

a lot of my students actually, they walk in the door, not knowing what they want to be in life. And a lot of them, like, are professionals ... they're leaders in their particular field. I have a student, NAME, and this man is probably like the most gentlist soul ever. He has been working at his job for more than twenty years and never asked for a raise. He didn't have the confidence, he didn't think he deserved a raise. And then you know I think like after a couple years of class, he went and asked for a raise, and he was like, "I was surprised I got it." I was like, "yeah because you showed confidence. Nobody wants to give money. They want people who want to earn the money." (Data)

there's a guy who trains here ...he didn't have like super frequent attendance or anything, but when he shows up we like have a blast and... I just found this out via watching the play that he was a part of, but he apparently is like a felon of some sort... He's in a program, like the theater...unfortunately their play was, it didn't actually happen physically because of the pandemic, but it went online and when I went to look at the filming and he was wearing one of our shirts. It was really cool that he was like, he didn't tell me about it, he didn't say a damn word, he just like went and wore this shirt in a play that a bunch of people were gonna watch. (Raca)

In addition to confidence, participants discussed persistence and resilience. Noa shared, "I felt happier, I felt more determined to be able to handle challenges when they were presented to me." When discussing an injury, Njinga stated, "just like people can say "Njinga got hurt" and "was she resilient enough to come back in some way shape or form?"" Tiba noted, "there's a great feeling that comes with the... determination and resilience I've been able to prove even to myself, that I've surprised myself over the years with what I've been able to push through." Terra stated, "what kept me going was, I knew what the road was going to look like. existing as like a Black man in *capoeira*, is, I guess kind of relates directly to that [enduring and overcoming challenges]."

I used to have a lot of social anxiety about like being in big groups of people because I've a very introverted person ... it [*capoeira*] helped me to deal with that, it helped me to kind of get past that, to work through, to be like, "Oh this is okay." (Ica)

It's the mental piece, telling myself, "keep going, keep going" ... I really use *capoeira* as a tool to continue to develop the way that I approach my training but also think about

how I can move past other barriers in terms of moving beyond some of the fears and limitations that I've had. (Mandinga)

So the benefits of *capoeira*, I was given a book, it was like a little *capoeira* book, and I think I read it in like a day or two, like, it was like I finally found something I could pick up, and I just read. Like to me, it was fascinating because I found, I really changed the paradigm in my mind that I would only read a book for ten pages and be like, "this is boring, I'm gonna put it down," for the majority of books. But it was like, "No I found something that was challenging." And from that book, it encouraged me to read other books, which encouraged me to expand upon my vocabulary and lexicon. It forced me to push beyond my barriers. (Muntu)

When I spoke about when my ankle was broken for me *smiling* I had to find a new place. I was still running my academy from a seat. I could not physically move, my students picked me up, drove me to the academy. I sat, I taught in the seat. I you know, explained what I desired for them to do, to the best of my ability. I led by example, of what I thought was the good, resilient person of *capoeira*, leader of *capoeira*, and just practitioner. I wasn't able to drive myself, I still traveled to other *capoeira* events. But I traveled as an observer, I traveled as a musician, I traveled as a singer, per se. I traveled as a cultivator, I didn't travel as a moving cultivator. (Njinga)

When you hit that [difficult] spot, what do you do next. It's basically you're falling off a horse, with that difficult challenge, and the difficult part is, are you gonna get back up on it to try it again the next day, or the next class, and you know, for those of us who have been training so long, it's no question that you're gonna get back up. (Sim)

my life is dictated, it's always been learning and fighting, whether it's physically fighting or fighting like to overcome something or to, you know, fighting to survive. I'm writing a *ladainha*... where I come from is a time of war in my life, so there was a lot of fighting, there was a lot of like, trying to survive. There was a lot that I survived to get to where I am and to become who I am and that is what I learned from. (Ica)

sometimes I'll just kind of fight my way through the class. I don't mean physically I'll fight my way through, I mean emotionally I'm kind of mentally fighting my way through... I've definitely learned to push through with that, and with other things, judging by the misery that I described grad school to be *both chuckling* that was six years of just like, push through *chuckle*, take the pats on the back where you can get them from and push through *chuckling* (Tiba)

one of the early stories that I have is just the culture of you know, pushing yourself, and pushing each other. My brother, when I was at UNIVERSITY, I knew my brother also wanted to do *capoeira*, to the west side, I'd pick him up for class, and to the east side for it, and so this when I was at UNIVERSITY, and fast forward to when I started training with INSTRUCTOR ... it was me, my brother, and INSTRUCTOR, and he worked us so hard, and just pushed us, and you know. My brother had to kind of take a moment to gather himself, otherwise he might have lost his lunch that day, but yeah, but just having

that ability to push through, push yourself beyond the limits that you think, you know you're accustomed to, is big there. (Sim)

You're constantly like having feet and heels getting thrown at your head and you know, death flashing before your eyes back to back to back, and I feel like that... increases like your own resilience in a way. Like you start to tackle life the way you do *capoeira*, like when you start in *capoeira*, you tense up when you see a foot coming at you. You tense up, maybe you like, turn your back to it and like try to run away from it, or you try to kind of like block it and deal with it face on. (Brandon)

when I started that, like restart, it was probably the third restart officially, or the second time with INSTRUCTOR I think it was, you know, just being able to build up that endurance ...being able to know my body and know what it's capable of, and being able to push myself that much. I find it rewarding to, just being able to make it through one of his classes. You know we'll say like, "I survived a class with INSTRUCTOR," is in itself an accomplishment... it's very rewarding in that aspect, and the feeling you get afterwards, its you know, it's like no other. (Sim)

And in the beginning, she just would not do anything that would appear to hurt somebody. And she finally broke out of it. She finally got to a point where she, she knew how to, she would take a hit and not get too mad, and she would try to dish it out. But in the beginning, it was like, "but that's not how I was taught, I wasn't taught to be aggressive and this that or the other," and I said, "but you have to know it." We had to talk to her for like an hour and a half to stop her from crying, and that was out of her element. It was like, "you don't have to display that in the roda all the time, but in the even that somebody try to take advantage of you, either in the roda or in the street, you're not afraid to just, just do what you have to do." (Zum)

In addition to a general feeling of empowerment, individuals discussed their growth in leadership. Game shared, "it definitely helped me in a positive way in terms of I guess leadership skills." Neef stated:

It [*capoeira*]'s definitely made me a better leader, like especially medical school, because that has been my role. Since I've started *capoeira* at MEDICAL SCHOOL like my last two small groups, which is the group that your assigned to, like I've been the leader of both groups. But like for my last year, and I definitely attribute that to a lot of the empowerment that the group in *capoeira* has put on me, that GROUP LEADER kind of puts onto us.

Another aspect of empowerment that participants discussed was liberation and social justice. Noa shared, "the main example ... that has happened in my life that I can derive this

from is that job. I guess you could say that now I've finally got a chance to let go and feel liberated.”

I find myself like being out in the garden, I take care of the garden now. *chuckle* I'm starting to do those small things that actually echo off that liberation and confidence, and it's a real freeing feeling, like weights are literally off my shoulders, like “I don't have to be what you want me to be, I don't have to be what you want me to be, I don't have to be you know, caught up in this rat race, that – materialist rat race that people are chasing after here – it's been the most liberating thing that, or group, yeah, group and martial art that I've ever been involved in. (Rão)

it [*capoeira*]’s also given me a voice too, and it’s, in some ways, it’s given me a platform that I probably would never have if I didn’t do *capoeira*. So the fact that I’m able to speak on like a number of different issues, whether they’re in *capoeira* or outside of *capoeira*, and sort of being able to sort of bridge that divide and show people where they may be complicit, is one of the biggest benefits that I’ve personally been able to take away from it. (Greg)

for me it’s helping, it’s kind of twofold: so it’s improving myself and my like, abilities, but also my worldview, and especially now in, especially now, because there is a lot of racial injustice that I was aware of before this year, but the past few years have really helped to remove the rose-colored glasses, if you will. And I feel like that has made being a part of *capoeira*, being a *capoeirista*, that much more important, because, especially as a White-leaning Latino, it’s, because I pass, right, I feel like it’s even more important to be involved in *capoeira*, because there are so many things in our society in the U.S. that are stacked against racial minorities. (Ole)

to me it’s liberating, you know. And everybody we’ve come across, who’s been in class, even though they don’t train anymore, I mean, we see each other on SOCIAL MEDIA, we’ll connect. I mean, some of the guys are having kids now or whatever the case is, and still, communication and it’s like, “hey what’s going on Pops? Pop?” or whatever the case is, and, so it’s that love, it’s that energy, it’s that extension of family that *capoeira* creates, that a lot of things that we involve ourselves that I've come across, um, works like that. (Zum)

My close friend who initiated this charge for actually getting us to actually have these types of conversations within our group, he’s finding his voice, continuously finding his voice, he’s doing an amazing job, and he educates himself on these issues a lot. And I personally feel like he’s become a better person for it. (Greg)

It lets me be me, yeah *chuckle* it let’s me be me. I mean in general, like *capoeira* lets me be me, let’s me confidently affect other people. I have the confidence to affect other people and research things that i thought were out of my realm and actually pass on as far as that goes. Yeah, it allows, it has really opened up, in summary, it has really opened up

the true chapter of my life of who I am, if that makes sense, without sounding corny.
(Rão)

For me, it's important. I don't know, being given the sort of platform that I have, it's something that's sort of weighed on me, it's weighed on me for a number of years like even before I was even like graduated to monitor, it was something that I always thought about. It was like, "what can I do if I am given this platform". I've seen what everybody else in my group has been doing with theirs and nobody is talking about like this [social justice] aspect, and then...when you extend it to like the overall *capoeira* spectrum, like, especially in Brazil, nobody's even talking about this stuff. (Greg)

Insight. Individuals shared about aspects of themselves that they learned, realized, and/or understood through *capoeira*. Mel stated, "This *capoeira* thing, if you let it, it just unpacks so much about yourself." Junior shared, "I can't just go out here and operate and be open... You have to know that you should be grounded first. You need to know what grounds yourself." Curtis stated, "I'm a pretty good person to demonstrate and to reiterate things or to show a video – okay, maybe this is how you do it so maybe I can slow down stuff a little bit more." Tiba stated, "There are times when I'll skip a portion of the event so I can be alone and kind of process what happened and talk myself down from being sad about it." Mel shared, "I would say, be ready to, be ready to play yourself in the roda."

Me, I guess I'm more tricks, movements, having the kids jump around, making sure they're sweating... that kind of style I guess, make sure the kids are having fun. If they leave sweaty and happy, parents like it. (E)

I am kind of quiet and shy and reserved and introverted um, so, but then at the same time like everybody respects that and we can still function together and it's not like I'm like really outcast or anything. (Student A)

Like I saw a lot of stuff over the period of time that I trained with this guy, that I don't know, just kind of swept under the rug because it was easier. I didn't personally sweep it under the rug, I like mentally put it aside because it was easier for me not to deal with it.
(Raca)

it's kind of taught me at least to like not rely so much on brute force...that's like just kind of how I go through, through life, especially when I started. It was just to kind of muscle and brute-force my way through any challenge, 'cause I had the sufficient muscle to do that. But if you try to muscle way through *capoeira*, you'll get tired out like really

quickly. And so I've had to learn to A: breathe and B: I've had to like develop the discipline to stretch and be well, like just stretching and becoming more flexible, like day after day. (Brandon)

I'm such a big picture thinker, but *capoeira* has made me stop and think about how things are gonna get done...like when you're playing in the game, and what moves you wanna do, 'cause I know I want that *rasteira* but how am I gonna get it from you? *chuckle* like how am I gonna set you up and what's my bait for you? And you're thinking about this on the spot, whether you're watching the person play beforehand or like dodgin' it like, "okay so you like to kick with your left foot, that's the one I'm gon' get." Not even just in the *roda*, but being a woman and a Black woman, I would say it's gotten better, but when I first started, it was kind of like, 'girl you know you're place in *capoeira*.' So to be methodical in like, like I mentioned before I want that *pandeiro* but how am I gonna get it. I'm not gonna wait for you to give it to me. Or it just made me like think about the path, instead of just lookin' at the puzzle. (Mel)

as we go through life we just have different eye openings through different aspects of our life, we see things differently, you know, we see people different. Um, sometimes we see them the same, we learn, you know like when our eyes open, you've heard everybody talk about being woke... you guys talk about being woke, I tell you, but what's more important than being woke is paying attention. they say, "what you mean?" I said, "you could be woke, and don't pay attention." But you can't pay attention and not be woke." So, I said, "so if you woke, you see, but you still, you're seeing what you're seeing, but you're not seeing what's going on over there, over there, and behind you." I said, "what's the point of being woke?" But I said, "if you're paying attention, the only way you could pay attention is if you woke, so pay attention more than just focusing on being woke." (Zum)

Similar to insight, participants discussed the importance of reflection. Junior stated, "Not a lot of people do those reflective moments." Curtis stated, "like, I could have done this way better, I could have gotten some guidance if I asked for help." Muntu shared, "I think that when you're alone, you don't realize the moments that you're trotting the path by yourself, is to develop so that you can trot with others."

I definitely learn more about myself. I learn more about like, the conditions that I have, the mental limitations that I think I might have. what was on my mind, what was I like carrying that needed to be released? "why was I fighting with that?" instead of just being, just letting it go so, it definitely teaches me that. (Junior)

That's the really really cool thing, is to touch on all these learning aspects, of sometimes showing through physical example, sometimes through discussion, sometimes through

self-awareness, ask questions about “how did you feel about your performance today?” “how did you feel?” and “what do you want to work on?” (Njinga)

That experience that I mentioned earlier, the bad *roda* experience *chuckle*, the accountability of accepting why did it happen, what was my role in it, and then being able to confront those encounters, and then discuss how can it change. And, it’s that way when communicating with other people, you realize that hey, when you’re in a situation with other people, you have a part to play, and how do you want to form that interaction. (Muntu)

There are certain people that I meet that I spend maybe five minutes with, or I’ll spend months with or years with and I know that they’re only going to be in my life for a short period of time, but I look at them almost like spiritual guides or like spiritual gurus. They could be like a boxing coach, they could be a jiu jitsu coach, they could be my math teacher but they may offer me some sort of wisdom or peace that I can then share with somebody else and then can add it to my life and it only elevates me. So, I feel like that consistently “Ohh that’s cool I never thought about that”, or like I remember when I took sociology in undergrad like that shifted, that blew my mind I was like, “Why do I wear this Nike shirt?” I don’t know why I bought this. (Neef)

Whenever we go to batizado, we come back. I like to have a sit down, reflection, “okay,” I’m gonna cycle back around, I like to have a sit down, reflection, of “okay, so what are some things that we saw when we traveled to batizado.” But, so we, I like to have the time of reflection. At the end of class, at the end of class Contra Mestre implemented the Ole: what did you observe, what did you learn, what did you experience. And so, at the end, as a part of close out, we do our Ole. We start from the highest ranking cord, before the Professor and Contra Mestre, the highest ranking, and we’ll go down to the lower-ranking and the non-ranked students. So if it’s your first time, you’re expected to say your Ole, if you’re seven, you’re expected to say your Ole. *chuckle* Sometimes one of the little ones, she is ... three? Maybe three now so she’ll stand in line at attention, and she’ll stand by her mom, and sometimes we’ll ask her, “what did you observe today,” “abs a tava acijalkh wiahdlgh,” and that’s really the participation. So Ole’s for everybody, and that, that’s something that, for me, is very, it’s important because how do you know what another person wants or needs if you’re not getting that feedback. (Ser)

Health coping/Better functioning. Within the idea of healthy coping, participants discussed having a healthy break or separation, stress relief, being present, positive feelings and fun in general. Junior noted that his teacher’s time spent doing *capoeira* is “time away from my house, that’s my time to like connect and be out in the community.” Student A stated, “it’s way of getting out on a regular basis. Of course the exercise is good, you know, socializing, hanging out with people.” Curtis noted, “It’s not just ignoring the problems but being like “there’s

nothing I can do about that problem, I feel so much better if I focus on something else right now.” Terra added, “you get to put everything on the outside in a box for a little while.” Noa shared, “I think that this group, that *capoeira* is their escape from the reality of the world.” Rão stated, “I left everything that was going on in the outside world, in the outside world. When I entered into the roda, that purity factor was there, it was playful, it was what it was supposed to be.” Terra noted, “*capoeira* can be an escape, but sometimes there’s a level above it ‘just being an escape’”.

Throughout everything, like when I was growing up, being a young kid, I was being bullied in school, but this was just a way for me to escape that, from school, middle school and high school, and just be myself and express who I wanna be. (Do)

after um three months, the next time I took the exam, I passed the exam and did really well, and I think I attributed it to *capoeira* and having those moments of pick-me-up to get me back into the classroom and back to studying and give me time to shake off those feelings that I had. (Tiba)

When I was going through that really tumultuous time ... being at practice always felt therapeutic. Of course, I would have to go back to, you know, real life, but at the same time, it felt good being able to go to classes. (Noa)

When you’re in an environment where everybody really feels close and it’s genuine, you know you feel, you know this is the place where you go to escape from everything that’s just tearing me down, I have my *capoeira* to, you know, go and find some solace or find some peace, or whatever the case is. (Neef)

I remember working with some kids like in the projects where like, it’s almost like giving them hope in a sense, like showing them that there is something else, that there is something you know, more than just your current environment. And I remember like, we used to even sometimes go pick up the kids from the projects to bring them to the SOUTHERN CITY cultural center, so that was just, just them being able to exit their environment to do something different, was already like a healing factor for them. (Cava)

In terms of stress relief, Mandinga stated, “I find it healing in terms of helping students deal with their stress, helping students manage their anxiety.” Other participants also discussed how *capoeira* helps alleviate stress.

Getting into the *roda* and playing, I hold onto a lot of stress. I internalize a lot of it, (yeah) and so training *capoeira* is therapeutic in that way, you know, it kind of gives you an outlet for that, a way to let go, and release. (Ole)

in regards to, like it relating to medical school I think the thing that a lot of us like stand upon is the idea that we need this to stay balanced, like stay focused um, and to stay locked in our work. So we can draw our attention to moving our bodies and doing things outside of medical school, and take a break, it will only help us in the long term, like mentally and physically. (Neef)

It's one of my go-to things that I do whenever I'm stressed or whenever I, yeah, whenever I do get emotional because of things that are happening on the t.v., or any types of stories that I might come across that reminds me of my Blackness, *capoeira*, *capoeira* angola it's always there to put me at ease. (Greg)

different than any other group I've been a part of ... I would say the culture is it's, it's still kind of built around medicine and destressing and it's basically built around the things, like the benefits more so, like it's not void of the music and the origins of *capoeira*. But it's definitely built upon the benefits of like what medical students need during the time that they're more stressed. So balance, flexibility, exercise, um, meditation, like even when we're stretching, we're talking about what muscles we're stretching and what ligaments you can tear what nerves end in what. Like every conversation is built upon you know these ideas. (Neef)

In addition to stress relief, some participants discussed the importance of being present. Junior noted, "being present, I do see a healing part of it, I do... you just want to be present." Mandinga shared, "what I've been doing is I've been reminding myself to be mindful in the moment and to really think through the process." Furthermore, Mel noted, "*capoeira* is like the only thing that I do where I'm not thinking about something else at the same time."

If I'm in a *roda*, I better be worried about a foot coming to my face and not thinking about what's going on at work. And that was, that was getting some opportunities to disconnect. Like legit, as I leave work and I'm driving, I'm still thinking about it. I even, I would dream about it. Like when I'm in a *roda*, in class, it would be, 'okay, you're in this moment, be present,' and it was easy to be that way. (Ser)

I was just talking to someone, a person who was having a lot of family troubles, and like, I knew he was stressing out and stuff, and just that day, we like, we just played a lot, and he got to play a lot of games and stuff and then afterwards we were just talking, and you know, 'for eight hours I was away from it' you know, just like getting away from that stress and getting into that other dimension, allowing yourself to be like, absolutely present, that just really helped personally just work through some of the stuff. (Curtis)

With regard to positive feelings, E stated, “just singing and clapping, that shit always brightens up the mood, for the most part.” He added, “whenever I’m in the *roda* and I’m singing and clapping, I’m always happy. I’m excited to be there.” Greg also stated, “One of the things that I often times do, is I’ll often sing just *capoeira* songs.” Junior noted, “I’m better to like continue operating...that’s something I receive from [*capoeira*], is like, the reminder to stay grounded.” Muntu noted, “actually the music helps me calm down.” Noa shared, “I definitely did feel better, my sense of well-being felt a lot better with every class I did take.”

I loosen up and by the end of the class I'm feeling jovial and happy, and oftentimes forget what I was down about to begin with so that has really felt like a great benefit...I think that helps to make everyone happier. (Tiba)

It's like, I can go into the class tired, or sick, or upset, but once I start goin', that's all she wrote. She [girlfriend] says I have a, I walk like an old man when I'm not training, but once I'm training it's like I have no bones in my body. (Terra)

I just felt, I guess my overall well-being felt good. I feel like if I didn't have that, um a lot of things would have fell through, I would have probably, you know, I probably, I wouldn't say that it would be you know, like if I didn't find *capoeira*, if I didn't do *capoeira* that I would have completely caved into the pressure, but it definitely kept me sane through all of that, you know. So, it definitely has it's importance. I definitely did feel better, my sense of well-being felt a lot better with every class I did take. (Noa)

You find yourself in this state of just, obviously this is after you're gasping for air and getting a sip of water, but after class when you finish changing and your body cools down, your body is in a state of calm, you know, “that was amazing” kind of feeling. You know, it comes from having that, you know good energy with each other, being able to push each other, and having that person that's there for you to be a better you ...it's just to the point where you're, not mellow, but you're calm. (Sim)

Beyond positive feelings, individuals mentioned aspects of healing through *capoeira*.

I had a traumatic childhood, so it helped me to deal with a lot of that in a safe space where I have family that wasn't family. people going through struggles in their personal life, when they come to *capoeira*, they realize that it's okay and they have a space to heal and a space to be safe. Whether it's like dealing with getting a PhD, or dealing with family trauma, family issues, or arguments at home. You see people come there, and they're safe and it gives people the space to heal in a different way. (Ica)

A couple years ago, I worked at a campus where the environment was really toxic, it was horrible, like I legit have PTSD, really, really horrible. And *capoeira* was my therapy where I could go, and not to beat up on anybody, but go to an environment where I knew I was loved, in spite of what else was going on, I knew, I knew I was loved, and I could be myself, I could let me hair down...I didn't have to put on a mask. (Ser)

For those of us that do *capoeira*, we're really into it right, you see them jumping around, happy, smiling, they're having a good time, so. I mean, it brightens up the mood – if that's not healing, I don't know what is. You go in there too, kind of like a therapy. That's what I used to see it as. Like as a kid, I used to cry if I didn't go to *capoeira* class, if my mom didn't take me. I used to cry, I used to love it that much, it was a therapy. I used to want to go all the time, I would just want to do it all the time, I would do it in the streets with my brother, we'd just walk around with *berimbaus* for no reason. (E)

All healing really potentially stimulates from your mind and your mental, so if you can't focus on your mental healing, even with like, there are some studies like people can't physically heal because they're mental doesn't coincide I guess, so it's almost like they don't believe that you know, "my shoulder's never gonna heal," and it actually doesn't just because you are so, you've embodied the ideology of "this cannot heal." so it's like once you kind of fix someone's mental, it helps with your physical as well. (Cava)

I would say *capoeira* helped me in the healing aspect, and it became therapeutic and helpful in finding my voice... so once again like I'm introverted, reserved and shy, and I wouldn't speak, or my voice would be like, "la la la la." And what helped me out of that, was honestly singing. (Mel)

I mean the therapy goes into the release of insecurities. The therapy goes into, and with the release of insecurities goes into, um the age factor, like I started when I was 37, so the limits are not there. You know, the liberation comes from seeing my son open up and become a completely different individual, like I look at him now and I'm like, "sheesh! Where was this guy?" Or you know, what, I kind of question it a little bit, like "what was it that I wasn't providing?" But, it takes a village, the saying, 'it takes a village' really played a huge factor. You know, my daughter's involved as well, you know, just, it's a mental release as well too. Like sometimes I don't want to play, in the *roda*, I'd rather sit there and just play music, I'd rather get into that axe. (Rão)

In addition to a general positive sentiment, Game shared, "It's fun...I can't really picture myself not doing [*capoeira*]". Muito noted, "It's always something fun to talk about with other people when you say this weird crazy word that nobody has any idea what it is that you can pronounce." Muito added, "just to have fun and enjoy your life is the most important aspect I think."

Just trying to imply that presence, and that mindfulness, without like beating someone over the head with it and being like “this is magical” but being like, “I promise this, at least, for me relieves a lot of stress” and the movements themselves are really fun and really awesome and the mastery is valuable, but it’s not the end of the world. (Curtis)

I kind of feel like I loosened up quite a bit in our *capoeira* group, in our classes. I have time to kind of feel silly, or I’ll make fun of myself if I like try a movement and fall over, just kind of make fun of myself for things and be silly and I feel like everyone is really receptive. if I make a bad move in a *roda* and I get myself caught up in a corner, I was like, “well that sucks” *both laughing* I don’t have the mental energy for it in *capoeira* so it helps me let loose in a way that I don’t in other aspects of life. (Tiba)

Physical Benefits. Numerous participants discussed the physical benefits of participating *capoeira*, including agility, endurance, and strength. Noa stated, “you’re going to want to get, you know, the obvious physical benefits of being in *capoeira*.” E stated, “it [*capoeira*] helps, of course, being healthy, right, getting in shape, staying in shape.” Terra shared, “Part of why I like the *CAPOEIRA* GROUP style is because it’s good for your body.” Ser noted, “you have the physical part of *capoeira*, obviously cardiovascular fitness, muscle toning just because of you know, the movement.” Student A provided an example of how doing *capoeira* seemed to prevent injury on a specific occasion.

One of the ways it [*capoeira*] helped me... For Christmas, my niece almost killed me, she tried to kill me. She left some sort of like plastic toy on the floor, like on tile, and I stepped on it and slipped and I think I caught myself, like I did the... *negativa* *chuckle* and I saved myself. I don’t even think my butt hit the ground. I was like, “oh my god!” but then once I realized like, “Wait a minute, I’m okay.” And I think it’s because I fell correctly for once. I always wondered if it was becoming a reflex, like in practice you know it’s coming, so I just never knew if I really like really like internalized it.

Another physical benefit discussed participants was endurance. For example, Cava stated,

“*capoeira* gives you your endurance.”

you [principal investigator] said, “run,” to me, that’s the best self-defense on earth...I tell people when they come in, I say, “if you can run,” I said “that’s a plus,” and I’m not saying being the fastest, but if you can for however long you need to run to get away from, I said “that’s good. But can you imagine running and getting tired, and then getting caught?” you know, that’s that, the only reason why they got you is because you got tired

of running ... and I think *capoeira* gives you that endurance, when you're playing, you train. (Zum)

personally, if I go anywhere in life, I know that I can always stay in shape, I can focus on songs, so I can always stay active, whether it's mentally or physically. And spiritually I can actually find an attunement to where I'm not bored. Like that was the one thing about, even with the COVID situation with people being inside of the house, it wasn't like, "oh what am I gonna do??" it was like, "oh okay, I can do some handstands, I can do ginga, I can do some *capoeira* moves, I can learn how to do all these movements in a confined space so then I can expand the space." (Muntu)

the benefits to your health like, for, it's a pretty challenging physical activity, so like, cardiovascular endurance, flexibility muscular, strength, balance. Let's see, and then of course like, exercise, you know, endorphins, there's like a bunch of like bio-chem that you can get into. It has like all those benefits of like just exercise, cause it's also like prolonged, like you do for an hour or two of the movement which they, studies say is also very helpful. Rather than doing like twenty minutes of running, like to maintain an activity for long periods of time is better, or has benefits. (Muito)

In addition to agility and endurance, participants discussed the strength gained from training *capoeira*. E noted, "ANOTHER STUDENT, when he first came in he was like super skinny and then after a while he was like swoll for no reason." Student A stated, "...that first class when I felt a lot of muscles for the first time in my life *chuckle* [I] really appreciate how much strength it must take and how good it must be for your entire body." She also shared the following anecdote.

My grandmother was a very traditional Chinese woman... like very old school Chinese woman, didn't want to exercise and move around, and didn't want to be just thin, she wanted to be like boney, not even any sort of meat or muscle. So when my grandmother got older she got really bad osteoporosis so like, you know her bones were constantly breaking and she spent the last ten years of her life in bed because she fell and like broke every bone in half her body... So, it's always been a priority in my life to exercise and strengthen my bones and keep building, so training *capoeira* and really the way that it works every bone in your body – you're doing headstands, handstands, like it really doesn't seem to leave anything out. And so I feel like that's a great way to prevent osteoporosis in the future.

General Growth. Ica stated, "it [*capoeira*]'s helped me to grow as a person. it [leading *capoeira* group]'s forced me to grow." She added that "they [students] grow as people." Junior

shared a similar sentiment and stated, “I can see my growth. I see that growth...it helps heal.” Do stated, “because *capoeira* is so um, unique in its own way that it makes you develop your own personality. I’m never gonna leave it because *capoeira* made me who I am today.” Mandinga noted, “It’s forced me to learn as much as I can and to continue to learn and sharpen my skills.” Terra shared, “I can’t say you know, “I didn’t train because, I just, I didn’t have the capacity to do so,” so you are always able to get better.”

to try to learn from other groups and other instructors and meet new people ...everywhere you go there’s another school, and so it kind of gives you a way to like travel and learn something new, but without having that like really scary unknown factor. So, I guess being a *capoeirista* kind of means to me like this constant growth. (Student A)

being safe, or being really into the music, or learning a different language, I’ve seen people do that, they just start off, they don’t know anything about Portuguese, they don’t know anything about Brazil, but then a couple years later they’re fluent in Portuguese. Stuff like that is just real cool. (E)

I have parents who bring children that have no clue really what *capoeira* is, but they know it’s this really cool activity that this lady’s teaching, and the kids that do presentations are really confident, and really helpful toward each other, and they’re leaders. And so they’re looking for those qualities to develop in their child, and they find that embedded within *capoeira* itself as an art. (Njinga)

I have a bunch of other hobbies, like playing music, and you know, being a good partner to her [girlfriend], and music and foreign languages and all this shit, but when I teach *capoeira*, if you think that I’m amazing now or whatever, I turn into a completely different person when I teach *capoeira*, and I, I can feel it... you could equate it to the feeling after getting a new haircut. You know, you’re sitting in the chair, and you’re like, “alright, I can’t see what you’re doing but I know it’s - I hope it’s going to be good.” and then they turn you around and it’s like “Wow!!” like “this is me!!” (Terra)

Terra also discussed a time when he observed growth in others.

Seeing them [students] come in, the same way, socially awkward, not knowing how to talk to people. A lot of these people are minorities; the Asian population was big, the Indian population was big, there were some Black kids, and there were some White kids interspersed with that. But, to see them, go from day one of learning the *ginga*, and not knowing what in the world they are doing. To a month later, being able to buy games, to sing songs, to play the instruments, and just to be a part of this, it was just like so crazy. Like to see them, they just became different people.

Rão shared about the changes he has seen in his own children.

And I see that within my children as well, like I said, they are GROUP. You know, and I mentioned it to INSTRUCTOR, and my son has a touch of Autism, and he is able to be himself, like he was also in that shell... to see him open up, and to be himself and feel comfortable in the community that he's in, and to be able to self-express, that's been my liberation, that's been my, like a very very very huge liberating part of my *capoeira* journey, is that seeing him transform into who he is right now, because, simply because *capoeira* and the community that we built is like a real big, dad, touch-me-in-the-heart as far as that goes. When I get to the point where [next rank] are at, my song will be about him.

She [former student] has the vocabulary to defend herself, and the physical attributes to be able to defend herself. And so that's mainly what I was trying to pull out of her, I was like, "you can keep those traits, but turn them into tools" as opposed to just being know for like, "oh this little girl, neck-rolling and you know like, acting up and talking with her hands," you know, blah blah blah. But now, she's in school for criminal justice? I think? So when you give kids leadership qualities, they seek leadership... that's especially with all my little kids, I push them. (Data)

Everybody's becoming, socially aware. Everybody's paying attention, people are starting to pay attention to um, issues that affect people of color, women, lgbt community, religious issues, not just within *capoeira*, but within the nation as well. And that's something that looking back on sort of my *capoeira* journey, it's definitely something that has not been sort of adhered to or focused on a lot. And just being able to see small changes, not everybody, but a number of different mentors and leaders that I look up to, it's incredible. And I feel like it's also allowing them to learn more and learn more about themselves and how *capoeira* influences their lives as well. (Greg)

Harm

Four different codes were identified for this domain including: sociohistorical context; training challenges; people, not *capoeira*; and physical injury/martial. Out of the four primary codes for this domain, one was discussed by all eight groups: training challenges (6.2). Training challenges included subcodes of the following barriers: physical, accessibility, consistency, and money. There were not any codes were identified by seven out of eight groups.

Physical. Some individuals discussed physical injuries or challenges that they have personally experienced and incidents that they have witnessed. Mel shared, "The drawbacks would be like physical injury, like the physical part of it." Student A stated, "I definitely

think you can do too much and wear yourself out... and like of course there's always the possibility for injury, but then I think that's true for everything." Game and Do discussed the potential for injury when playing.

Obviously there's gonna be ... hurting, harming because it's a martial art ... someone's not always gonna be able to get out of the way, or may take a harsh take down and not be able to fall properly, that's definitely part of it. (Game)

Some people they just don't like – where it's like Regional groups, like right away it's like, “boom, boom” and then the beginner gets kicked “okay it's natural it's natural, just keep on moving move it move it” like. And then a week later, they don't show up or they're hurt (Do)

It's not always how the body works, it's like some conditioning's important ... someone might not have the strength, they might have to develop that... especially with certain *queda de rins* where you're putting a lot of weight on your wrist and you could potentially hurt yourself, or other movements, for that matter. (Game)

As soon as you hit someone ... this person can *rasteira* you, or *martelo* you, kick you in your face, as soon as you see that... everyone's like, “Okay, so this is a fight now.” There's no flow, it's just, “Oh I'm fighting.” It sets the tone, and that's why sometimes I'm like, “Dang, why'd you start it? why'd you *rasteira* this person, cause now, you set the tone like getting a little more aggressive. Now, people are gonna be like, “Alright, it's okay to take someone down.” (Do)

Participants also shared about their personal injuries due to *capoeira*.

I had an ACL reparation surgery, for my ACL, I was thirteen and I just never, it just never bounced back ... I would push myself –there's times after a batizado where I couldn't walk afterwards... and like for me I didn't see it as negative, like, “oh yeah I had so much axe” that's what I'm doing today, I'll just give it a day and I'll bounce back. (Mel)

You can definitely go too far. started to realize, like I have a bad knee, and ...there's kind of the idea that you kind of work through it and strengthen the muscles around it and that's a way of therapy. But then there are times where I, like I kind of take a break for a week and I realize my knee feels great. It's like, “Oh it doesn't hurt today,” (Student A)

I got *tesouro 'ed* and my foot twerked and snap pow! So that was, that wasn't fun, but that's a part of it... I've seen, like I've busted a couple of lips. I've seen people get concussions, just because like we, like we play, like it's fun, but it's also contact, right, and I've even played with some outside groups, some other groups and, they're not as physical as we are. (Ser)

This guy kicked me in the face and I took the heel to the eye...I was like, “wow, it’s already swollen shut before I hit the ground. This is remarkable!” I was just surprised at the amount of damages...you know people are like, “oh it’s not a serious martial art, you can’t hurt somebody with it” and I’m like, “oh no, you really can!” ... “you can really hit someone to the ground with that kick!” doing a *mea lua de compasso*. (Muito)

Cava stated, “I hurt my shoulder and kind of slowed down a lot, but now I’m back into it.” Ole recounted a traumatic brain injury that he incurred years ago and the subsequent impact upon his training.

From a physical standpoint - almost 8 years ago, I suffered a traumatic brain injury that left me with recurring migraines ... I get vertigo fairly easily, depending on how I move. It has also left me with what I suspect is just weakness in my left shoulder... in my previous group, it was pretty difficult because it was a lot of *au*, and, we just trained a lot of *au* *chuckle* that really made it really difficult for me because it would set my head spinning pretty quick.

In addition to injuries, participants discussed the physical challenge of training their bodies.

Mandinga shared, “one of the personal challenges that I have been having lately is noticing differences in my ability to do certain movements.”

It’s hard to get out of bed the next day, it’s sometimes so physically demanding. I know that as a martial artist, being in it for as long as I have been... your body is trying to recover and develop new connections, whether it’s physically with your muscles or mentally in your mind (Sim)

that [*capoeira* class] is the hardest thing I’ve ever done, hands down. And then it doesn’t get easier. Like most other things, once you reach a certain level, you are in that level and that’s what it is. You know, you become a teacher, you’re a teacher, there’s good days, bad days, but you’re a teacher. You know, you learn to fly a plane, for hours and hours and hours, you become a more experienced pilot, but you don’t become more pilot *both chuckling*, you become a slightly better pilot. (Data)

I feel like there’s not always as much knowledge in the art form amongst teachers to always possibly um you know, help someone really get these movements in a way that’s safe and a way that’s not gonna break their body because... people say that *capoeira* is a lifelong journey and I definitely want to be able to do *capoeira* until I’m older. (Game)

Some of us have injuries and things like that so to be able to see that that is something that is an on-going, not to say struggle for balance, but on-going adjustment to balance, that’s what I’ll say, because you’re never at a totally comfortable equilibrium and to be able to be off-balance with another person in this very small, confined space *chuckle* is

important to be able to trust yourself, and move wisely, in, around, above and below (Njinga)

Terra noted the limitation of space and stated, “I’m in my little apartment with my girlfriend, and I don’t really have space to move around like I want to.” Furthermore, a few participants discussed physical challenges in relation to time. Mandinga stated, “one thing that I’ve realized is my body is changing in some ways, I am getting older.”

You’re traveling, you’re teaching constantly, every time you’re going somewhere, you’re constantly teaching, you’re not even letting your body to get rest. But that’s how a lot of capoeiristas, who are a little bit older, that’s like, how they ruin their bodies. (Do)

I mean age is always there, just combatting age with “I can still grow” or “do I want to still grow”. These are some of the things that plague the older members. But they do realize that there is a difference between them and the new twenty-year-olds who just came in, or playing with the kids, and “will they patient with me?” not to say ‘age discrimination,’ but just, there's the possibility. (Njinga)

Participants discussed potential solutions or ways to deal with the physical challenges of training, including conditioning and stretching. For example, Data stated, “water, stretch, water, stretch.” Additionally, Game noted the impact of stretching:

Flexibility is a thing that’s also needed for a lot of kicks...it’s like I had a teacher who ... was working on a macaco... it wasn’t until he started doing yoga and he started doing more shoulder flexibility exercises that he just instantly saw that he was able to get over that plateau. And that’s one of those limitations that I didn’t always hear a lot of people speak on... “just do a bunch of reps, you’ll get it eventually,” could lead to someone harming themselves... as someone who’s taken yoga myself, that importance of it, and taking the time to properly stretch, you know, during classes and afterwards to kind of reduce any injury as much as possible. (Game)

Accessibility. Participants shared about their desires to try *capoeira* and barriers to having the opportunity. Greg stated, “growing up I actually wanted to do martial arts but I never had the opportunity or the means to actually take classes.” Additionally, Game shared:

When I was younger, my parents couldn’t afford to do it... that’s personal for me, and so thinking about the accessibility, and having the opportunity like giving that to people who wouldn’t otherwise have access to it is big. I know I appreciate it.

Sim also discussed the desire to try *capoeira* and when he took a break and later returned to training.

That's something that I've always wanted to try, and you know, I jumped at the chance, and kind of on and off for a year, year-and-a-half. I end up leaving UNIVERSITY and going to STATE UNIVERSITY, and at the time it was very difficult to make classes with the group, so that was kind of my first introduction to it... when I took my break, you know I always knew I wanted to come back, but you know, that's how I found my instructor, INSTRUCTOR NAME. (Sim)

at the time, it was early 2000s, it was around, but at that time, it was only one *capoeira* school in EAST COAST CITY. All the other teachers, the second groups that are here, in EAST COAST CITY, were non-existent. There was *capoeira* in OTHER EAST COAST CITY, but I live in CURRENT EAST COAST CITY. So sometimes the scheduling and things like that [is why] I didn't start until post-college (Njinga)

Tiba described the challenges of training virtually and stated, "the online classes don't have the same feel as in-person classes." Similarly, Simba discussed barriers with regard to location:

"*capoeira* sessions on the weekend took place on a local beach rather than in school, so initially figuring out how to get to the new location was difficult." Noa also mentioned the change in his *capoeira* school's location, stating: "eventually they ended up moving away from my martial arts studio because of other practical reasons." Junior spoke about the prospect of losing support when not able to pay for and attend classes: "you might have that community and then all of sudden, like you're kicked out because you know, that might have been their philosophy."

Money. A handful of participants discussed financial challenges and considerations while trying to learn *capoeira*. Simba stated, "The new location meant a greater financial burden because I had to take a taxi to the beach, which also impacted the amount of money I had left to spend on groceries." Below are additional examples of the financial burden and barriers experienced by participants.

I really wanna pay for class, but I do need to feed my family... I gotta pay rent, like I gotta feed myself, I gotta feed my family, so those are, those are the challenges... Some

groups you know, tell them [students] that they can't come [if they can't pay]... in some circles, like that might be frowned upon (Junior)

When I was younger, I think one of the reasons why I wasn't able to do, um, I would have loved to have been able to have done this at a younger age when, um, I think when I was younger, my parents couldn't afford to do it (Game)

I joined a group, actually I wasn't in a group yet. I couldn't afford it so there was a guy at a gym that like I used to see him do it and I used to ask if I could come train with him. And there was another gentleman there, he had two kids and he definitely couldn't afford *capoeira* but he loved it. So, when I could afford it once I finished my masters, I started doing it at like a legit, actual gym...one of his other students that couldn't afford it, we would go together in the gym that I would work out at and we would go over some of the movements...like they talk about twin flames like somebody who is just as interested in things as you are, your paths don't cross but you guys are very similar – he was very similar to me, he was always interested. It was just his circumstances or things that didn't allow him to get certain types of experiences, so I would think on that, and we would try to add new things to it. (Neef)

Consistency. Another challenge described by participants was consistency. Mandinga noted, “I would say that, that in itself, the discipline, the consistency is hard.” Do stated, “I think that the challenges is ... just keeping a group, especially keeping *capoeira* alive.” Do also stated, “you gotta think about a lot of people who are adults, you know, they are not dedicated as much as they should be in the *capoeira* world.”

I would say with all my students here, they may come see me on a Monday, or they may come on Saturday, they're not really training like they should... so they struggle every week to really relearn what they were taught the previous week. (Mandinga)

I've been with the group since like 2013, and one of the things that is basically the challenge is consistency, and the consistency of people coming... MESTRE I think has been a part of the community since I think 1997. Contra Mestre has been doing, Lord have mercy, more than 20 years. He's been doing it for a while, but just kind of the consistency are the challenges, just personalities. (Ser)

A few participants attributed schedule limitations as to why they were not able to continue training. Curtis stated, “I'm like, “okay I cant be doing it three times a week anymore. It's not possible, I can only do once a week” so that's how I'm teaching. I can't commit to more than that right now.” Junior noted, “with everybody's schedules we know that sometimes, you

know, that's [training] not realistic." He added, "time is a reality and yeah like making those decisions can be tough." Do stated, "just right now is not the time for us, like me and ANOTHER GROUP MEMBER were fighters and right now our main focus is fighting." Game noted, "other engagements can sometimes take time away from *capoeira*, which is again, that's how life is." Mel shared, "another drawback for me would be giving beyond my, my what, my boundaries, beyond my capacity, 'cause it's so easy, you know, we're family it's so easy to sacrifice yourself for things that you think deserve it. And it's completely fine to do that, but it's just for me, after a while you're like, "I'm tired." "I'm tired."

Life commitments and other priorities were also discussed by participants. For example, Simba stated, "a very rigorous medical school schedule interferes with training because being on time for *capoeira* training sessions is made difficult." Curtis noted, "Like I'm obsessed with this [*capoeira*] but, I have other things to focus on." He added, "It's always tough to kind of find – to reconfigure the pieces as you get to different stages of life."

I think one of the things that I understand is because I'm a female and I watch women come in and out of *capoeira* because of marriage, children, school, and I say in and out, or they're watching from the outside, whatever the terminology is; I am more patient or understanding, when even the gentlemen have the same stresses. (Njinga)

After I graduated in EAST COAST CITY, I immediately moved back to MIDWEST CITY because at the time my mom needed to go the hospital and I needed to come back and get a job and actually help her with like finances and bills and stuff. So, moving back to MIDWEST CITY and sort of settling here, I couldn't train as often. (Greg)

Just having to deal with like life, and then coming to class, 'cause I know that some students are like dedicated and they want to be in class, but then there's obviously like life things that happen but they wanted to be there. And they might be physically there, but then they can't fully be engaged because they have outside things happening. (Cava)

I trained with him [group leader] all through my first and second *cordão* and then he got married, wanted kids, he quit, especially when you got a wife, kids, work besides that, going to school, it's very difficult to keep a strong *capoeira* group. (Do)

I think our retention is, has kind of dwindled, and I know that some people come back from it but often times people have other life responsibilities and that's some of the people that's no longer training because of having families, and obviously moving away (Game)

Philosophy

Twelve different codes were identified for this domain including: universality/greater connection; being present; (not) for everyone; privilege/gratitude; way of life; reciprocity/cycle; humility/ego; own path, nature of things; harmony; bigger than me, perpetual growth/change; and creating reality. Out of all twelve codes for philosophy, two of the codes were discussed by all eight groups: general philosophy (1.0) and universality, or the idea of a greater connectedness (1.1). There were not any codes in this domain that were discussed by seven out of eight groups.

General philosophy. Some participants shared their thoughts regarding a general orientation toward life, and others discussed philosophies regarding *capoeira*. In terms of outlook, Junior stated “You have to be creative, just how we operate in this life.” He also stated “We are creators of our own reality. If we know that then we're able to still be able to work our magic and able to grow”. Do also commented on the notion of time and stated “life is so fast”. In addition to orientation, Zum explained a story that demonstrated the idea that we are all ignorant to something:

There was a little White boy, he wasn't doing super well in math class... This other little kid, I think he was from Pakistan, he said, “oh he's just dumb!” And now they're all gonna say, “stop stop stop.” I said, “why you calling him dumb?” “because he don't do his work, this that, and the other.” I said, “okay,” and I asked the little kid, and I said, “so what is it that you know how to do?” ... so he started explaining that he loved to fish, you know the different types of lures and hooks and what to do to this type of fish ... after he finished explaining it, I asked the little boy from Pakistan, I said, “did you know that?” he said “no.” ... I said, “who's dumb now? ... you don't call people dumb, because we all ignorant to something.” and he understood it, you know, he understood that. (Zum)

Regarding *capoeira*, participants shared about their group and personal philosophies toward the art form. Mel stated her group's philosophy is to “respect the tradition and practice

inclusion”. Muito stated that in an Angola group, no one has specifically named a motto, but to “have fun” is important. She further reflected:

I could even be saying that because it’s an expression of how I personally feel about life, which comes first right? the chicken or the egg – did I find this because it expresses what I already believe, or did it make me see the world differently in this way... I suppose, I just personally feel like your life should be fun, I don’t think that life is about work and I don’t believe that you should live to work. Like I think you should work to live, like it’s what’s done for necessary things. I think you should be enjoying your life ... like the sweetness of life, the joy of interacting with people (Muito)

Muito also practices *capoeira* with a Regional group and stated that their motto is “play your own game”. She added “don’t try to play someone else’s game, you know, cause it’s not gonna work. They’re gonna play their game better than you are, so you play your game.” Ser commented on

Related to interactions with people, Data stated the goal “to make more friends than enemies”. Both Data and Muntu referenced the book ‘Art of War’ by Sun Tzu for different reasons. Data shared about his realizations based on the book, wherein “if you gotta fight, do the shit as quick as possible so you’re not making your people poorer, but then the other one was like, “the best way to win a war, is not to fight one.” He added

Our skill level will decimate most groups, our training, is elite, but at the end of the day, you want to make more friends than enemies, like you want people to want to come work with you. They’ll have a healthy respect, like, “yeah, those cats, you don’t wanna go in there being no clown,” but at the same time, you want to go to their events, like they’re great events.

Muntu stated that he was reminded of the book’s philosophy that “it does not give you the advantage to wait to engage in battle, unless you strategize for that time.” He elaborated

Contra Mestre mentioned a statement, he was like, “Yeah! When they’re coming at you, the first thing you want to do is put yourself in danger!” “What!?” That is counterintuitive, I want to avoid and the danger! It’s like, “No you gotta put yourself right in the jaws, in the clutches of death and then take it away from them!”

Muntu also conceptualized how approaching rather than avoiding something can be advantageous.

You can see how the philosophy in life in how to preserve one's self is to run away from things, and you're just like, "yeah but for how long?" It's almost like we talk in our everyday lives, like if you have a scenario that comes up and you're avoiding it, avoiding it, avoiding it, you're really making it a disadvantage for yourself because you're not confronting it as soon as possible. unless the timing that you're choosing to confront the scenario is in your best advantage.

Lastly, in terms of *capoeira* philosophy, Data stated, "People can be amazing capoeiristas but shitty humans, or the other way around."

Universality/greater connection. This code included the concepts of spirituality, connection to *capoeira*, and relationships. Noa shared about his experience of "that physical and spiritual aspect of feeling at home and feeling like you're in a family outside of your own". Mandinga and Neef specifically referenced their belief in God or a higher power. When practicing *capoeira*, Mandinga stated he is "not only honoring the experience for myself, but also honoring God and what has brought these different elements that have brought me to really connect and expand my relationship to *capoeira*." Neef stated:

spirituality for me is, like I believe in God... whether you believe in God or whether you believe in a higher power or more divine order or whatever you want to call it, for me, like I feel like there is... a higher thing that we obviously don't understand. More specifically, like the Bible talks about God being everything and everything being one, everything being visible and invisible. So from a scientific standpoint for me, that's like 'oh that's the earth, that's the rocks that's the air that we breathe that we can't see'

Do also discussed the idea everything, wherein "axe is around the world, it's everything". He also discussed his connection to nature and stated, "I just explain to people like, "man, I'm Native American, I'm just naturally in touch with Mother Nature." Both Mandinga and Njinga referenced a connection to the African Diaspora. Njinga stated "We are one in the same with what we are, our genetics are pretty much African descent." Neef noted:

We all arise out of the same things on this planet, like the food that our parents ate to conceive us, I feel like the Universe, or God, is always talking to us through other people or through other signs.

Mandinga shared:

There's also the spiritual piece, realizing that this is part of a bigger connection to the African Diaspora realizing that it comes from a distance, it comes from the struggle, and those feelings that I am experiencing are signature to the art form.

In addition to spiritual connections, participants discussed their connections to *capoeira*.

Simba stated, "The circle [in *capoeira*] brought sense of unity to life, a greater connection with the universe and planet." Greg shared, "The idea of *capoeira* is like, I guess, attributed to how interactions are in the roda, and not so much like coming, trying to be above things, more so just living with them." He elaborated about his experience of connection within *capoeira*.

Spiritually-wise, I'm an aesthete but I've always felt ... I've always felt like I have had a whether that's setting up the *bateria*, playing the instruments, syncopating with all of the other instruments in the *bateria*, providing the space for two people to play within the roda and creating that type of space where everybody can, where people are able to express themselves that's very rewarding for me on a spiritualistic level and it's uh, it's something that I've never been able to fully explain, myself, but it's definitely that a feeling that I've been able to identify, that I've never been able to feel in any type of like, church setting, if you will. Like I've felt a spiritual connection in the past in church settings, but then my beliefs have changes and then *capoeira* was, became sort of like the only place I've been able to feel that sort of euphoric feeling.

Beyond spiritual connections, participants also discussed their connections to others.

Njinga stated, "Whatever it might be... depending upon the person's age and experience and vocabulary, you make those connections." Junior shared a similar sentiment and stated, "We're all like moving and operating and we're all walking with those same, those same like philosophies inside of us." Junior also differentiated that people "may experience different things inside of different circles but we still are all connected." Zum discussed the connections made possible through nonverbal communication:

I read something once and it said, “we all smile in the same language,” ...when somebody’s smiling, it’s like one universal language we can all find some kind of way to be there and still celebrate each other’s differences, instead of trying to fit into one box.

Njinga added “There’s more things that are alike, than aren’t alike” and Íca stated “It [*capoeira*] shows that we’re all the same”. Junior noted “We’re all in this together”. Do stated, “I think capoeiristas are always looking out for each other, always. Even if there’s like bad blood between groups, at the end of the day they’re just like, “you do *capoeira* just like me”. Curtis also discussed the idea of unity despite differences:

I think it's in a lot of group disciplines but especially so with *capoeira* where you’ve seen someone tired, you’ve seen someone uncomfortably singing, you’ve seen them, you know, at their most vulnerable. And we’re all a part of this, and knowing that we might be like, such different types of people, or we might not have met as friends in any other context, but we’re all together at least in this.

Njinga described *capoeira* as a small microcosm as well as strengths and weaknesses.

We’re just a small microcosm, and example of the world, we’re all trying to get there, we’re all trying to grow in ways that we’re not as strong, and some ways that we think we’re not as strong at all, but through these words we are not as strong, not that we are weak, just different than strong. We’re going to have to work really hard on that side, we’re going to have to really work hard on being patient.

In sum, all groups shared about a general philosophy and greater connection, including mention of spirituality, *capoeira*, and relationships with other individuals.

Unique aspects of capoeira

Four different codes were identified for this domain including: multifaceted; historical relevance; family/closeness/community; and integration with daily life. Out of the primary codes for this domain, seven out of eight groups discussed one code: multifaceted (8.1).

Do stated, “that’s the thing about *capoeira*, it’s very different compared to every other martial arts cause you’re not just learning martial arts.” E shared, “the history, the music, it’s not just a physical activity.” Game also stated, “It’s more... all-encompassing than other disciplines

and that's why I like it. It's different." Mel shared, "the benefit are endless, like not only the physical but the spiritual, the emotional, all of that." Terra noted, "it's so good for your body, and it's good for your mind, because it's so multi-layered in that, you know, there's never a point where you can get bored with *capoeira*."

It [*capoeira*] encompasses a lot of parts of life... when I did kung fu, I did Ping Changchuan, which is like Northern Longfist, and I did the Northern five animals... there was only drilling. The same thing over and over and over...it only reflected a single sense of life. (Data)

They [other martial arts] may focus on the physical piece or they may have the musical component but in terms of all of those different layers coming together, it makes *capoeira* quite unique. What makes it unique is that you got the complete mind, body, and spirit wrapped up in an incredible activity with a unique history. (Mandinga)

I definitely have learned over time that, learning, not just how to do a movement, but learning the music, learning the language, the culture, the history, the like oppression that brought about *capoeira*, learning that and having an appreciation for that and sharing it with others is ... an important part of being a member of a *capoeira* group. (Tiba)

I truly believe that *capoeira* is um I think, like this is kind of wild to say, but I think almost every student should learn *capoeira*. Um, like maybe in high school, elementary school, or it should be offered because it's one of the few – it's not one of the few – but it's one of the sports where there's so many elements to it. There's the music piece, the language piece ... all of that and then there's also this movement that like, a lot of people don't invert, they don't walk on their hands like these are movements that are, we have, but we don't tap into. And I just think that like this structured way of lifting weights like this and like this is not ideal *moving arms up and down*. I mean yoga's great too, I love yoga but even yoga has its limitations. And I think that *capoeira* kind of taps into those other spaces, which is why I do it. (Neef)

Individuals denoted the importance of music. Terra stated, "Without music, *capoeira* is just another fight."

If we don't have the music, we're just a bunch of guys in a circle *chuckle*, dancing, doing the ginga and kicking, there's no, it's just nothing, it's like a little circle fight. I can't explain it. It's just not, not *capoeira*. (Do)

If you want to punch and kick people, I don't know, maybe do Muay Thai or something, or kickboxing (right), that has the same thing but without the culture, you know, do MMA, put what you learned in *capoeira*, and just apply it to that, like, don't call it *capoeira*, (Game)

In addition to being multifaceted, participants noted the flexible nature of the art. Terra stated, “all you need is a floor and some chairs, matter of fact you don’t even need chairs, all you need is a floor.”

It’s a martial art that really lends itself to like, happening anywhere, with anyone regardless of if they’ve ever seen it before or not that I feel makes it just more accessible to people than like just doing a demonstration of a more, I don’t want to say traditional, necessarily, but a more structured martial art. (Ole)

Miscellaneous.

Three different codes were identified for this domain including: other systems; feedback; and questions for principal investigator.

Other systems. A few participants mentioned other systemic challenges, related to educational systems, fraternities and at organizational levels. Do discussed the personal impacts of his phenotype and how he is perceived by others.

This is at the time when I had my long hair, my beard and she [college instructor] said, “if I see Do walking down the street, I would not know that he would be African American and Native American. I would think that he would be Middle Eastern or Puerto Rican.” And I was like, “oh snap!”

Mandinga and Terra also discussed the responses that they have experienced based upon how they look: “Folks see me, they see dreadlocks and they think, “oh, some Rasta man, right?””

(Mandinga)

I still look like a suspect and they’re going to find something, which I don’t know what they’re going to find, but they’re going to find something, and be like “oh yeah, this is why,” you know, “his past dictated why he should have been dead.” (Terra)

Tiba also shared about emotional toll that she experiences on a personal level.

Not only do I have the emotional toll of trying to process this myself and get out of bed every day and do my job and teach my students, but then I have to teach you too, a message that you didn’t want to gain until now.

Additionally, Tiba denoted organizational challenges that she has experienced when navigating her career.

It kind of pains me right now to note that even though I'm really happy to be a physics professor and ... for there to be the presence of a Person of Color in my department, for my students to have a Person of Color to teach them right now, I'm just kind of having this feeling of sadness that our society shows that sometimes those achievements still don't matter.

Similarly, Terra described the negative experiences he faced at an organizational level when pledging to a fraternity.

They will put you through hell but tell you to keep going because "that's what everybody goes through" and all of this. I, being a Black man and understanding how fraternities and organizations like this work, you tend to have to go through a lot to you know, break you down and build you back up.

Terra also spoke about the historical oppression that Black people have experienced

To be honest with you, you know, this has been going on for centuries, and like I told you, that book [W.E.B. DuBois' Souls of Black Folks] I'm reading right now was published in 1903 and I would say about 98% of that book still applies today. You know, we tried being peaceful, we've tried you know, getting loud and burning things and breaking shit, we've tried talking to people and we've gotten more politically active and people still kill us.

Feedback. Aside from the post-interview survey wherein participants were specifically asked about their interview experience, seven participants provided feedback within the interview itself. Mel and Game shared that they liked the questions: "I think you asked like, the best questions, and there's nothing I would change about that" (Mel). Game also stated that the questions are "really nice, or interesting" and added, "I've never been asked these kinds of questions before."

Both Sim and Rão stated that they were happy to help and be a part of the project. Rão also stated he thought the project was "very interesting. Additionally, feedback included an expression of gratitude for the project and the space: "I do appreciate ...this offering, this connection" (Junior). Terra stated, "I appreciate you for doing this, this is good, this is really

good”. Terra added, “what you’re doing is great. When ANOTHER GROUP MEMBER told me I was like, “fuck yeah” and you know, just uplifting your Black friends.

When asked if there was anything else that participants wanted to share, Data stated “that Mião is awesome”. Data also expressed an interest in attending the defense to “hear what kind of questions they [committee] ask” and inquired about being able to record it “for the archives so when Estelle grows up, she’ll be like, “that’s my mommy right there.”

Questions. In addition to general feedback, some participants had questions and others did not. Nine participants, or roughly 33.3% of the sample stated they had no further questions at the time of the interview: Brandon, Data, Do, Junior, Noa, Rão, Sim, Terra, and Tiba. Meanwhile, eighteen participants, or roughly 66.6% of the sample asked the principal investigator questions during or at the conclusion of the interview. The questions asked pertained to the principal investigator’s own experiences with *capoeira* and the research project.

Participants asked how the principal investigator began *capoeira* (Curtis, Cava, Muito), how long principal investigator has been training (Muito, Cava), when I received my *capoeira* name (Curtis), if I still teach (Curtis), if I still train (E), what my plans are regarding *capoeira* in the future (Greg), and how *capoeira* impacted my life (E). Muntu and Zum asked if I have answered the same questions myself (Muntu), and how *capoeira* has been healing for me (Zum).

Regarding research, participants asked what inspired the principal investigator to choose *capoeira* for this project (Mel, Cava), the research project overall (Game, Neef), how many people were interviewed and still needed to be interviewed (Neef, Ser), how useful it was to interview the participant (Raca), general timeline to completion and how results would be summarized and shared (Ica, Mandinga, Simba, Student A, Zum). Njinga and Ole asked about which degree the principal investigator is pursuing and the eventual title thereafter.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

Summary

The goal of this research project was to understand cultural healing and identity among individuals who practice the Afro-Brazilian martial art of *capoeira* by answering the following research questions: 1) What aspects of identity are important for *capoeiristas*? 2) What are meaningful cultural traditions in *capoeira*? 3) What aspects of *capoeira* are therapeutic, or healing, over time?

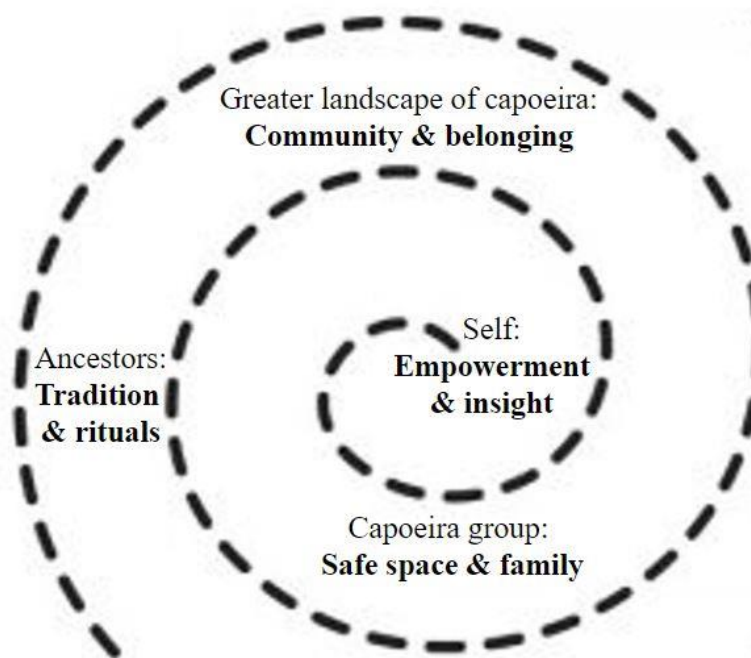
A total of 27 participants from 8 different *capoeira* groups completed semi-structured interview, including 15 group leaders and 12 group members. Results from the interviews were categorized in the following domains: pedagogy, cultural traditions, identity, healing: interpersonal, healing: self-development, harm, philosophy, unique aspects of *capoeira*, and miscellaneous which was comprised of question and/or feedback for the principal investigator. It is likely that responses were not coded as ‘unique to *capoeira*’ often because those ideas were already coded as ‘cultural traditions.’

Healing through *capoeira* can be conceptualized with the following figure, which incorporates an ecological model, as well as ways that healing occurs. At the center, an individual experiences healing through empowerment and greater insight. As described by participants in this study, healing occurred through a sense of congruence to the art form as well as opportunities to gain new insight and overcome challenges that they did not think or know they could achieve. Beyond the individual, *capoeira* groups were described as safe spaces in which individuals could express themselves and ‘family’ was cultivated through a welcoming and inclusive environment. The greater landscape of *capoeira* offers an even greater sense of community and belonging, as individuals are able to travel all over the world and still find their

‘family.’ Finally, ancestral traditions and rituals were described as cultural pathways through which an individual can spiritually and physically embody the art of *capoeira*, providing a direct connection to *capoeira*’s history of resilience. A visual representation is presented in figure 8.

Figure 8

Ecological Healing through capoeira



The exploration of identity through an intersectional approach demonstrated the importance of understanding variation within demographic identifiers, as well as multiple roles or ways that a person conceptualizes themselves. This approach also solicited information to understand how identity functioned for participants, in contrast to broad generalizations that often occur through use of demographic checklists.

Salient aspects of identity

On their respective identity diagrams, participants included a range of 3-19 aspects of self with an average of 7.8 different parts of self. Across the sample, more than half of the individuals

included ethnicity, familial role and/or partnership, being a student/learner, and movement on their identity diagrams. In addition to discussion of the identity diagrams, individuals discussed the meaning of being a *capoeirista*, as well as the importance of a sense of congruence to the art form and who they are.

Capoeiristas. Out of all 27 participants, twenty-three individuals included an aspect of movement on their identity diagrams, including 21 individuals who specified *capoeira*. As previously mentioned, *capoeira* was described in terms of being a lifestyle, effort and commitment toward training, the way that a person plays and interacts with another *capoeirista*.

Participants described *capoeira* as integral to who they are rather a hobby or activity that they do: “I like to say that *capoeira* is that little piece between my inhale and my exhale, that’s where you’ll find my *capoeira*.” (Zum)... when I play my game, it’s just my expression, it’s my story, I feel like it’s an inseparable part, like I don’t become a different person. I become like more me” (Muito)... “everything I do is *capoeira*.” (Cava), which supports Almeida’s (1986) assertion that *capoeira* is constantly carried with a person. Junior stated, “we’re all like moving and operating and we’re all walking with those same, those same like philosophies inside of us.” Junior also noted that his identities “walk with me all the time.” Additionally, Nginga shared:

capoeira is how I walk... it’s every day, it’s not something that I can do without... to me it’s not something that’s only physical movement, but how we move within society, how we move within family.

The noted experiences are also echoed in the lyrics of *capoeira* songs:

<i>Eu sou capoeira sim senhor</i>	<i>I am capoeira, yes sir</i>
<i>Tehno uma família de ouro</i>	<i>I have a family of gold</i>
<i>capoeira é a minha vida</i>	<i>capoeira is my life</i>
<i>E a roda é o meu tesouro</i>	<i>and the roda is my treasure</i>

Eu sou angoleiro

I am angoleiro

Angoleiro eo que eu sou

Angoleiro is what I am

Mandingueiro de Luanda

Mandinguero from Luanda

Mandingueiro de Angola

Mandinguero from Angola

Eu sou mandingueiro quilombola

I am a mandingueiro of the quilombo

O que é que eu sou

that is what I am

Mestre Acordeon noted (Leondore Cinema View, 2011), “For me, being a capoeirista means one who is very involved in *capoeira*, one who gives. It might be physical, it might be musically, it might be mentally, emotionally, it’s for everyone, they give in different ways in *capoeira*.” Similarly, E described the inclination to “do it [*capoeira*] all the time, I would do it in the streets with my brother, we’d just walk around with berimbaus for no reason.” Cava also stated:

I remember being in college once... I was in like a weight-lifting class, and we were doing like laps around the gym. And I was like, “I think I hear the berimbau, ‘cause that’s ...that’s a distinguishable sound,” so then I *chuckle* I think I just left the class; I’m not even sure if I told like the coach or the instructor, I was just like, “oh that’s a berimbau,” and I was looking as we were running laps around the gym and I was like, “aw somebody’s playing the berimbau,” so I just like left out of there and I had to go to see who this person was... if I hear the berimbau, I’m going to go wherever that sound is no matter where I’m at, I have to.

Their experiences exemplify lyrics from three different songs that reference *capoeira* calling upon a person to play:

Avisa meu mano

go tell my brother

Avisa meu mano

go tell my brother

Avisa meu mano

go tell my brother

capoeira mandou me chamar

capoeira is calling me

Chama eu,

it calls me

<i>chama eu</i>	<i>it calls me</i>
<i>Chama eu Angola, chama eu</i>	<i>it calls me, Angola calls me</i>
<i>São bento me chama</i>	<i>são bento calls me</i>
<i>São bento me quer</i>	<i>são bento wants me</i>
<i>São bento me proteja</i>	<i>são bento protects me</i>
<i>Quem capoeira e</i>	<i>who is capoeira</i>
<i>Se berimbau toca tu me chama</i>	<i>the berimbau you play it calls me</i>
<i>O meu corpo precisa de dançar</i>	<i>my body has to dance</i>

For *capoeiristas* in this study, *capoeira* was not just an activity that occurred during a class for an hour or two, rather it was an extension of themselves and integral part of their everyday living. As Student A stated, “it’s such an encompassing lifestyle.” This finding contributes to the literature thus far, as embodied identity has been previously delineated by Bordieu (1977), Merrell (2005), Narváez (2013), and Mestre Acordeon (Lendore Cinema View, 2011). Numerous participants described spiritual practices, dancing, fighting, martial aspects, playing music, singing and community, again illustrating the many ways that *capoeira* can be embodied. Additionally, results support de Martini Ugolotti’s (2014) findings that marginalized individuals can reclaim physical space and personal identity through community-based activities such as *capoeira* and parkour.

Congruence. Participants’ experiences support existing literature that asserts that ethnic identity can serve as a protective factor for marginalized individuals and help to buffer the daily challenges that minorities face (McLean et al., 2017; Sue, 2010; Frost, 2015; Hammack, 2010). Terra noted, “It’s made me feel like there’s still a connection between Black people and

something Black people created because, Black people, to be honest with you, we ain't got much left, Mião, that hasn't been taken." Simba noted that he felt "a stronger connection with the African world." As stated by Rão, "I feel more physically, mentally, and spiritually connected to *capoeira* more than anything else."

Participation in *capoeira* was also noted as starting point for individuals to learn more about themselves and their respective cultural histories, thus contributed to

That's what I feel like I get the most out of *capoeira*, in general, is the connection, with something my ancestors left, for us, you know. I feel like I'm still getting more in tune with... where I could be because a lot of my fitness journey and my career currently come from a European ... construct, when I got introduced to *capoeira*, it was something completely different... what it's caused me to do actually, is like look up the different religious beliefs that came from *capoeira* before they came here, which was the Yoruba construct, and the Candomblé. (Rão)

To be a *capoeirista* is definitely very important for me because of the fact that again, the first aspect of African martial arts, it's you know, getting a chance to practice something that I am very passionate about ... to be able to learn more about the African diaspora as well as like the, just overall just this particular art that has established itself for many years. (Noa)

It's ... a practice that involves... the music, the dance, the martial arts element, but more so, I'm learning more about the philosophy, I'm starting to read books about this and *capoeira* and I feel like the philosophy of it is something that resonates with me. (Game)

because I'm a Black man, in America, I always have to sort of mentally prepare myself for just whenever I step out of the house, whenever I'm not around my family. And because there's, there's a big chance that I may not make it back alive. So I have to sort of mentally prepare myself for the absolute worst thing to happen each and every single time I step out and interact with society. Whether that's me walking up the street to like a local coffee shop, or if I'm driving to work, me being a Black man, and a distinct one at that because of my beard, it's something that I have to mentally like, check, each and every single time I step out of the house. (Greg)

When asked what helps to cope with the aforementioned stressors, Greg stated:

What I often times do, is I'll often sing just *capoeira* songs... It's one of my go-to things that I do whenever I'm stressed or ... whenever I do get emotional because of things that are happening on the t.v., or any types of stories that I might come across that reminds me of my Blackness... *capoeira angola* it's always there to put me at ease.

Similarly, Terra noted the privilege of being able to practice the art form:

I cannot help but think that that song was being sung hundreds of years ago, by these people who created this thing that we are able to do now, without worrying about somebody whipping us or you know, amputating a limb.

As described by participants, the knowledge and relationship to *capoeira* itself can be a protective factor for *capoeiristas* and is indicative of potential benefits for marginalized individuals who would not otherwise seek access to formalized mental health care services. In addition, congruence was described in terms of self-empowerment and healthy coping with regard to how *capoeira* is healing over time.

Meaningful cultural traditions

Participants described a number of important cultural traditions, including the acknowledgement and discussion of *capoeira*'s history of resilience, the importance of music and storytelling, naming and group membership, and connection through *axé/ase*.

History of resilience and intergenerational wisdom. While researchers have discussed *capoeira*'s history (Rosa, 2012; Merrell, 2005; Lewis, 1992; Almeida, 1986), interventions have not focused upon the ways in which the art form's history impacts *capoeira* practitioners (Burt & Butler, 2011). Several participants in this study denoted the importance of *capoeira*'s historical roots in resilience, including knowledge as a requisite to advance in rank:

We have to do like an essay on a *Mestre*, or, 'what's the history of the cord system,' or ... 'how was *capoeira* in Brazil' ... 'how was that in the past,' 'what were some of the challenges they had to experience,' so it's kind of a robust curriculum of movement, music, and education. (Ser)

When I'm teaching *capoeira* what's important to me is that not only do students have a great grasp of the physical movement, but I also like to talk about the history, talk about the resilience component of it that I think is very integral to *capoeira*. (Mandinga)

It's really important not to just train it as like a physical art but to really understand why there's music involved and what kinds of things people are singing about and understand the history and context of it in general. (Raca)

We taught the art based on our connection to the history of the art, so we never dismissed the fact that it started off with the enslaved Africans in Brazil, and we made sure that was embraced in the class. (Zum)

Beyond knowledge of the history itself, participants discussed the ways in which *capoeira*'s history had a personal impact. Game stated, "the history of it is what hooked me so much and [is] one of the reasons why I'm doing it." Like the critical skill of reframing, or perspective-taking, of a cognitive behavioral approach to therapy (Beck, 2020; Forgas & Williams, 2002; Linehan, 1993), knowledge of *capoeira*'s history is one way that participants were able to reconceptualize their own dispositions.

It's roots are very bloody, and, negative, like slavery, like very much hardship. And you know, stuff in life is hard sometimes, so I have always thought that it's really cool that they took this very negative situation, and found some joy in life, in each other, cause I can't imagine what slavery would be like ... so, it's kind of hard to compare that to like, my life. (Muito)

I cannot help but think that that song was being sung hundreds of years ago, by these people who created this thing that we are able to do now, without worrying about somebody whipping us or you know, amputating a limb. (Terra)

As discussed in the literature, ethnic identity is found to be a protective factor for marginalized individuals (Cole, 2009; see also Gains et al., 1997; Kim-Ju & Liem, 2003; Jones, Dovidio, & Vietze, 2014; McLean et al., 2017; Smith & Silva, 2011; Sue, 2010), which is supported by participant responses. Some individuals explicitly discussed their involvement with *capoeira* as a protective factor, as Terra stated, "knowing that they endured all of that... I think that might be something else that kept me going."

Knowing that this art was created by African slaves, and has survived as a means of standing up to oppression in many different forms and being as resilient as it is to have survived being outlawed and just having practitioners arrested, it's something that, it's an art form that I've become very familiar with, with just regards to the history alone. And it's an art form that has over the years, more so and more so, has put me at ease. (Greg)

Now it's causing me to go back further into my ancestry or roots, and see, "okay, what was it that we were before we came here, what was our diet before we came here, what

was our style of living, what was everything, our entire construct before we came here, what was that?” So it’s caused me to go deeper into African studies. (Rão)

the way I look, the color of my skin, some people see it as a threat, and some people see it as, you know, this is who we are. So I change my, I’m almost code switching, depending on the job, because if I want to continue to be an impact on my community, I need to be around to do so. And tying this back into the quilombos... at the end of the day, you do what you need to do to survive. (Ser)

Njinga stated, “my ancestors knew that they must disguise this because their life depended on it.”

Similarly, Data discussed his own struggle with life hardships which contributed to feeling depressed and suicidal, but “literally *capoeira* saved my life.”

On the way, to actually you know, kill myself, I get a call from a friend, and he was like, “Hey, do you still want to do *capoeira*?” And I was like, “there’s no *capoeira* in STATE.” And he was like, “Yeah, I just drove past a place on W. STREET, they’re doing *capoeira*.” ... so I had this, ridiculous dilemma now, but at the time I was like, “is my pain of living worth more than me trying something that I’ve be searching for *years*?”

Similar to individuals who fought for survival hundreds of years ago, *capoeira* remains a tool for survival today (Assunção, 2005; Capoeira, 2006; Merrell, 2005; Lewis, 1992; Rosa, 2012). As

Ica stated, “it was developed for freedom, it was developed for the slaves in Brazil at the time to be able to escape and to be able to survive and to be able to be free.”

We are far from broken. We are a miracle. We should not even be here anymore. All of the horrible things we have been the victims of would have broken us if we were weak. Our ancestors who lived wonderful lives back in Africa and were kidnapped, sold, transported on filthy ships, enslaved, Jim Crowed, lynched, murdered, raped, and generally abused for four hundred years have left us with a strength that some of us don’t even realize we have. (Jackson, 2021)

Music and storytelling. As previously described, music differentiates *capoeira* from other martial arts, as Terra noted that “without music, *capoeira* is just another fight.” Capoeira (2006) purported “It is dangerous to say ‘I know *capoeira* music’ without knowing black culture and music as well” (p. 327).

Having the understanding of the music and what’s behind the music, and how the music guides ... not only is the rhythm and the toques, the rhythm of the berimbau’s important,

but also the words of the song, and you know, what's happening, and the meaning behind it too... The music tells you what to do, the music tells you where to go and how to move throughout the *roda* with each other, and just having the respect for the music. You know, whenever you enter the circle, you're always paying respects to the people playing the instruments, but you know, at least my understanding is you're paying respects to not only those that are playing, but the music itself that's guiding you into the circle. (Sim) the music, I definitely practice a lot of music. I've read multiple books on it, because of um, especially learning the fact that it's from our ancestors. It's, I feel more connected with *capoeira* than any other martial art that I've taken. I've taken wind chung kung fun, I've taken tae kwon do, I've been boxing for almost 17 years, and I feel more physically, mentally, and spiritually connected to *capoeira* more than anything else. (Rão)

if the music is not strong, the axe is not strong. You know we had an event not too long ago, and the music just felt broken, or you know, it was monotonous, and you know, you can kind of feel it. I mean, yeah, everybody was still playing and you know, we're making the best of what we had. But take that, and compare it to some of the best events we've had, definitely you notice that the energy is different, having that, again, that foundation of music, you know, is proof that having that foundation will improve the axe of the group. (Sim)

Capoeiristas reported experiences of their collective contributions through the music, which is supported by psychological findings regarding music therapy in a group setting (Gilboa & Salman, 2018; Guerrero et al., 2014). As stated by Terra, "when I sing, I can feel my voice bouncing off the wall and coming back into me. It's like I'm feeding myself." Within the scope of this study, music is a cultural pathway through which culture is preserved and proliferated.

Naming. Naming was a non-physical way that *capoeiristas* sought to protect themselves, since their street name was often how they were recognized in their respective communities, it made finding a person by their legal name even more difficult (Capoeira, 2006). This is a tradition that is still utilized within street culture, as gang-affiliated individuals often have monikers for similar reasons as *capoeiristas* (Zaitzow, 1998; Wilson, 1997).

Within the scope of this study, naming was a cultural tradition described by each of the eight groups, which is "an enduring tradition of *capoeira*" (Noa). Some participants had *capoeira* names, while other *capoeiristas* were not yet named, despite more than 10 years of

practicing the art form (e.g., E, Muito). As stated by Njinga, “some people just want a name, even though they know that everyone doesn’t just get a name.” While naming is an important cultural tradition of *capoeira*, Curtis stated, “if the name got forgotten tomorrow, I’d be like, ‘I’m still a capoeirista.’”

Sometimes naming was ritualized, at special events such as a *batizado* or a naming *roda* (e.g., Mandinga, Tiba), based on a moment (e.g., Neef, Student A, Noa), the way a person moved (e.g., Curtis, Muntu) or the characteristics of a person (e.g., Sim, Brandon, Mel, Terra, Ser). For individuals who did not receive their names during a *batizado*, they noted that their name may had a different impact if received during a graduation ceremony. For instance, Curtis stated, “I think it would have changed more if I hadn’t like already been to like a lot of *batizados* ... like if it was related to my graduation, I might have felt ... different about it.” Even though Tiba received her name during a naming *roda*, she stated that she felt “more of that feeling [connection] after my first *batizado*, than I did at the naming.”

Group leaders discussed their approaches when giving names, wherein many group leaders made a concerted effort away from choosing a name that mocked a person, and instead were thoughtful about how they could empower their students. For example, Mandinga stated, “Especially with our young people, I didn’t want to give them names like ‘bananahead’ you know, like that’s not what people want to be called by the street.” Both Data and Ica also noted the consideration of an individual’s personality, dedication, or how students comported themselves.

This strength-based approach to naming was described as meaningful for *capoeiristas* that resonated with their given names, which can empower individuals who are otherwise marginalized by society (Marco et al., 2016; Pérez-Gualdron & Yeh, 2014).

it was in class... like a couple weeks before my first *batizado* ... it was interesting because I didn't like necessarily like self-identify as TRAIT or anything *chuckle* ... so... that name was like a little drop of, gave me a bit of self-awareness about myself, and yeah, it was, it was cool (Brandon)

He [group leader] was like, "yeah, yeah, you're ANIMAL." I said "why?" And he said, "well I knew a Mestre who was very powerful and his game was very strong, you know he just had this, this essence about him. Like you could feel him when he walked into a room." He [group leader] said, "I feel like you could really grow into that, that's a very powerful name and I want you to have that." ... to have something that's like insanely powerful, when I think about my name, I'm like, "you know, this name carries a lot of weight' and it's not something that I can ever ever take lightly. (Terra)

my first teacher... he said because I was always there, and always ready to help, like an INSECT. But then he also said... something like "the INSECTS are needed, and without INSECTS, you don't have anything."

The benefit of naming, in contrast to other interventions or programs that are labor- or cost-intensive, is that an empowering name takes no significant toll upon resources aside from the time spent identifying the best name for a person. The longstanding positive impacts of receiving a name were described by participants, as they experienced authenticity, connection, and group membership after receiving their *capoeira* names. As stated by Muntu "I felt more authentic *chuckling* like, 'I have arrived!' 'I have a name now!'" Mel stated, "I felt like I was part of the team, like my first group everybody had names and I was still going by like, my Pagan name and shit." Terra stated, "it's almost like I'm now a real part of the party...even though I don't have a title to my name...they're like 'he's legit.'"

the name definitely felt like a membership card, where you know I got to tell people like, "hey! I'm NAME!" um, now I didn't have to just give like my government name or anything like, yeah, it made me feel like I was part of the secret club. (Brandon)

I really wanted a cool name and then I got 'ANIMAL' and I was like 'damn' like *both laughing* But, eventually ... I was like 'that's my name' and people are like 'that's your *capoeira* name?' and I loved it cause I felt like I got it from like my family and or like the family that I eventually acquired (Neef)

Capoeirista's names also were identified as significant aspects of their identity. For example, Mel stated, "I even have an INSECT tattooed on my body, my mother adopts this INSECT

aspect of me too. She buys like all these INSECT t-shirts.” Neef also shared, my name in SOCIAL MEDIA is Dr. ANIMAL.”

some people I genuinely like do not know they’re real names, like I only know their *capoeira* names because like I’ve never asked. Like they’re like, ...“this is ANIMAL” I don’t actually *shaking head* know ANIMAL’s name, but I’ve hung out with him like thousands of times, but his instagram name is ANIMAL, his *capoeira* name is ANIMAL, everything ... so for me I feel like it’s like, because I know why people have *capoeira* names to begin with in terms of the history like for me it makes me feel more like part of the community. (Neef)

As described in the literature, group membership is germane to a person’s well-being and is evident in the cultural tradition of naming *capoeiristas* (Jones et al., 2014; Sue, 2010; Brewer, 1991; Hill, 2005; Sherif, 1957).

Axé/ase. Thus far in the literature, axé has been discussed as energy (Capoeira, 2006; Downey, 2005), however participants elaborated that axé can also refer to mindfulness, deep connection or alignment, and affirmation.

As stated by Mestre Ombrinho, “every once in a while, there’s a game, where all the planets align and you’re just in that state of being” (Fein, 2012, 00:00:46). Similarly, Ica stated “axé is when you’re in the moment, you’re in the *roda* or in the, at an event and you’re just, you feel the energy.” When he was at an event, Ser noted, “I was... just like, ‘okay I’m in this moment.’” In these examples, axé was one way that participants were able to be fully present, and engage in mindfulness, which is an evidenced-based practice to help manage distress (Linehan, 1993).

I have literally had this conversation –it was a, one batizado ago maybe? - but I was just talking to someone, a person who was having a lot of family troubles and like, I knew he was stressing out and stuff, and just that day, we like, we just played a lot, and he got to play a lot of games and stuff and then afterwards we were just talking... ‘for eight hours I was away from it’ you know, just like getting away from that stress and getting into that other dimension, allowing yourself to be like, absolutely present, that just really helped personally just work through some of the stuff. (Curtis)

Mindfulness is described as “paying attention in a particular way, on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgmentally” (Shapiro, 2015, p. 86). Mindfulness has been found to have a moderate effect size as compared to wait-listed groups when measuring symptoms of anxiety, depression and overall stress (Khoury et al., 2013). Additionally, Shapiro (2015) noted additional benefits of mindfulness, as practitioners can deepen their resilience and have “a stronger resistance to stress,” (p. 88) which was described by participants.

When we’re connecting to the *axé*, we’re connecting to the ancestors, we’re connecting to stories, we’re connecting to stories of other people, friendship, and our life experiences, and experiences of others as well and you just kind of ball it up, in my opinion, ball it all into that one word and just digest it. It’s really internal, but you still, it’s got that external factor that we just feed off, almost like a, current, it’s not the electricity, but it’s what the electricity creates. (Zum)

I felt like everything was just aligned, like all the training that I’ve done up until that point, all the alone training, ‘cause I left CITY in YEAR and I’ve been doing a lot of training by myself throughout this time period and so it felt like everything came together. (Mandinga)

Everybody connecting and being on that same, that same current...and then having that same energy...like with new students and whatnot, everyone feeling connected and together, so whenever someone feels awkward or whatever, like everybody shares the same experience, at the same moment, whether you’re new or you’ve been in *capoeira* longer. Like in that moment, everybody’s sharing the same journey and experience together. So if you’re a new student, like I might not be a new student, but I’m sharing this journey with you, you know, to help you grow and excel as well. (Cava)

Being physically connected, or in sync with a partner was found to help prevent “primitive defenses” in relationships (Shuper Engelhard, 2018, p. 41), similar Koehne and colleagues (2015) who noted the empathic qualities of individuals who were able to understand non-verbal cues. In confirmation of the aforementioned studies, *axé* was described as a way for individuals to align themselves or coalesce. Brandon stated, “everything just clicks into place.” Curtis added, “It’s that energy...the trance that you almost get into at you know, a really poppin’ *roda* where it’s like, ‘okay, we’re just like all on this ride together in like a separate dimension.’”

Terra stated, “when everything aligns, you just have this beautiful thing, that nobody can explain, you can’t replicate it, and it takes over you.”

Axé was also describe in terms of an outpouring of emotion and gratitude:

I’m singing a song, and I’m saying thank you to the ancestors, I’m saying thank you to the people are here, “thank you to the *Mestres* that are all around,” and “thank you to my Mestre, and thank you to your Mestre, because our *Mestres* together have helped us to be these great children of *capoeira*,” and “oh it’s going to magnificent,” and “thank you to this *Mestra* here” and I burst into tears. I’m like, “what is going on?” And I’m like, “they’re gonna think I’m crazy, hold it together!” *both chuckling* And I’m like, “how do I explain this?” “how do I explain this?” and it’s not something that needs to be explained all the time, sometimes you just allow it to take you to where you need to go. And it was this magical release, where it like melted burdens or heaviness, it just melted off on me. And it was just a place of gratitude. (Njinga)

the last time I worked the summer camp - I’m going to try to not cry. One of my favorite songs is *beira mar*, and I was like the head RA so at every single of the meals, I would give announcements at the end. So at the last Friday, the last meal we were going to have... I went up to the microphone, and I conditioned the kids to know, that when I pick up the microphone, they all had to get quiet in the cafeteria ...I waited for everybody to get quiet... one of my students got up and said, “Alright guys, let’s do it! *singing* *beira mar io io, beira mar ia ia*” like, *sigh* my entire class got up, and sang *beira mar* to me, it’s one of my favorite songs. And I like, I dropped the mic, and I started crying, and I like went to them, in their circle and started singing with them, and then the rest of the school had heard enough and they started singing too, and it was like, that moment, that moment is also axé. (Terra)

As evidenced by the aforementioned examples, axé exemplifies a culturally-based form of catharsis, or emotional release (Cherry, 2020). Catharsis is described as “an emotional moment that leads to a positive change” and a skill to help individuals cope with sadness, anxiety, and other mental health symptoms.

Ase was described as a way that *capoeiristas* affirmed each other and another mode of connecting:

if it’s a-x-e, axé, to me it’s more Brazilian, more like a togetherness and more like... it just has a more Brazilian feel to it. The a-s-e gives me more of an African vibe, it gives me more of like an ‘amen,’ ‘I’m in agreement,’ ‘I understand,’ ‘I feel you,’ like ‘this is slave-shit-type,’ like ‘we’re in this together.’ That’s what ase means to me, it’s like a spirit, that transcends generations and setting. (Ser)

But I also say ase, which means “and so it is” which is kind of the equivalent of when people say “amen” or “amin,” so I’m agreeance to it, I’m putting energy towards that, I want that to happen. So ase, yes, I agree, put energy toward that, let’s keep building together. (Njinga)

Ase is a culturally based term for validation, which is emphasized within dialectical behavioral therapy as a critical tool for interpersonal effectiveness (Linehan, 2012). As noted by Data, “it’s more like, qi, or chi, or spiritual energy, and it’s just another tool, what you do with it, dictates how it’s used.”

I never really understood what axé meant but I would say it anyways, because everybody else said it in *capoeira* they would all say axé, right, I mean I was young ...what I got out of it, it could mean like, “hello,” “goodbye,” or a sign of respect kind of thing. So then, yeah, a sign of respect so just being respectful to one another no matter where you come from. So yeah, like no matter who I meet, “axé” right? that’s what I got. (E)

In consideration of Vélez and colleagues (2017) Cultural Microsystem Model, meaningful cultural traditions include *capoeira*’s rich history of resilience, music and storytelling, naming and group membership, and axé/ase. *capoeira*’s historical context has been described through ethnographic and anthropological lenses (De Campos Rosario et al., 2010; De Martini Ugolotti, 2014; Stephens & Delamont, 2009; Griffith Miller, 2016), but participants in the study illuminated the importance of learning and embodying the history of resilience. music is one of the cultural pathways, or ways in which culture is preserved and passed along, through which *capoeiristas* learn stories of ancestors, context of the artform, and embody cultural tradition (Narváez, 2013). Naming and group membership was another cultural pathway in which *capoeiristas* could identify with their respective groups and the greater context of *capoeira*, which can serve as a protective factor for ethnic minorities (Pérez-Gualdron & Yeh, 2014; Sue, 2010). Finally, axé/ase was a cultural pathway, specific to *capoeira* and related rituals, wherein individuals were able to connect with each other within respective settings.

Healing Over Time

In addition to a sense of congruence, several participants discussed the importance of connection through rituals and tradition, safe space, social support and belonging, and self-development and empowerment over time.

Connection through rituals and tradition. Rituals define ways in which individuals behave and interact depending upon the culture (Jones et al., 2014; Brayboy, 2006; Delgado-Gaitan, 2001; Yosso, 2005; Appadurai, 1996). Specific cultural pathways, or rituals described by participants were the ways that a person participates in a *roda*, the structure of *capoeira* classes, utility of music, and the sense of connection as a result. Muntu exemplified these concepts and stated “not everybody follows the ritual of *capoeira* when it comes to the spiritual aspect of it. So those encounters and their expression of what goes on and then their sharing... that’s where they’re sharing the rituals.”

Rituals were described regarding events such as *batizados* or *rodas* as well as *capoeira* classes. As stated by Greg, “everything that we do in preparation for setting up the *roda* is also contributing to the *axé* as well. And having those type of everyday, ritualistic practices... are extremely important, because it all feeds off each other. Junior noted that “the first game means a lot.” As described by Hooker and colleagues (2018), a meaningful life is a healthy life insofar as meaning can be a protective factor among adolescents, individuals experiencing acculturative stress, and individuals experiencing hopelessness (Brassai, 2011; Pan et al., 2008; Marco et al., 2016).

Cultural pathways were also described during *capoeira* classes, which were structured, or ritualized, in specific ways depending upon the group. *Capoeiristas* can benefit from having structured classes because they can dedicate cognitive load to learning new skills rather than

adjusting to routine (Gathercole et al., 2019; Feldon, 2007; Cowan, 2000). Some rituals occurred at the beginning of classes, while others occurred toward the end of class. A number of individuals described the incorporation of music at the beginning of class (e.g., Simba, Mandinga, Raca), while others played music at the end (e.g., E, Greg).

As a group leader, Terra stated that he “always start[s] with A: thanking people for being there, because I think that’s the most important part.” As Mel stated, “before we hit the floor we have to say ‘*salvé capoeira*’ so it’s like we’re announcing our presence to the group.” Acknowledging a person’s presence may seem basic, but for individuals who are often overlooked, ignored, or excluded, something as simple as an acknowledgement can affirm that person, which is critical to our social functioning (Barton & Carrow, 2016).

The phrases “salve” and “axé” were also cultural pathways that unified group members, which allowed them to feel connected interpersonally and spiritually. For example, E stated, “I like when they all line up at the end of class especially when the kids do it... they say – ‘SALVE CAPOEIRA GROUP!’ and they go ‘Salvé!’” Similarly, Tiba shared, “we’ll say ‘salve’ and send everyone well wishes together.”

We end every class with it so some sort of, that closing ritual that ends with ‘axé’ ... I don’t know if anybody’s every really explicitly said anything besides like, it’s the end of class, and then you do the thing ‘axé.’ in addition to something at the end, it’s something at the beginning. So, using axé as a way to sort of set the tone to begin class and then at the end it’s a sort of appreciation for class. (Student A)

Other rituals also helped *capoeiristas* feel connected to *capoeira* beyond the class. For example,

Student A stated:

it’s always made me feel like kind of it ties the present with the past. Like it’s one of these very long-standing traditions that traces all the way back to the first *mestres*. And so, every time you do it, it’s a way of honoring those who came before.

there’s also the spiritual piece, realizing that this is a part of a bigger connection to the African Diaspora, realizing that it comes from a distance, it comes from struggle, and

those feelings that I am experiencing, are signature to the art form, and it's a privilege for me to stop. (Mandinga)

Rituals, and a sense of connection are not only germane to the human existence (Marco et al., 2016), but are healing over time through the practice of *capoeira*. As stated by Nyad (n.d.), “the spirit is larger than the body. The body is pathetic compared to what we have inside us.”

Inclusive community. As is foundational to the art of *capoeira*, many *capoeiristas* experienced their inclusive *capoeira* communities as healing. Participants discussed safe space, belonging and family, and community overall. Research indicates that positive relationships “make us more resilient, advance our personal growth” and increase the likelihood that we will become “community builders... good leaders, and caring citizens” (Johnson, 2013, p. 268). Furthermore, meaningful relationships contribute to happy and stable individuals (Johnson, 2013). A Tribe Called Quest (1991) professed that “The thing that men and women need to do is stick together. Progressions can't be made if we're separate forever.”

It's in a lot of group disciplines but especially so with *capoeira* where you've seen someone tired, you've seen someone uncomfortably singing, you've seen them... at their most vulnerable and we're all a part of this, and knowing that we might be like, such different types of people, or we might not have met as friends in any other context, but we're all together at least in this (Curtis)

Safe space. In terms of the environment, participants described *capoeira* as a safe space. One way to cultivate a sense of safety within the environment is by welcoming individuals to the group, which was mentioned by several participants.

It was developed, for people to come together, to give them a common ground, and to give them a safe space where they could train, where they could fight, where they could, ... work together to get out of something. (Ica)

For individuals who did not experience emotional or physical safety in their work or home lives, *capoeira* was described as a place of respite. Junior shared, “I definitely believe that it does create a safe space. it does create a safe space for all of us... [for them] not to feel like they're

about to be judged.” Raca noted, “I’m not gonna like laugh at anybody or be like, ‘You’re not good enough’ at this. It’s literally just a no-judgement zone.” Ica shared, “for me, it’s given me a safe space ... to express myself,” which is one of the elements described by Yalom (2005) regarding group therapy.

A couple years ago, I worked at a campus where the environment was really toxic, it was horrible, like I legit have PTSD, really, really horrible. And *capoeira* was my therapy where I could go, and not to beat up on anybody, but go to an environment where I knew I was loved, in spite of what else was going on, I knew, I knew I was loved, and I could be myself, I could let me hair down...I didn’t have to put on a mask. (Ser)

For those of us that do *capoeira*, we’re really into it right, you see them jumping around, happy, smiling, they’re having a good time... it brightens up the mood – if that’s not healing, I don’t know what is. You go in there too, kind of like a therapy. That’s what I used to see it as. Like as a kid, I used to cry if I didn’t go to *capoeira* class, if my mom didn’t take me. I used to cry, I used to love it that much, it was a therapy. I used to want to go all the time, I would just want to do it all the time, I would do it in the streets with my brother, we’d just walk around with *berimbaus* for no reason. (E)

I had a traumatic childhood, so it helped me to deal with a lot of that in a safe space where I have family that wasn’t family. people going through struggles in their personal life, when they come to *capoeira*, they realize that it’s okay and they have a space to heal and a space to be safe. (Ica)

I was just talking to someone, a person who was having a lot of family troubles, and like, I knew he was stressing out and stuff, and just that day, we like, we just played a lot, and he got to play a lot of games and stuff and then afterwards we were just talking, and you know, ‘for eight hours I was away from it’ you know, just like getting away from that stress and getting into that other dimension, allowing yourself to be like, absolutely present, that just really helped personally just work through some of the stuff. (Curtis)

As delineated above, participants explicated the extent to which being present and engaging in *capoeira* was therapeutic, as well as their specific efforts toward making individuals feel comfortable. When providing instruction to children, E stated “just make them feel comfortable, cause if they feel comfortable, they’re gonna feel welcome and if they feel welcome, they’re gonna want to keep on going.” Zum added, “part of the class environment is just making everybody feel welcome... and no bullying... when there’s kids involved, you try to teach them,

just some basics of being decent and growing up.” Tiba stated she thinks about “how I treat new people and bring new people into the group, that I'm doing my part to make sure that the group is welcoming.” Terra noted that he focuses on “making them [students] feel like they’re a human being, and making them feel like they’re a part of the space.”

with new students and whatnot, everyone feeling connected and together, so whenever someone feels awkward or whatever, like everybody shares the same experience, at the same moment, whether you’re new or you’ve been in *capoeira* longer. (Cava)

my current *capoeira* group culture and why I joined this group was because it’s more of an open and accepting friendly environment. It’s not like, “oh this is what we do, and don’t nobody else -” no it’s not like that ... It’s very inclusive and we learn so many things under the *capoeira* spectrum which keeps us in that friendly light. (Mel)

I mean these kids, and I'm telling you, some of these kids were like, just physically handicapped, but they were trying their best to do cartwheels and *bençao*. So to me, that shows the power of *capoeira*, and how it transforms. (Zum)

Some group leaders discussed the ways in which they and relied upon more advanced students to validate and normalize the challenges experienced by new students.

I use everyone else to let the other person that might be new, that’s in their doubt stage, you know like, “yeah man, the struggle is real, it’s supposed to be...but we’re all struggling so you can do it, come on come on come on.... It helps to build their confidence in the pack. (Data)

Some of those same students, you know, after they train for a while, and they see beginners that come in, it’s like, “wow.” So they become like a strengthening body to the new students, like “hey” you know “five months ago I was right where you are.” “I couldn’t do this, and I couldn’t do that” and I think that comfort level is a plus, for newer students. (Zum)

These results enrich the literature that explore third spaces and the affirmation experienced therein (de Martini Ugolotti, 2014). The setting in which *capoeira* is taught, played, and absorbed can have a profound, and positive impact as discussed by participants in this study. Their experiences illuminate the ways in which individuals can be affirmed ecologically, or within a given environment, in contrast to the lack of representation and environmental

microaggressions often experienced by individuals who are already marginalized (Sue, 2019; Sue, 2010),

Belonging and Family. Mestre Acordeon stated that *capoeira* is “an opportunity for a means of ... social acceptance,” (Leondore Cinema View, 2011) which can contribute to an individual’s sense of belonging (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Allport, 1924; Anderson, 2011).

Belonging within a group is denoted as a contributing factor to an individual’s self-concept and self-esteem, as seen in research regarding participation in music, dance, and martial arts (Lin, 2014; Bolger, 2012; Burt & Butler, 2011; Lopez & Burt, 2013; Burt, 2015; De Martini Ugolotti, 2014; Kugel, 2018; Shipley, 2013; Iriart & Milani, 2009; Jones, Dovidio, & Vietze, 2014; Sue, 2010; Brewer, 1991; Hill, 2005; Sherif, 1957; McLean et al., 2017; Sanchez et al., 2013). When participating in *capoeira*, Simba stated, “Benefits are experiential, deeper connections that are more focused and meaningful because they are sustained interactions.” Tiba shared, “[we] pick each other’s spirits up and talk about things.”

something I try to pass on is a lot of that language and understanding of Brazilian culture ... and trying to understand that, why certain things are the way they are can really help, especially people of color, to try to find some type of belonging. (Curtis)

They [students] find it healing in their thinking and their purpose and their reasoning in what they do, to realize that they have an effect on someone else. And also, that effect may be big or small, it’s sometimes unrealized how you impact each other. So there’s healing in that relationship building. (Njinga)

capoeira’s done a lot for me like it allowed me to make friends growing up in CURRENT CITY I was always sort of like a loner, I never got on with anybody, it’s a specific kind of culture here. And if you sort of like deter from that culture any type of way, it does sort of like, it sort of isolates you in a sense. (Greg)

before *capoeira*, I felt very ... like ostracized, I guess I didn’t fit in very well. And I felt like I really needed to like, bend my own observed reality to kind of like fit in with everyone else... encountering the unapologetic-ness in the context of *capoeira* has allowed me to kind of I guess reclaim that, kind of that confidence in my own reality. (Raca)

Sim stated, “having that welcoming feeling of being a part of a new group and family, it’s, it’s incredible.” As noted by Student A, “if the members aren’t connecting to each other or with each other in a meaningful way, then you lose students and you don’t have that sense of belonging that’s so important.”

Capoeiristas noted the depth of their connections to the extent of identifying each other as family. Zum stated, “I can’t say every group, but most groups, our group in particular, it’s like a family... everybody’s close-knit.” Similarly, Junior shared, “I feel family in y’all, even though I haven’t met y’all, you know, via face to face. that’s kind of... what I get out of it, like an extended family that ah, speaks Portuguese.” When moving from one state to another, Student A stated, “it definitely eased the transition to have like a group of people who I already knew were kind of like-minded and it was almost like there was already a family there.” Ica shared, “It’s not just a class, it’s a family of people...it’s definitely given me family. It’s given me my family, like my brothers and sisters in *capoeira*. It’s given me my significant other in *capoeira*.”

we’re like a family, legit, so we’ll laugh together, we’ll cry together, we argue, we fuss and, when it’s all said and done, we’ll hug it out, we’ll eat together... So if you’re in the group where ,, you don’t have all those experiences, then that’s not a group that I want to be in, ‘cause it’s really authentic, it’s really organic. (Ser)

We kind of describe it as my *capoeira* family, like when you bring somebody new to *capoeira*, like, “oh yeah, you want to try *capoeira*? I do this martial art. Oh and you can meet my *capoeira* family.” And that’s like how um, a lot of people in my group would describe it. Like, they were going to ANOTHER EAST COAST CITY to meet the rest of the academy and they were like, “I’m so excited to get to meet my *capoeira* family.” (Muito)

Through the safe space cultivated in *capoeira* groups, both belonging and a deeper connection to others can be experienced. As stated by Student A, “I always encourage my students, or like my students are just scared of traveling around, and moving to new towns, and I always tell them, ‘There’s nice people everywhere. You just have to find your family wherever you go.’”

Community. In addition to the sense of closeness to other *capoeiristas*, participants described specific projects and a greater sense of connection to their respective communities. Mel shared, “during the holiday season we go to LOCAL TRAIN STATION and give out care packages to the homeless.” Similarly, Ser described his group’s involvement with providing coats and hygiene products to homeless individuals: it was, “okay well this is a need that we see. We have homeless population in our community, how do we give back?” In these instances, *capoeira* was a mechanism through which participants could directly and positively impact their communities. This orientation toward social justice and service is an obligation within the profession of counseling psychology (APA, 2017a) and congruent with *capoeira*’s history of quilombos, or formerly enslaved individuals who formed self-sustaining communities (Capoeira, 2006; Merrell, 2005).

In addition to offering community service, *capoeiristas* described their increased sense of connection to their communities.

I think it has changed my, my connection to the community. My connection to the Black community. So obviously, as I mentioned earlier, I’m not originally from SOUTH CENTRAL CITY, I moved here from CENTRAL AMERICA some years back. And didn’t really have like, I would go to work, come home. But, we would train *capoeira* at the CITY CULTURAL CENTER, and a large population, a large majority of the population that would come to the center are of African descent. And so, you know, you see, getting another view of like, a live and in-color view of you know, Black people doing great things. Black people supporting one another in the community, that, you know, that’s been a positive piece that had a positive impact on my life. (Ser)

I being able to kind show that support for you know, whoever we were there for, and you know, that’s kind of what I feel is needed, like you know, just being able to be there and show that we have that freedom to give something, you know it may not be monetarily, but you know we can give our energy, we can give our time, we can give our commitment, and just be there for whoever needs us. (Sim)

I recently started learning more so about the culture, the cultural aspect, heavily within the past year and a half of traveling with different groups... what I'm learning about our culture is how in-depth it is about community more so than just the martial arts aspect,

and you know that everything that makes everybody else looking like, “oh my god they’re acrobatic, they do this, they do that,” but how heavily *capoeira* can, should affect community. (Rão)

Self-empowerment and liberation. Through *capoeira*, individuals described changes that they experienced including increased insight, fortified confidence, healthy coping and expression of self, and liberation through just being able to be themselves. Greg stated, “ I think if you took *capoeira* away from me, I wouldn’t be as wholesome a person as I am. Capoeira’s done a lot for me.” As purported by Socrates, “to know thyself is the beginning of wisdom,” which was one of the benefits described by participants in this study.

I definitely learn more about myself. I learn more about like, the conditions that I have, the mental limitations that I think I might have. what was on my mind, what was I like carrying that needed to be released? “why was I fighting with that?” instead of just being, just letting it go so, it definitely teaches me that. (Junior)

it’s kind of taught me at least to like not rely so much on brute force...that’s like just kind of how I go through, through life, especially when I started. It was just to kind of muscle and brute-force my way through any challenge, ‘cause I had the sufficient muscle to do that. But if you try to muscle way through *capoeira*, you’ll get tired out like really quickly. And so I’ve had to learn to A: breathe and B: I’ve had to like develop the discipline to stretch and be well, like just stretching and becoming more flexible, like day after day. (Brandon)

Self-reflection is a critical skill through which inherent development and greater leadership skills can be achieved, as well as the ability to regulate emotions (Nesbit, 2012; Linehan, 1993). Some group leaders solicited or prompted group members to reflect, or think about their experiences.

Ica stated, “they’ll come back and I’ll talk with them afterward. I’ll be like, “What did you think?

This was your first *roda*.”

Whenever we go to *batizado*, we come back. I like to have a sit down, reflection, “okay,” I’m gonna cycle back around, I like to have a sit down, reflection, of “okay, so what are some things that we saw when we traveled to *batizado*.” But, so we, I like to have the time of reflection. At the end of class, at the end of class Contra Mestre implemented the OLE: what did you observe, what did you learn, what did you experience...So OLE’s for everybody, and that, that’s something that, for me, is very, it’s important because how do you know what another person wants or needs if you’re not getting that feedback. (Ser)

That's the really really cool thing, is to touch on all these learning aspects, of sometimes showing through physical example, sometimes through discussion, sometimes through self-awareness, ask questions about "how did you feel about your performance today?" "how did you feel?" and "what do you want to work on?" (Njinga)

Group leaders undertook a similar role to a therapist or counselor who asks their client questions to develop insight (Ivey et al., 2016). Through their participation in *capoeira*, individuals were able to learn about themselves, which contributed to an improvement or change in their behavior, approach, and intentions. In the post-interview survey, one capoeirista stated that participation in the interview "allowed me to reflect," which may have not otherwise occurred.

Beyond insight alone, *capoeiristas* stated they felt more confident due to their participation in *capoeira*. For example, Game stated, "It [*capoeira*] also helped me be just like more outgoing and just more... I think I had more leadership skills, more confidence." Data also discussed the ways in which his confidence has grown: "it [leadership role in *capoeira*]'s the foundation, because I wasn't always confident, and I don't know how confident I am, but I'm more confident about trying than just being confident in general." Rão noted, "I'm 39-years-old and I'm more confident than I've ever been in my entire life."

When working with children, Zum stated, "for me, the leadership or the self-confidence comes from that, where they can actually be in an environment with adults," which again relates to the idea of providing a safe space in which individuals can grow and gain confidence.

CONFIDENCE

HEALTHY COPING

EXPRESSION

By focusing on myself, I am no longer competing with other people, but rather I am focused on expressing my inner voice, or inner force. (Simba)

. I don't really get to express myself as much, you know, it's only through *capoeira* that I'm able to do it (Data)

Ica shared, "for me, it's given me a safe space ... to express myself."

Like GROUP LEADER tells me to always stop holding back so much. You know, and just like let my kicks fly, you know there's always just like, and in life, I'm always second-guessing and triple and quadruple guessing things that I'm going to say, and just like going over and just like overthinking so much that, as he says, "if you over think too much and hold back, you're going to end up hurting yourself physically," and you're just like putting, like that puts too much strain on yourself . And I've noticed that, well him saying that, I noticed that's like consistent outside of *capoeira* in my personal life, just you know *chuckle* saying what you think. (Brandon)

Liberation. As described by Ica, "*capoeira* liberates...it's still for us to be free from whatever in our lives brought us to this point." Rão noted that he is able to release his insecurities, which is therapeutic.

It's been the most liberating thing that has, I mean, literally, confidence, not caring about what everyone else thinks, things that I've insecure about my entire life, I just literally don't care about it. (Rão)

just being able to build up that endurance ...being able to know my body and know what it's capable of, and being able to push myself that much. I find it rewarding to, just being able to make it through one of his classes. You know we'll say like, "I survived a class with INSTRUCTOR," is in itself an accomplishment... it's very rewarding in that aspect, and the feeling you get afterwards, its you know, it's like no other. (Sim)

the liberation comes from seeing my son open up and become a completely different individual, like I look at him now and I'm like, "sheesh! Where was this guy?" Or you know, what, I kind of question it a little bit, like "what was it that I wasn't providing?" But, it takes a village, the saying, 'it takes a village' really played a huge factor. You know, my daughter's involved as well, you know, just, it's a mental release (Rão)

Participation in this study – creating the space!

"cathartic because it allowed me to openly express other facets of my identity"

belonging

FREEDOME TO BE MYSELF

Just being able to play and express myself and not have to worry, and just be. (Data)

And *capoeira* was my therapy where I could go, and not to beat up on anybody, but go to an environment where I knew I was loved, in spite of what else was going on, I knew, I knew I was loved, and I could be myself, I could let me hair down...I didn't have to put on a mask. (Ser)

It lets me be me, yeah *chuckle* it let's me be me. I mean in general, like *capoeira* lets me be me, let's me confidently affect other people. I have the confidence to affect other people and research things that i thought were out of my realm and actually pass on as far as that goes. Yeah, it allows, it has really opened up, in summary, it has really opened up the true chapter of my life of who I am, if that makes sense, without sounding corny. (Rão)

sometimes you just want to be, you know, you don't want to think about the different layers of your identity. By all means, am I proud to be Black? Absolutely, yes. Am I proud to be a man? Yes, absolutely. Am I proud to train *capoeira*, be a capoeirista? Absolutely. Father, partner, all of the roles that fit me, I'm definitely proud of those identities. And then there's times when I just want to *be*. I just want to be and chill, and not think about the labels that others are just putting on me, you know what I mean? (Mandinga)

As noted by Jazale's Art Studio (2018), "Freedom means that we can be who we really are."

Na roda, na vida. The literal translation means "in the *roda*, in life," and pertains to the applications of *capoeira*. Participants discussed *capoeira* as a smaller representation of the world, the importance of being aware of one's surroundings, and the ability to overcome challenges. Njinga described *capoeira* as "a microcosm of the world." She added:

there are people who cannot afford classes, there are people who would love to be with *capoeira* every day, as well, as some days they're like, "i'm tired" you know, there are some who ask a million questions and some who think that they know everything. It's a microcosm of what the world is. (Njinga)

Similarly, Data shared:

My MESTRE, he says 'How that person is in the *roda*, is how that person is in life.' And so if you have a very boastful person, a very violent person in the *roda*, they're very aggressive, that's probably how they are, how that person actually is in life.

Both Njinga and Data described the *roda* as a space in which to explore how a person responds to whatever is presented:

we have those conversations, how can we get along, and then how can you add spice to those conversations in a respectful manner. And how do you respond when someone is giving you spice. And the spice is that you don't, maybe you're uncomfortable, they're too close to you, maybe you're not comfortable with the move that they did. "I have knee problems, did they know? Why were they sloppy, why -?" How are you going to respond to them? (Njinga)

so you get to choose how you interact with that person. Are you going to go head to head with them, or are you going to redirect their negative energy, or you know, you determine how you want to engage with that person. And so, you are developing yourself in accordance to how they are playing. (Data)

Mel provided an example of how she strategizes when she is playing and in relation to her identity:

capoeira has made me stop and think about how things are gonna get done...like when you're playing in the game, and what moves you wanna do, 'cause I know I want that *rasteira* but how am I gonna get it from you? *chuckle* like how am I gonna set you up and what's my bait for you? And you're thinking about this on the spot, whether you're watching the person play beforehand or like dodgin' it like, "okay so you like to kick with your left foot, that's the one I'm gon' get."

Not even just in the *roda*, but being a woman and a Black woman, I would say it's gotten better, but when I first started, it was kind of like, 'girl you know you're place in *capoeira*.' So to be methodical in like, like I mentioned before I want that *pandeiro* but how am I gonna get it. I'm not gonna wait for you to give it to me. Or it just made me like think about the path, instead of just lookin' at the puzzle. (Mel)

The thought processes described by Njinga and Data are akin to many skills discussed and taught in therapy, such as cognitive flexibility, decision-making, problem solving, and coping ahead which can benefit individuals by thinking through a situation before it arrives so they can successfully handle it (Beck, 2020; Linehan, 1993). For BIPOC individuals who do not seek out formal therapy, *capoeira* is one venue in which they could practice the aforementioned skills to help prevent further crisis or dire circumstances.

Another aspect of '*na roda, na vida*' described by participants was a general awareness of one's surroundings, as Junior stated, "with the children I always try to implement that aspect

of knowing your surroundings. Similarly, Ser noted, “that’s something that *capoeira* has taught me, like be vigilant.”

I feel like there are a lot of nuances that I pay attention to now and it’s only because of how I sort of learned to handle myself in the *roda*. And I’ve been able to sort of apply those concepts into my everyday life, in some ways, a practical sort of self-defense.
(Greg)

In consideration of *capoeira*’s history, awareness of one’s surroundings was integral to survival because participating in *capoeira* was considered a criminal offense and punishable by law until the 1940’s (Merrell, 2005; Capoeira, 2006). Within the game of *capoeira*, different rhythms, or *toques*, provide information to *capoeiristas* about the environment. For example, a *toque* named ‘*cavalaria*’ indicates that ‘calvary is on the way’ so *capoeiristas* need to finish playing and leave the area to prevent them from getting caught. Nowadays, this *toque* can indicate that an adversary may have just entered the space, or that trouble could be brewing and signal to the players to get out of the *roda*.

Awareness of one’s surroundings remains a similar concern for visible minorities today (Spratt, 2014), which was exemplified during an interview.

I’m gonna be honest, I’m gonna be really transparent in this moment, obviously in this moment you can see that I’m sitting in my car but a police officer just pulled up to my left, it looks like he’s about to pull away... like I’m trying to really avoid eye contact - the cop just pulled off but I’m actually gonna do this *flipped screen view to what Ser is seeing* just so you can kind of get an idea of what I’m saying. I’m gonna show you right... here *pointing to left of screen* so, that’s giving me a little bit of “ehhh.”

As an African, as a person of color, and someone on the scene as an educator, I’ve had conversations with you know the kids, like not just like Black and Brown kids, especially at work like, “this person did this, but you didn’t say anything to them.” And I have to explain to them, I have to explain to them – Ima keep it right there [camera facing outward] - but I have to explain to them sometimes it doesn’t matter what someone else does, *cop car driving away* but rather, so *turned camera view back to Ser* that, that’s part of being an educator.

Being alert to one’s surroundings can be cognitively taxing for individuals but is a necessary task for visible minorities who are targeted based upon how they look (Perrault, 2004).

In contrast to the challenges of being recognized as a visible minority, Mel discussed the importance of making her presence known in her respective settings.

capoeira has shown me to, not only announce myself when I walk in a door, a *roda*, can be seen as a door as well. So introduce yourself in whatever space you're in, make your presence known. (Mel)

This significance of making one's presence known is the potential impact of being acknowledged, validated, or seen, which can contribute to a person's self-concept (Barton & Carrow, 2016; Anderson, 2011). In therapeutic settings, the idea of validation is foundational to interpersonal communication and building rapport needed to work toward treatment goals (Linehan, 1993). This concept can be applied in additional settings, whether at *capoeira*, home, school, or elsewhere. While it is unrealistic to befriend each person that someone encounters, simply acknowledging a person's presence can contribute to an individual's sense of self (Anderson, 2011; Markus & Kitayama, 2009; Cottrell et al., 2007; Geertz, 1973).

To connect the idea of adversity and the ability to overcome, a few participants discussed *ginga*, or way that a person sways, and the role of music.

the *ginga*, the three-step movement which is the basic philosophy of *capoeira*, is that you step forward and step back and step forward. And I was in the Afro class, it was like, "oh! This is a tradition that things push back, but even if they push back, you gotta keep moving forward." And so it was like, even the *ginga* in that philosophy, like no matter what, things may come against you and push you back. (Muntu)

a *ginga* is like a movement, like a constant movement to keep, to keep yourself protected from an adversary. You can do that at work, if you like have a job, you can do that there. It may not be like the physical *ginga*, but it could be like a movement of like, your, your plan, your strategy and like that type of thing I think is always, that *capoeira* is constant thinking, constant analyzing, constant application of what is learned. (Ser)

Mandinga added that, "I really use *capoeira* as a tool to continue to develop the way that I approach my training but also think about how I can move past other barriers ... beyond some of the fears and limitations that I've had."

I'm singing around the house all of the time *laughing* really terribly to myself. Even though I don't train anymore I still like to bust out the instruments sometimes (Student A).

because I'm a Black man, in America, I always have to sort of mentally prepare myself for just whenever I step out of the house whenever I'm not around my family. And because there's, there's a big chance that I may not make it back alive. So I have to sort of mentally prepare myself for the absolute worst thing to happen each and every single time I step out and interact with society Whether that's me walking up the street to like a local coffee shop, or if I'm driving to work me being a Black man... it's something that I have to mentally like, check, each and every single time I step out of the house. one of the things that I often times do, is I'll often sing just *capoeira* songs... it's an art form that has over the years, more so and more so, has put me at ease. (Greg)

Similar to the skill of transferability within a therapeutic setting (Babulal et al., 2016), individuals noted how discoveries about themselves within *capoeira* also applied in their everyday lives. As stated by Data, "in the *roda*, in *capoeira*, you learn what kind of person you want to be, and then you hone those skills, and then you take those skills into the rest of world, into everything else that you do."

Mestre, his piece of advice on my game is that I'm trying, that it looks like I'm trying to do five different things all at once and I need to just like slow down, and just like take my *capoeira* one move at a time. I found that *chuckle* in life, I'm, I guess like constantly trying to multi-task. My mind isn't necessarily in the task that I'm doing at the moment; I'm always trying to ... hold like five different trains of thought all at once...the *roda* has been like this microcosm where I can plainly see the patterns and behaviors ... that have been like holding me back kind of globally, and that's been very helpful. (Brandon)

I'm what my students see when leading class, so all eyes are on me, and that's - while that's a lot of pressure, on my personality-wise, it's something that I've over time, become increasingly comfortable doing. And I've been able to like extend it to other opportunities, such as like my job, my outside job, and other aspects of my life. (Greg)

like in *capoeira*, it's like, why am I so afraid to be, to speak publicly, like I'm not gonna die. I just went in this *roda* and I did this thing and I did a trick I didn't even know I could do until today it went. Like, where else can I do things like that? (Neef)

we not only talk about *capoeira*, but we talk about other aspects of life together... I do feel more positive with tackling other aspects of my day-to-day life. 'cause even when I went into the exam the second time, I can't say honestly that I felt that confident about physics *chuckle*, but I still, I was still getting some confidence from *capoeira* ... and that pushed me through. (Tiba)

As mentioned by Brandon, he was able to learn more about himself to move past the challenges of multitasking to be present both inside and outside of the *roda*. Similarly, Neef realized that he could do something when playing *capoeira* and then wondered about the additional things he was not aware that he was capable of. Greg also gained comfort in his role, despite his natural demeanor away from the limelight. Furthermore, Tiba's self-efficacy was positively impacted because of her participation in *capoeira*, as she said she did not feel confident about taking an exam, but drew upon the confidence she gained from *capoeira* when taking her test. As described by Game, "being able to navigate that both in the *roda* and in life, that kind of idea ... resonates with me, and, like that's part of *capoeira*."

Suggestions and implications

Although *capoeira* has not yet been considered an evidenced-based-practice within the Westernized lens of psychology, results from this study indicate that *capoeira* is a viable form of healing. As the benefits of participation in *capoeira* were previously discussed in depth, herein is a brief discussion of who else could benefit from participating in *capoeira*, conjecture as to the most important mechanisms of healing within the art form, and further recommendations.

Who could benefit

Based upon the responses of participants in this study, *capoeira* could benefit several types of individuals including but not limited to: 1) individuals who identify as ethnic minorities or who have an aspect of identity that is marginalized, 2) individuals who identify with or have experienced systemic oppression, 3) individuals of any age who value community, 4) individuals who value culture and tradition 5) individuals who desire holistic engagement of the mind, body, and soul, and 6) individuals who value growth.

Capoeira's history of resilience and roots of liberation resonated with individuals who identified as ethnic minorities and marginalized aspects of self, such as sexuality or an individual's orientation counter 'mainstream' goals of starting a family upon reaching a 'certain age.' As stated by Terra:

capoeira comes from the struggle of Black people, it comes from the oppression of Black people...we also use *capoeira* to liberate ourselves and run to quilombos like Palmares and others ... I will always make sure that my students know where *capoeira* comes from. (Terra)

While not all participants identified ethnicity as a salient aspect of identity, several participants described experiences within oppressive systems or being 'othered' specifically within academic settings, work environments, and in day-to-day life. Participants in this study drew upon parallels to their current struggles, which often paled in comparison when they thought of those who were enslaved generations ago. Muito shared, "it's really cool that they took this very negative situation, and found some joy in life, in each other, 'cause I can't imagine what slavery would be like ... so, it's kind of hard to compare that to like, my life." *Capoeira* was a significant protective factor for participants, as exemplified by participants:

because I'm a Black man, in America, I always have to sort of mentally prepare myself for just whenever I step out of the house whenever I'm not around my family...because there's, there's a big chance that I may not make it back alive... one of the things that I often times do, is I'll often sing just *capoeira* songs... it's an art form that has over the years, more so and more so, has put me at ease. (Greg)

as a kid, I used to cry if I didn't go to *capoeira* class, if my mom didn't take me. I used to cry, I used to love it that much, it was a therapy. I used to want to go all the time, I would just want to do it all the time. (E)

Community was a fundamental aspect within *capoeira*'s history and was described by many capoeiristas' regarding their ability to connect within their group members to the extent of having a '*capoeira* family.' *Capoeiristas* described the ways in which all ages could participate to create a collective experience during regular classes, annual events and even beyond training

to learn more about each other's lives. Although not all participants identified as ethnic minorities, their affinity for cultivating a safe space in which to develop community still fostered connections within their respective groups, which demonstrates the power of shared or collective goals (Sherif, 1957). As stated by Rão:

what I'm learning about our culture is how in-depth it is about community more so than just the martial arts aspect, and you know that everything that makes everybody else looking like, "oh my god they're acrobatic, they do this, they do that," but how heavily *capoeira* can, should affect community.

Similarly, although some participants did not have African or Brazilian heritage, they described an understanding and appreciation for *capoeira*'s cultural roots and traditions. Some individuals described *capoeira* as the launching point for learning about their own family histories. As stated by Noa, "To be a *capoeirista* is definitely very important for me because ... it's ... getting a chance to practice something that I am very passionate about ... to be able to learn more about the African diaspora." Regardless of cultural background, participants shared a respect for *capoeira*'s culture amidst group-specific nuances. As stated by Do, "at the end of the day...we unite, as one, as a family."

While *capoeira* is a martial art, the incorporation of music along with movement distinguishes *capoeira* from other physical practices. Individuals highlighted the ability to integrate the mind, body, and spirituality, which is congruent for many collectively oriented groups (Peréz-Gualdron & Yeh, 2014; Holden et al., 2014; Meekums, 2008; Merrell, 2005; Guthrie, 1995, 1997; Wall, 2005; Sibinga et al., 2011). As stated by Mandinga, "What makes it unique is that you got the complete mind, body, and spirit wrapped up in an incredible activity with a unique history." Due to the holistic integration and application of self, individuals noted their own growth through *capoeira*. As described by Student A, "being a *capoeirista* kind of means to me like this constant growth." Growth was described in terms of learning, gaining

insight, becoming empowered, and healing as a result, which can increase the likelihood that individuals will become community builders and good leaders (Johnson, 2013). As described by a participant in the anonymous post-interview survey, “*capoeira* is a tool for community change.”

I remember working with some kids like in the projects where like, it’s almost like giving them hope in a sense, like showing them that there is something else, that there is something you know, more than just your current environment. And I remember like, we used to even sometimes go pick up the kids from the projects to bring them to the CITY cultural center... just them being able to exit their environment to do something different, was already like a healing factor for them. (Cava)

Mechanisms of change

In addition to the proposed model of cultural healing through *capoeira* which includes the self, group, community, and ancestors, results from this study suggest that being fully present, group leadership, and the concept of ‘*na roda, na vida*’ are instrumental to positive change.

Fully present. As described by participants in the study, *capoeira* requires a person to be entirely present. When participants were in the moment, they experienced healthy separation from life stressors and positive coping, which contributes to improved mental health and overall well-being especially among marginalized individuals (Hagedorn & Hirschorn, 2009; Ault-Brutus & Alegría, 2018; Pérez-Gauldron & Yeh, 2014). Some ways that mindfulness manifested within the context of *capoeira* are reiterated below:

a person who was having a lot of family troubles and like, I knew he was stressing out and stuff... that day... we just played a lot, and he got to play a lot of games and stuff and then afterwards we were just talking, and you know, ‘for eight hours I was away from it’ you know, just like getting away from that stress and getting into that other dimension, allowing yourself to be like, absolutely present, that just really helped personally just work through some of the stuff. (Curtis)

If I’m in a *roda*, I better be worried about a foot coming to my face and not thinking about what’s going on at work. And that was, that was getting some opportunities to

disconnect. Like legit, as I leave work and I'm driving, I'm still thinking about it. I even, I would dream about it. Like when I'm in a *roda*, in class, it would be, 'okay, you're in this moment, be present,' and it was easy to be that way. (Ser)

We went simultaneously into each other, so if we didn't look at each other before we let those legs go, it would have been, he said it would have been *maculêlê*, we would have met shins, and possibly broke our shins. But we ended on the same movement, and for some reason, with that game right there, I felt like, "I belong." It was kind of like an intro to, it was my first Mestre play. (Rão)

Group leadership. Participants discussed the importance of a group leader's role, which could mean the difference between a warm and welcoming space and an environment that is hostile and unsafe physically or emotionally. As with group therapists who are responsible for holding the space in which a group can address their treatment goals, a *capoeira* leader functions in a similar capacity. As cautioned by Data, "An arrogant teacher creates poison in his own group, which creates poison in the community... so it all comes down to who leads, and to who follows." In Lindsay's (2019) research in a school setting, a student illustrated him as "a *capoeira* superhero," exemplifying his role and positive impact upon students.

Several participants discussed respect for their group leader's ability to manage life within and beyond *capoeira*. As exemplified by Student A, "they are able to be so dedicated and sacrifice so much to become *capoeira* instructors, professors, *mestres*, but then still have such a robust life outside of that." Additionally, participants described the importance of flexibility regarding teaching style and approach. Zum shared that "by reducing the amount of specific instruction that you give, you can ... find what somebody's abilities already are," which parallels a strength-based approach in a traditional talk therapy setting. As described by Melchior (2011), the use of cultural strengths within a learning environment can contribute to collaboration between the student/group member, and teacher/group leader. Finally, group leaders discussed

the importance of their own humility and modeling their learning processes, which is demonstrated by appropriate self-disclosure:

If I notice that somebody is getting discouraged, I just like, remind them that we're in a class setting and that everybody's making mistakes constantly, including me, just – there's no right way to do anything, right - and every time you do something 'right' in *capoeira*, it might be slightly different ways, different situations. (Raca)

Na roda, na vida. Just as skills acquired within a therapeutic setting are then generalized across other settings, '*na roda, na vida*' is a culturally based term to illustrate this concept. Participants described the ways in which their skill-based learning and further insight applied to other areas of their lives beyond *capoeira*, which contributed to their resilience and empowerment over time. As noted by Ser, "*capoeira* is constant thinking, constant analyzing, constant application of what is learned."

You're constantly like having feet and heels getting thrown at your head and you know, death flashing before your eyes back to back to back, and I feel like that... increases like your own resilience in a way. Like you start to tackle life the way you do *capoeira* (Brandon)

It's the mental piece, telling myself, "keep going, keep going"... I really use *capoeira* as a tool to continue to develop the way that I approach my training but also think about how I can move past other barriers in terms of moving beyond some of the fears and limitations that I've had. (Mandinga)

sometimes I'll just kind of fight my way through the class. I don't mean physically I'll fight my way through, I mean emotionally I'm kind of mentally fighting my way through... I've definitely learned to push through with that, and with other things, judging by the misery that I described grad school to be *both chuckling* that was six years of just like, push through *chuckle* (Tiba)

the *ginga*, the three-step movement which is the basic philosophy of *capoeira*, is that you step forward and step back and step forward. And I was in the Afro class, it was like, 'oh! This is a tradition that things push back, but even if they push back, you gotta keep moving forward' ... even the *ginga* in that philosophy, like no matter what, things may come against you and push you back. (Muntu)

By being present and applying lessons learned through *capoeira*, participants can experience healing and connection with tradition, the community, their respective groups, and themselves, which is not necessarily achieved in traditional talk therapy.

Recommendations. Thus far, the literature calls upon providers to incorporate culture within a therapeutic setting, however for individuals who never attend formal treatment, community-based alternatives may be the most viable option. The following recommendations are extrapolated from the results of this study, in addition to the existing literature.

- 1. Offer programming based in BIPOC communities.** As proximity is one way to increase access to services, BIPOC communities would benefit from receiving services without the additional barrier of transportation. Group leaders discussed the importance of ‘giving back’ to their communities by performing at events and coordinating service projects, which are additional ways to enrich respective communities.
- 2. Create a welcoming environment.** Inclusion is not a statement, rather an experience. Many *capoeiristas* discussed the positive impact of being welcomed into their training spaces, especially by group leaders and when attending events. *Capoeiristas* also discussed the benefit of expressing themselves within a safe space.
- 3. Facilitate connections.** As described in the dearth of literature regarding group therapy, catharsis is made possible when others can bear witness to and hold the space for individuals to work through challenges. For BIPOC individuals who are often collectivistically oriented, healing can be fostered through peer connections. Several *capoeiristas* described the benefits of emotional support offered by group members and leaders.

4. **Empower others through knowledge.** Resilience was identified as protective factor for capoeiristas who learned of *capoeira*'s history, including the ways in which enslaved individuals gained liberation and formed self-sustaining communities.
5. **Respect the individual.** Regardless of the demographic checkboxes on intake forms, allow individuals to indicate what is most important about their identities rather than making assumptions. As seen in the results from this study, identity salience cannot be assumed based upon a person's membership as a BIPOC individual.

Strengths

There are several strengths of this study including the depth of the stratified sample, intentional exploration of intersectionality when discussing identity, divergent data, triangulation of data, iterative coding cycles, and opportunity for participants to provide candid feedback anonymously upon the conclusion of all interviews.

As previously discussed in the results section, the sample spanned eight different groups, six different geographic regions, and included both group members and group leaders with various levels of experience and duration in *capoeira*. The age range was inclusive at least two generations, from 24 through 66 years old. Although *capoeira* is historically a male-dominated activity, both male ($n = 21$, or 77.8%) and female ($n = 6$, or 22.2%) *capoeiristas* participated in this study.

Identity was captured and discussed in a way that allowed for participants to demonstrate how aspects of their identities interact and fit together, rather than simply asking what they are. This study also sought to understand how identity functioned for each respective participant, rather than inferring a stereotypic meaning based upon a particular label. Additionally, the way

in which a person self-identified was preserved, rather than changed into a broader category, which illustrates the nuances of within-group differences.

Divergent data strengthened the study, as challenges and harm within the art form could be illuminated and discussed rather than ignored and/or omitted. Additionally, divergent data helped to explain why some individuals no longer participate in *capoeira*, even though they still consider themselves to be *capoeiristas*.

As seven out of the eight groups included interviews with two or more participants from their respective group, data could be triangulated. In the case wherein only one capoeirista from a group was interviewed, the transcript was double-coded and discussed with the research team to delineate codes. Additionally, data could be analyzed across groups to further confirm emergent themes.

Numerous coding cycles allowed for the data to be first understood, rather than a singular reading of the transcript and simultaneous attempt to code data. Additionally, because the coding cycles focused upon different aspects of the data within the coding process, data could be reconsidered after understanding the breadth of the interview to determine the best code within the context of the transcript itself, respective groups, and data corpus.

The anonymous post-interview survey provided participants with the opportunity to provide honest feedback about their experience with the interview to further determine how forthright they were throughout the interview process and/or indicate any barriers during the interview. The post-interview survey also asked participants to indicate the goodness-of-fit regarding *capoeira* and Vélez-Agosto and colleagues (2017) Cultural Microsystemic Model, wherein each category on the model was identified at least once, with the central categories on

the model being endorsed most frequently (e.g., self, neighborhood, social services), as well as *cronos*, or changes over time.

Limitations of Current Study

As expected, when conducting qualitative research, the results are generalizable to the sample within this study (Merriam & Tisdale, 2016). However, the depth of the stratified sample, including representation from eight *capoeira* different groups, six different geographic regions, and three different group styles allowed for greater variation within the sample and subsequently deeper value of the results and implications (Merriam & Tisdale, 2016).

In consideration of analysis and interpretation, life experiences and lack thereof can limit a person's understanding of information (Rosaldo, 1993). As such, additional measures were taken to mitigate the impacts of the principal investigator's bias by having multiple data sources, member-checking, soliciting divergent data, additional research team members, anonymous feedback through the post-interview survey, and iterative coding cycles (Antin, Constantine & Hunt, 2015; Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Maruyama & Ryan, 2014; McLoed, 2011; Patton, 2015; Saldaña, 2016).

Another limitation of this study was the complexity of ideas, as some ideas encompassed more than one domain. While the data was organized and interpreted based upon the primary code, the nuances of the idea were sometimes categorizable in other domains as well. For example, the idea of music was discussed in terms of pedagogy, the group leader's role, passing knowledge and ritual. However, the nuances were presented throughout the discussion.

Finally, this study was limited to individuals who are English-speaking, although *capoeira*'s primary language is Portuguese. Additionally, *capoeira* includes aspects of languages

native to Brazil such as Kaiwa Guaraní (Native Languages of America, 2020) and Africa such as Yórùba.

Future directions

Capoeira (2006) notes the importance of developing a relationship between “*capoeira* and the university world” which is “especially needed because ... *capoeira* still needs to be legitimized, due to all sorts of prejudices” (p. 334). As indicated by participants in this study, there are numerous benefits that have yet to be more fully investigated and understood. For instance, participants expressed the desire to access *capoeira* at an earlier age, which contributed to a cultural understanding of self in adulthood. As such, further exploration of youth experiences within the art form could confirm illuminate what type of impact participation in *capoeira* has among marginalized youth, especially for those who reside in neighborhoods characterized by poverty and criminal activity.

Additionally, social isolation, symptoms of anxiety and depression, self-efficacy, confidence, healthy coping, belonging, cultural identity and cultural pride could be explored through the lens of Liberation psychology, given *capoeira*’s historical roots. Implementation of a qualitative approach can further add to the context in which an individual is able to benefit from participating in *capoeira*, meanwhile quantitative measures can indicate the widespread impacts of participating in this art form.

Conclusion

This project offered an in-depth exploration of identity and cultural healing from the perspective of both group members and group leaders spanning numerous geographic regions and experience levels. In contrast to Western approaches of psychological treatment, a focus upon oral tradition through a narrative approach allowed for participants to explicate their

experiences in their own words. Results indicated that cultural traditions were at times synonymous with healing over time, including the prevalence of individuals' identification with *capoeira* and as student/learners. Participants underscored their experiences of cultural congruence to the art form, *capoeira's* historical roots in resilience, and the value and influence of music in contrast to other martial arts that do not include these elements. As stated by Noa, “*capoeira* always has been... and always will be a liberating art.”

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Screenener (inclusion/exclusion criteria)

Online survey accessible at:

https://milwaukee.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_08lxdUwDoZe38t7

Thank you for your interest in participating! In order to determine whether you are eligible for the study, please answer the following questions:

- 1) Are you an adult who is at least 18-years-old?
- 2) Have you participated in *capoeira* for at least 6 months?

If yes: For how long?

- Less than 6 months
- 6 months – 1 year
- 1 – 5 years
- 5 or more years

3) Do you consider yourself to be a minority in any of the following categories: race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religious affiliation or practice, gender identity, legal status, language ability, learning ability, etc.?

- 4) Are you proficient at speaking and verbally understanding conversational English?
-

If all responses are yes: Great! What is the best email to contact you to schedule the interview?

Your email will only be used to schedule your appointment, to communicate regarding any changes, and to provide the transcript of your interview for your review and if you would like it.

If any responses are no: Thank you for your interest, however you do not qualify for the study at this time.

Appendix B

Semi-structured Interview Questions for Group Members

1. Tell me the story of how you got involved with *capoeira*.
 - a. Are still training? How often?
 - b. Or have you stopped? How come?
 - i. What were the barriers or challenges that interfered with training?
 - c. How long ago since you started? If I may ask, how old are you now?
2. Tell me a story about you *capoeira* group's culture. Culture is described as a social reality that includes the way we think, what we value, how we interact and the way we behave. It also includes how we learn, and can be considered a set of tools or expectations that inform our rituals, traditions, and customs.
 - a. What are some meaningful traditions or routines that your *capoeira* group practices? (i.e., being a part of the *bateria*, playing the *berimbau* in the *roda*, developing a *ladainha*, demonstrating specific sequences of movements)?
 - i. How do you learn them? Or how do you know what they are?
 - b. What are other important rituals, or structured ways that people interact (i.e., asking the mestre for permission to enter the *roda*; finishing the *roda* with *samba de roda*; wearing *abadás* for class)?
 - i. How do you learn the traditions or routines?
 - ii. What happens if people don't learn the traditions or routines?
 - iii. What, if any, of the rituals or traditions do you practice in your life outside of *capoeira*?

- c. What is your group's philosophy about *capoeira*? *Prompt if needed:* For example, is it 'a way of life,' is it 'an act of liberation', is it 'a way to connect with each other', is it 'exercise'?
 - i. What do you think about your group's philosophy?
 - ii. How does your group's philosophy relate to your life?
3. Can you tell me a story about your *capoeira* group's *axé*?
 - a. What does *axé* mean to you? How important is it? Why?
 - b. What does your group leader say or teach about *axé*?
 - c. How is *axé* cultivated, or created?
 - d. What is your role in creating *axé*?
 - i. What do you do when you notice that the *axé* is dissipating, or fading?
 - ii. What does your group leader do?
4. Tell me a story about what it means to be a member of your *capoeira* group.
 - a. What are your relationships like with other group members?
 - b. What are benefits and drawbacks of being a member of your group?
 - c. Overall, how would you compare the benefits versus the drawbacks?
5. Can you tell me a story about your group leader and their role?
 - a. What is your relationship like with your group leader?
 - b. How would you describe your group leader's relationships with other group members?
6. Tell me a story about what it means to be a capoeirista.
 - a. How did you know when you became a capoeirista? Or when do you consider others to be capoeiristas?

- b. Tell me a story about how being a capoeirista has been therapeutic, healing, or helpful.
 - c. Tell me a story about how being a capoeirista has been harmful, damaging, or not helpful.
 - d. As time passes, how does being a capoeirista change you, if at all?
7. Can you tell me the story of how you got your *capoeira* name (if you have one)?
- a. What was it like when it happened?
 - b. How has it shifted your affiliation with the group? Or how has it changed how you relate to *capoeira*?
 - c. If you don't have your own *capoeira* name yet but know people who have gotten them, how does that work?
 - i. What are your expectations or hopes about getting a *capoeira* name?
8. Can you tell me a story about how your *capoeira* group is (or isn't) connected to the community or greater social issues?
9. Now we are going to talk about your cultural identity, which can include your race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexuality, religion, spirituality, and other group affiliations, such as being a capoeirista, a soccer player, a parent or caregiver, a volunteer, a student, an educator, a banker, etc.
- a. If this piece of paper represents you, I want you to draw your cultural identity using the circles. They can be as big or as small as you want, can overlap, be totally separate, and so forth. (Provide time for the person to make it). This is my example: (show and explain example).
 - b. Can you show me and tell me what you made?

- c. Out of those identities, which are not considered ‘mainstream’?
 - d. How do your identities influence the way you go about your life?
 - e. Which, if any, of your identities are most important to you when you are doing *capoeira*? How so?
10. Is there anything else that I didn’t ask about, but you think is important for people to know about *capoeira*?
11. Do you have any questions for me?

Thank you again so much for your time, and for sharing about your experiences!

Appendix C

Semi-structured Interview Questions for Group Leaders

1. Tell me the story about how you got involved with *capoeira* (who, what, when, where).
2. What things are most important when you are teaching about *capoeira*?
 - a. What are your goals for yourself? For participants?
 - b. How do you share information?
 - c. How do you correct group members?
 - d. How do you encourage new learners?
 - e. Can you tell me a story about how your teaching extends beyond *capoeira* training?
3. Tell me a story about your role within the group
 - a. How important is your role as a group leader in comparison to the other roles you have in your life? For example, maybe you have another job and that role is important to you, or maybe within your family your role is important to you.
4. Can you tell me a story about what *axé* means to you?
 - a. What is your goal for your group's *axe*?
 - b. How do you teach about it? How do you know when it needs to be reset? What do you do?
5. Tell me a story about challenges that you notice among the *capoeiristas* in you group.
 - a. How have they struggled?
 - b. What have they done to fix it?
 - c. What did you do?
6. Tell me a story about benefits that you notice among the *capoeiristas* in your group?

7. As time passes, what changes among or within group members?
8. What makes *capoeira* unique (as opposed to other physical activities or forms of exercise)?
 - a. What are meaningful cultural traditions or routines in your group?
 - b. What are your expectations of group members?
 - c. How do group members get their *capoeira* names?
9. Tell me a story about how you think *capoeira* helps people, or is healing. What is your role?
10. Tell me a story about how you think *capoeira* challenges people, or is harmful. What is your role?
11. Now we are going to talk about your cultural identity, which can include your race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, religious affiliation, so on and so forth. It can also include social identities, such as being a capoeirista, a soccer player, a parent or caregiver, a volunteer, a student, an educator, a banker, etc.
 - a. If this piece of paper represents you, I want you to draw your cultural identity using the circles. They can be as big or as small as you want, can overlap, be totally separate, and so forth. I'll show you my example so you have a better understanding of what I'm asking. (provide time to make it)
 - b. What did you make?
 - c. Out of those identities, which are not considered 'mainstream'?
 - d. How do your identities influence the way you go about your life?
 - e. Which, if any, of your identities are most important to you when you are doing *capoeira*? How so?

12. As time passes, how has *capoeira* changed or influenced your life? How has being a group leader changed or influenced your life?
13. Is there anything else that I didn't ask about, but you think is important for people to know about *capoeira*?
14. Do you have any questions for me?

Thank you again for supporting this project, for allowing your group members to participate, and most importantly for your time and for sharing your experiences!

Appendix D

Post-Interview Survey online at:

https://milwaukee.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_aY7brR4niRJbHql

1. What was it like for you to share about your experiences with *capoeira*?

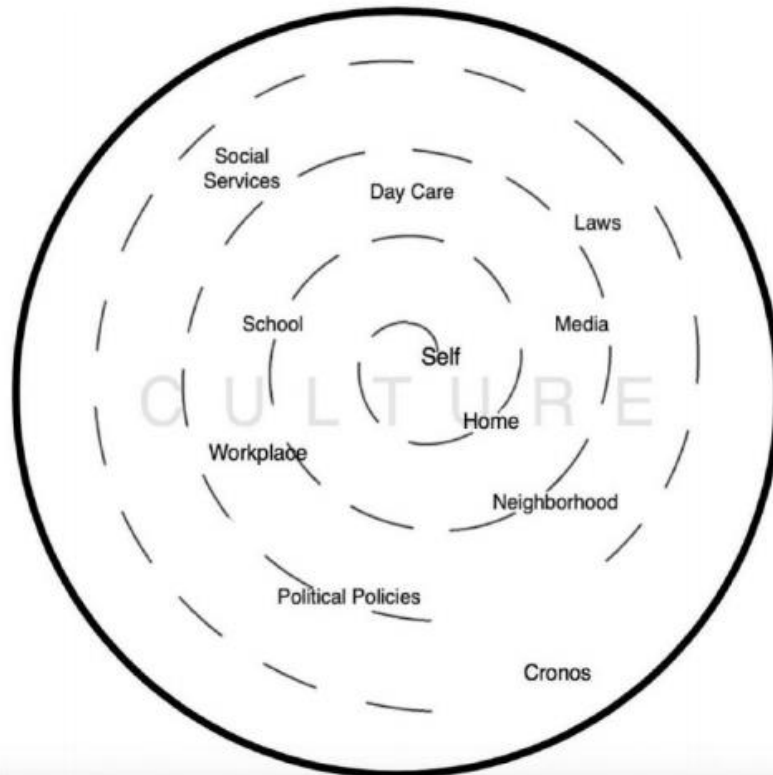


Figure 1. Vélez-Agosto, N. M., Soto-Crespo, J. G., Vizcarrondo-Opppenheimer, M., Vega-Molina, S., & García Coll, C. (2017). Bronfenbrenner's bioecological theory revision: Moving culture from the macro into the micro. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 12(5), 900-910.

2. Based on the diagram above, where do you think *capoeira* fits the best? (choose all that apply)

- Self
- Home
- Neighborhood
- School

- Workplace
- Media
- Day care
- Social services
- Laws
- Political policies
- Cronos (meaning “changes over time”)

3. Why did you pick those words? (there are no right or wrong answers)

Appendix E

Resource Info Sheet

General Social Service Needs

- Dial 2-1-1

Culturally-Specific Institutes

- Asian Pacific Institute on Gender-Based Violence – www.api-gbv.org 1-415-568-3315
- Casa de Esperanza: National Latin@ Network of Healthy Families and Communities – www.casadeesperanza.org 1-651-646-5553
- Ujima, Inc.: The National Center on Violence Against Women in the Black Community

Disabilities

- National Disability Rights Network – www.ndrn.org 1-202-408-9514
- Job Accommodation Network – www.askjan.org 1-800-526-7234

Domestic and Intimate Partner Violence

- National Resource Center on Domestic Violence – <https://nrcdv.org>
- National Domestic Violence Hotline – www.thehotline.org 1-800-799-7233
- National Indigenous Women’s Resource Center – www.niwrc.org 1-855-649-7299
- National LGBTQ Institute on Intimate Partner Violence – www.nwnetwork.org 1-206-568-7777
- Battered Women’s Justice Project Criminal and Civil Justice Center – www.bwjp.org 1-800-903-0111, ext 1
- National Health Resource Center on Domestic Violence – www.futureswithoutviolence.org/health 1-888-792-2873
- National Center on Domestic Violence, Trauma, & Mental Health – www.nationalcenterdvtraumamh.org 1-312-726-7020
- Resource Center on Domestic Violence: Child Protection and Custody – www.ncjfcj.org/dept/fvd 1-800-527-3223

Housing

- Homeless Shelter Directory – www.homelessshelterdirectory.org
- Housing Counseling Agency – www.hud.gov 1-800-569-4287
- National Alliance to End Homelessness – www.endhomelessness.org 1-202-638-1562
- National Housing Resource Center – www.hsgcenter.org 1-267-773-7210
-

Immigration

- National Immigration Forum – <https://immigrationforum.org> 1-202-347-0040
- National Immigrant Justice Center – www.immigrantjustice.org 1-312-660-1370
- National Immigration Law Center – www.nilc.org 1-213-639-3900
- United States and Immigration Services – www.uscis.gov

Legal

- Legal Services Corporation – www.lsc.gov 1-202-295-1500
- National Bar Association – www.nationalbar.org 1-202-842-3901

LGBTQ+

- National LGBT Health Education Center – www.lgbthealtheducation.org 1-617-927-6354
- National LGBTQ Institute on Intimate Partner Violence – www.nwnetwork.org 1-206-568-7777
- National Resource Center on LGBT Aging – www.lgbtagingcenter.org 1-212-741-2247

LGBTQ+ Youth

- Genders and Sexualities Alliance Network – <https://gsanetwork.org> 1-415-552-4229
- It Gets Better Project – <https://itgetsbetter.org>
- Q Card Project – www.qcardproject.com genya@qcardproject.com
- Stop Bullying – www.stopbullying.gov
- The Trevor Project – www.thetrevorproject.org 1-866-488-7386

Mental Health

- Anxiety and Depression Association of America - <http://www.adaa.org/> 1-240-485-1001
- Children and Adults with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder - <http://www.chadd.org/> 1-800-233-4050
- Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance - <http://www.dbsalliance.org/> 1-800-826-3632
- International OCD Foundation 1-617-973-5801
- Mental Health – www.mentalhealth.gov
- Mental Health America – www.mentalhealthamerica.net 1-703-684-7722
- National Alliance on Mental Illness – www.nami.org 1-800-950-NAMI
- National Center for Excellence for Eating Disorders - <https://www.nceedus.org/> 1-800-931-2237
- National Institute of Mental Health – www.nimh.nih.gov 1-866-615-6464
- Schizophrenia and Related Disorders Alliance of America - <http://www.sardaa.org/> 1-240-423-9432

Sexual Assault

- National Alliance to End Sexual Violence – <http://endsexualviolence.org/forsurvivors>
- National Sexual Violence Resource Center – www.nsvrc.org 1-877-739-3895
- National Sexual Assault Telephone Hotline - <https://www.rainn.org/about-national-sexual-assault-telephone-hotline> 1-800-656-4673
- RAINN: Rape, Abuse, Incest National Network – www.rainn.org 1-800-656-HOPE
- SurvJustice – www.survjustice.org/survivors
- Victim Rights Law Center – www.victimrights.org 1-617-399-6720

Substance Use

- National Association of State Alcohol and Drug Abuse Directors – www.nasadad.org 1-202-293-0090
- National Institute on Drug Abuse – www.drugabuse.gov
- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration – www.samhsa.gov 1-800-662-4357

Suicide

- The American Foundation for Suicide Prevention 1-888-333-2377
- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 1-800-273-8255

Trauma

- Trauma Resource Institute – www.traumaresourceinstitute.com/home

- Sidran Institute - <http://www.sidran.org/> 1-410-825-8888

Appendix F

Safety Crisis Plan

The following safety/crisis plan will help me manage my (check whatever applies):

anger anxiety depression substance use trauma _____ _____

My triggers/risk factors include (i.e., poor sleep, hungry, stress, recent changes or crises):

WARNING SIGNS:

- Physical (i.e., feeling tired, change in appetite or temperature, etc.) _____

- Emotional (i.e., mood changes quickly, more irritable, tearful, frustrated, etc.)

- Thoughts (i.e., difficulty concentrating, negative thoughts, etc.) _____

- Behaviors (i.e., clenching fists, crying, isolating, making threats, etc.) _____

HEALTHY COPING SKILLS:

SUPPORTIVE PEOPLE (NAME, PHONE #)

1. _____

1. _____

2. _____

2. _____

3. _____

3. _____

4. _____

4. _____

If you are experiencing an emergency or if you are in danger, contact 911 immediately. If you need additional support, please contact any of the organizations provided on the Resources Info Sheet (Appendix E).

Appendix G

Protective Factors

1. Favorite memory _____
2. Favorite place to be _____
3. Places I want to go _____
4. Favorite things to do _____
5. Things I want to do _____
6. Favorite food(s) _____
7. Favorite beverage(s) _____
8. Best support(s) _____
9. Favorite thing about myself _____
10. Something I am proud of _____
11. Something I am thankful for _____
12. Best things about life _____

It is important to remember the positive things in my life because

Write one goal that you would like to work on:

Now complete the following sentences regarding your goal:

I can _____

I am _____

I will _____

Appendix H

Payment Receipt

By signing below, I confirm that I have received a \$10 amazon gift card in exchange for my time. Even if I did not complete the interview, I was still eligible to receive compensation.

Printed Name, Signature

Date

Compensation was provided by:

Researcher name, signature

Date

Appendix I

Introductory Correspondence

Bom Dia _____!

My name is Mião (Lauren) and I am a capoeirista in Milwaukee, WI, although I train with Contra Mestre NAME (based in MIDWEST CITY) under Mestre NAME in MIDATLANTIC STATE. I am also a doctoral student in the Counseling Psychology program at UW-Milwaukee. I am reaching out because my dissertation is focused on *capoeira*, cultural healing, and identity with the hopes of illuminating the experiences of capoeiristas and the power of community-based, culturally centered practices by interviewing capoeiristas (takes about 1 hour). All participants are compensated with \$10 amazon giftcard for their time, so if you'd be willing to help please click here: https://milwaukee.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_08lxdUwDoZe38t7

Thank you in advance for your time and consideration! Axé e muito obrigada - Mião

Appendix J

Research Team Member Recruitment Letter

Good Morning/Afternoon/Evening,

My name is Lauren Mascari and I am a fourth year student in the Counseling Psychology Program at UWM. I am seeking research team members for my qualitative dissertation on the topic of: **capoeira, cultural healing, and identity**. The purpose of the project is to gain a greater understanding about culturally-centered healing practices (e.g., the Afro-Brazilian martial art of *capoeira*) as alternatives to talk therapy. I will conduct and transcribe interviews with 3-4 group leaders, and 4-9 participants from each group starting this fall.

Research team members are required to complete IRB training online <https://uwm.edu/irb/training/human-subjects-training-citi/>, and will receive training regarding the qualitative procedures for this project. Upon successful completion of training, the expected time commitment is a few hours per week, in which team members will code the interview transcripts.

If you are interested in gaining research experience, this is a great opportunity. Please email me and include responses to the following questions (there are no right or wrong answers! Rather, it is important that the team consists of diverse individuals due to the qualitative nature of the study):

- 1) Why are you interested in being a member of this research team?
- 2) What research experience do you have if any? (It is okay if you don't have any!)
- 3) What are the most important aspects of your identity? This could include your roles as a student, parent, banker, teacher, server, etc., or other attributes such as your race, ethnicity, sexuality, gender identity, socioeconomic status, etc.
- 4) Tell me about one weakness and one strength you see in yourself.

If you have any questions please let me know. Thank you in advance for your interest and consideration!

Sincerely,

Lauren

Appendix K

Coding Manual

CODES

Defined as:

1. Philosophy **general orientation, not specific to cultural traditions**

1.1. Philosophy - Universality/greater connection

i.e., “we’re all in this together;” “everything is connected;” “we arise out of the same things;” “I have a stronger connection with all things;”
“we become one unit”

1.2. Philosophy - Being Present
us;”

i.e., “completely present in the game;” “just be with us;”
“sometimes just being there is what matters;”

1.3. Philosophy – (not) For Everyone
it’s

i.e., “*capoeira* is for everyone;” “we call can try but not for everyone”

1.4. Philosophy – Privilege/gratitude

i.e., “not everyone had the privilege of doing this for fun;” “we’re conveying information that we’ve had the privilege of learning”

1.5. Philosophy – Way of Life

i.e., “*capoeira* is an integral part of my life;” “it permeates everywhere;” “I carry it with me;” “I hope I do *capoeira* as long as possible”

1.6. Philosophy – Reciprocity/Cycle
door

i.e., “get what you put in;” “don’t get it back, but a door is open;” “rather than stall the energy, it’s my responsibility to continue it”

- 1.7. Philosophy – Humility/Ego people i.e., “humility is needed to participate,” “more people could benefit from being uncomfortable and getting outplayed”
- 1.8. Philosophy – Own path “we all come to i.e., “each person walks their own way;” *capoeira* for different reasons;”
- 1.9. Philosophy – Nature of Things, harmony i.e., “it’s the nature of things;” “without the dirt you wouldn’t appreciate the flowers growing;”
- 1.10. Philosophy – bigger than me i.e., “it ain’t about me, it’s bigger than me;” “you’re happy just to be a part of it,”
- 1.11. Philosophy – perpetual growth/change i.e., “we are always changing;” “it will always continue to improve but it will never stop;” “*capoeira* was here before me and will continue after me,”
- 1.12. Philosophy – creating reality i.e., “we are creators of our own reality;” “we shape our own world;”

2. Cultural Traditions (CT) culturally important aspects specific to *capoeira*

- 2.1. CT - Passing Knowledge/intergenerational i.e., “I want to learn to teach and motivate others,” “we are perpetuating meaning and traditions,” “engrained role so if you die, things don’t die with you”

- 2.2. CT - Collective Ownership where
i.e., “each person has a role,” “build to the point people are teachers themselves”
- 2.3. CT – Tribute/Honor/Respect honor those
i.e., “we pay tribute at the end of class;” “we who came before; “it is important that we honor our ancestors;” “respect is needed”
- 2.4. CT – Cultural Connections
i.e., “*capoeira* is just a part of other practices;” mention of any of the following:
samba, *candomble*, *maculele*, *puxa de rede*, African dance
- 2.5. CT – Ceremony/Ritual tune and
i.e., “ritual unifies us;” “Mestre asked that I bless the instruments;” mention of *batizado*
- 2.6. CT - Music and Language
i.e., “music is the soul of the roda;” “singing is important;” “music is how we tell our stories”
- 2.7. CT – Naming group;”
i.e., “naming is actually very sacred within my
“if my name was forgotten tomorrow, I would still be a *capoeirista*;” “I’m not in a rush to receive my name”
- 2.7.1. Experience
i.e., “it wasn’t connected to my first batizado, so it wasn’t as big of a deal;” “I was flipping out and running up to people like, “Yeah!! I’m *CAPOEIRA NAME!!!*”
- 2.7.2. Meaning party;” “the name
i.e., “I finally felt like I was part of the definitely felt like a membership card;” “it made me feel like I was part of the secret club;”

- 2.7.3. Expectations i.e., “people expect a certain thing when you have a name like that;” “maybe I tried to live up to the name by having a beautiful game;”
- 2.7.4. Mocking/teasing they call me i.e., “I tripped over my own feet and so now NAME;” “I did an esquivá and I stuck my butt out and GROUP LEADER said, ‘everybody, this is NAME, because he stuck out his butt and is flat-footed;”
- 2.8. CT – *Axe/Ase*
- 2.8.1. CT – *Axe*: energy energy;” “it’s the i.e., “calling on the energy;” “it’s the flow;” “it’s ever-present;” “even though I came tired, I could keep playing all night;”
- 2.8.2. CT – *Axe*: positive feeling holidays and i.e., “it feels like when you go home for the everyone is there; “it rises those goosebumps;” “feeling joy and euphoria; “
- 2.8.3. CT – *Ase*: coalescing/affirmation in tune;” i.e., “when everything’s aligned;” “we’re all “it’s like saying ‘amen’ or ‘amin,’” “I’m with you, brother;” “it’s that sweet spot when it all comes together;”
- 2.8.4. CT - *Axe*: learning pouring i.e., “it’s not taught explicitly;” “I saw my elders libations;”
- 2.8.5. CT – *Axe*: orientation that i.e., “*axe* itself is neutral, it’s what you do with it

- matters;” “my relationship with axe changes all the time;”
- 2.8.6. CT – *Axe*: offering i.e., “*axe* is an offering;” “it’s when everybody is putting in effort, that’s when you feel it;”
- 2.9. CT – History/roots i.e., “this is a slave art;” “people practiced this to literally fight for freedom;” “*capoeira* has bloody roots;”
- 2.9.1. Defense/survival i.e., “for the first five years I was just fighting other styles because they didn’t respect *capoeira* and would come in trying to spar;”
- 2.9.2. Safe space/liberation i.e., “historically people worked together in *quilombos* for survival;” “for lack of a better word, it was a safe space where you could be free;”
- 2.10. CT – *na roda, na vida* i.e., “a person is the same in the *roda* and in real life; if they are aggressive in the *roda*, they are aggressive in their life;”
- 2.11. CT – expression/creativity/art/conversation i.e., “a *ginga* was not always as structured as it is nowadays;” “*capoeira* is a conversation;”
- 2.12. CT – belonging/congruence i.e., “I found my home;” “this is one of the last few things that White people haven’t taken away from us;”
- 2.13. CT – challenge/question/change i.e., “we’re living in new times;” “our *ginga* today looks nothing like the *ginga* back then;”
- 2.14. CT – ever present i.e., “we all have that movement that still resonates;” “you carry that and that walks with you;”

3. Pedagogy approaches

aspects of learning and teaching, general

- 3.1. Pedagogy – Foundation i.e., “we have five kicks that are fundamental;” “a strong base is more important than *floeiros* (fancy moves)”
- 3.2. Pedagogy – Break it down/build it up i.e., “break down the movement into parts;” “I try to break it down;” “then you can build onto that;” “we add different parts to the *sequencias*”
- 3.3. Pedagogy – Start where you can i.e., “come where you are;” “there’s always something that can be worked on;” “for each movement there is a precursor”
- 3.3.1. Eventual goals i.e., “you’re not supposed to get it today;” “eventually we’ll build up to it;”
- 3.3.2. Patience i.e., “you have to be patient with yourself;” “anything worth doing takes time;”
- 3.3.3. Modeling i.e., “it took me two years before I could jump up to *bananeira* from a squat;”
- 3.3.4. Patience i.e., “sometimes you gotta take you’re time with it;”
- 3.3.5. Let them figure it out i.e., “I say as little as possible and just let them figure it out;”
- 3.4. Pedagogy – Adapt to the individual i.e., “even in a group of twenty, can still adjust for each person;” “they’re amenable to how people learn;” “no matter where you’re at, I’ll try to meet you;”
- 3.4.1. Many ways/creative approach i.e., “sometimes you have to take it from different angles;” “you gotta be creative with it and see what works for that person;”
- 3.4.2. No “right” way i.e., “there isn’t necessarily a ‘wrong’ way to

- do it, but there may be a way that I am asking you to do it a certain way, and there may be a reason why I'm saying that;" "you can't do it wrong, you can only do it more right;"
- 3.5. Pedagogy – Awareness of surroundings but it's i.e., "you can always play your own game, important to just watch first; "it's important to be aware in all aspects"
- 3.6. Pedagogy – Context/Application i.e., "I like to explain why I would put my hand here so that I can protect my ribs; "I show the attack and the defense;"
- 3.6.1. Protection/self-defense i.e., "you know how to protect yourself and others;" "this is a self-defense;"
- 3.7. Pedagogy – Encouragement/no limits reiterate their i.e., "you did well;" try your best:" "I progress so they're not clipping their own wings out of hesitation;" "just keep coming to class and it will get easier;" "I try to push people just past their own limits;"
- 3.8. Pedagogy – Leader role/description i.e., "they are dedicated and still live a full live;" "he's like an older brother to me;" "my voice is terrible, but if I can sing, you can sing;"
- 3.8.1. Leader as student i.e., "I show that I am vulnerable too, like "hey guys, this is the new song that I'm working on;" "I learned this at the event last weekend;"

- “I’m still learning just like you;” “we’re all here to learn;”
- 3.8.2. Support
people;” “when a
i.e., “it’s important to just be there for
student was going through a difficult situation at work, he called and we just talked for an hour;” “she’s always been supportive and listened;”
- 3.8.3. Guidance
people are
i.e., “I try to offer guidance if that’s what
seeking;” “some people will be on a different path and I’ll try to present them with other ways or options, you don’t have to go that same way;”
- 3.8.4. Limitations as leaders
need
i.e., “there are some things I don’t touch; you two
to figure that out for yourselves;” “if there are siblings arguing about who took the last cookie, they need to settle that outside of class;”
- 3.8.5. Patience
over the course
i.e., “they exhibit patience;” “it might be
of a month and half for just the *basics*;”
- 3.8.6. Value students
being
i.e., “I start each class by thanking students for
there;” “they were all doing their own thing, not realizing that a teacher can’t teach if no one is there to learn;”
- 3.9. Pedagogy – Member/Students role
non-
i.e., “I try to help new people get into the *roda* in a
scary way;”

- 3.9.1. Student as teacher ANOTHER i.e., “I’ll have STUDENT go help STUDENT because maybe they can explain it in a new way that makes more sense;” “someone with a similar skill level can also show a movement that might help better”
- 3.9.2. Support/participate i.e., ““I’ll sing louder; “I remind people to clap;”
- 3.10. Pedagogy – Growth mindset i.e., “I try to be as open as I can to receive what I can;”
- 3.11. Pedagogy – Empowerment i.e., “ I’m sure that some of them felt empowered also in terms of those critical issues because they were a part of a lot of the work that we were doing in the community through *capoeira*;”
- 3.12. Pedagogy – take it or leave it i.e., “if nobody shows up, my teacher will still be there every week to hold the space;” “I don’t give advice anymore because people are going to do what they want to do;” “I try not to force my views on anybody;” “some are not ready to receive that;”
- 3.13. Pedagogy – greater landscape of *capoeira* i.e., “we go to other events;” “we connect with other groups;” “every month we have a unity *roda*;”
- 3.14. Pedagogy – music i.e., “we’ll start each class with music;” “at the end of class we each try out the instruments;” “we’ll take turns practicing the lyrics;” “we’ll have a music night at my house;”
- 3.15. Pedagogy – consistency/commitment

- other
- i.e., “a group of us religiously came to class;” “the teachers were spotty so I ended up being the only one who could commit to teaching on a regular basis;”
- 3.16. Pedagogy – working together i.e., “we would work with a partner;” “we use each other to stretch;” “I might be lifting someone over my shoulder;”
- 4. Healing: Interpersonal atmosphere for training and/or social dynamics**
- 4.1. Interpersonal – Welcoming i.e., “embracing;” “not banished if you can’t come to Class;”
- 4.2. Interpersonal – Inclusive Community i.e., “you learn a lot of inclusivity;” “can appreciate diversity;” “everyone is different but we respect each other;” “we might not be friends in any other context;” “you meet people that you wouldn’t normally talk to;” “you belong;” “I found my *capoeira* home”
- 4.2.1. Advocacy i.e., “we’ll
- 4.2.2. Allyship i.e., “we’ll tear down the bull shit, not the person, but we don’t stand with that here;”
- 4.2.3. Squashing old beef i.e., “I always tell people to not let their *Mestres* problems become their own problems;” “they were in the same room at my event, which I later learned had not happened for years;”
- 4.2.4. No elitism i.e., “we’re all equal and valued regardless of our level;”

- “yeah, just call him [Mestre], he’s a regular guy;” “I don’t need people to call me Instrutora and they definitely don’t need to call me doctor, like, please don’t;”
- 4.2.5.
- 4.3. Interpersonal – Fun/enjoyment
“it’s a good
time;” “people are smiling, laughing”
i.e., “class at the beach gets my day going;”
- 4.4. Interpersonal – Family/Travel
family;” “I
know I have a place to stay in Kenya because of *capoeira*;” “you just have to find your family wherever you go”
- 4.5. Interpersonal – knowing each other/connection
i.e., “we go eat together;” “we talk after class;” “we learn about each other outside of class;” “we studied together;” “we spend a lot of time together so I’ve gotten to know my *capoeira* teacher quite well;”
- 4.5.1. Camaraderie
i.e., “I wasn’t the only one struggling;” “I realized I wasn’t alone anymore;” “when you get to that ceremony, you want everyone else who has been training with you to be right there with you;”
- 4.5.2. Belonging
are searching
for belonging;”
i.e., “I felt like I belonged;” “some people
- 4.5.3. Celebrations
he
i.e., “we’ll do birthday rodas;” “one of the students,

graduated from high school so we celebrated that;” “we share a birthday month so we celebrated all together;”

4.6. Interpersonal – safe space
our

i.e., “I was able to heal within a safe space;” “when

relationship is good, I know that my student is able to reflect;” “after class I make time to have a dialogue;”

4.6.1. Safety/no judgement
benefits

i.e., “she said that she felt safe here;” “a lot of

are giving people that space to have community and come together;” “you can come and not be judged;”

4.6.2. Critical conversations/connections to greater social issues

i.e., “after class I make time to have a dialogue;”

“we

have critical conversations, about socioeconomic inequity;” “at an event they made time for discussions about societal issues, women’s rights, LGBTQ+ rights;” “we have critical conversations”

4.6.3. Trust
because

i.e., “I always had trust in GROUP MEMBER

he was going to school for music, so when he taught the class I was never worried;”

4.7. Interpersonal – ever present
“they’ve

i.e., “some old guy’s voice pop’s in their head;”

told me they hear my voice, especially when there are challenges, like, “just one more”

- “you got this;” “the things I say, it’s gonna sit with them;”
- 4.8. Interpersonal – uplifted/supportive i.e., “even though I may not be feeling it sometimes, it [positivity] rubs off on me;” “he’d give me [encouragement] so that was enough to keep me going;”
- 5. Healing: Self-development (SD) the individual’s internal experience & personal benefits**
- 5.1. SD – vulnerability i.e., “I was able to try uncomfortable things;” “can still be a part of the group even though I’m shy;”
- 5.2. SD – humility i.e., “you can be challenged without being offended;” “there’s always someone who can flip better than you”
- 5.3. SD – efficacy i.e., “I realized that I could do it;” “I wondered what else I could do;”
- 5.4. SD – open to new things/adventure/exploration i.e., “I am more open to new experiences and people;” “before I would have been more closed;” “I’m willing to try new things;”
- 5.5. SD – Empowerment/liberation i.e., “it’s those things that were in you that you never knew you had;” “I’m free now;” “I can just be myself;”
- 5.5.1. Confidence/comfort i.e., “I’ve lead two of my small groups at medical school

- now;” “it helps me feel more comfortable with myself;”
- 5.5.2. Voice/illuminating issues have this i.e., “he’s finding his voice;” “I’m glad I platform;”
- 5.5.3. Overcoming barriers overcome i.e., “helps move past insecurities;” “I have barriers;” “it helped me not be as introverted, because it’s hard for me, to be this [leader] person;”
- 5.5.4. Strengths the music i.e., “I’m not good at flips but I can focus on and be good at that;”
- 5.5.5. Adapting “sometimes you i.e., “we’re going to adjust to change;” might get a kick, a *rasteira*, and your footing might be off;”
- 5.6. SD – insight i.e., “I have a better understand of myself;” “I am learning how my body works”
- 5.6.1. Accepting roles was like, i.e., “then mestre handed me a cord and I “noooooooooo!” and he was like, “yesssss!!” “everyone says that if I want to become a teacher, I’ve got a great example, but I’m not there yet;”
- 5.7. SD – healthy coping/better functioning i.e., “I feel better;” “I can function better;”
- 5.7.1. Balance better;” “it i.e., “the energy can bring you back, I feel keeps me balanced;”
- 5.7.2. Stress relief i.e., “it relieves a lot of stress for me;”

- 5.7.3. Healthy separation to the other i.e., “it’s the one thing that’s not connected parts of my life, and I like that;” “I can take a break from studying 14, 15 hours a day and come back to it refreshed;” “stepping away helps me retain concepts better;” “for a few hours, he was able to just be away from all of those family issues;” “not everyone has the best life at home;”
- 5.7.4. Relaxing/fun laugh at i.e., “I feel more relaxed;” “I can loosen up and myself when I mess up;”
- 5.7.5. Hope/fortitude slave i.e., “knowing that our ancestors sang these same hymns – if they got through that, what am I crying about?” “because this art form has survived, put’s me at ease;” “we are a tortured people, but we are still here;” “I’m able to do this because my family’s been doing this for centuries;”
- 5.7.6. Fully present i.e., “I was right there;” “I was fully present;”
- 5.8. SD – expression/creativity i.e., “you can be creative;” “it’s the most emotional martial art because you can express how you feel;” “you can play in a silly way;” “we’re free of the conditioned boxes in the roda”
- 5.9. SD – better person has i.e., “you are a better person for it;” “doing *capoeira* made me a better person;” “I can manage people better, I can teach better”
- 5.10. SD – physical benefits “you get i.e., “I am stronger;” “I’m more flexible;”

- healthier;” “you use your whole body;” “this is a good way to prevent osteoporosis”
- 5.11. SD – general growth i.e., “I’ve growth with them [messages from my elders];” “I’ve grown because of *capoeira*;”
- 5.12. SD – achievement/excellence i.e., “I honored my exams, which means I scored over 95% on each;” “I went to college on a scholarship for track;” “students who are disciplined in one area are usually disciplined in all areas;” “I’m not excelling less than that;”
- 5.13. SD – perspective side, i.e., “I never considered that before;” “she’s on this side, and I’m on the other side, but we’re talking about the same thing in the middle;”
- 5.14. SD – fulfillment/purpose i.e., “maybe this is my purpose [to teach *capoeira*]
- 5.15. SD – goals/direction i.e., “I try to have a positive vibe, it gets difficult sometimes but;”
- 5.16. SD – personal challenges i.e., “I struggled to connect with other people in the department;”
- 5.16.1. Belonging/fitting in
- 5.16.2. Movement
- 5.16.3. Language/music
- 5.16.4. Self-critical
- 5.16.5. Hopelessness/despair
- 5.16.6. Systemic oppression
- 5.16.7. Responsibility/burden
- 5.16.8. Motivation/discipline/dedication/sacrifice

6. Harm

negative aspects of *capoeira*

- 6.1. Harm - Sociohistorical Context i.e., “y’all are living in old ways;”

- 6.1.1. Oppression against women
women to
i.e., “it is generally frowned upon for
move up in *capoeira*;” “my *Mestra* said she
always has to prove herself;” “as one of the
few female teachers, sometimes it can be
weird;” “women are not as valued or
respected in the *roda* and that’s a problem;”
“she was bringing up the topic of sexism and
machismo;”
- 6.1.2. Reputation as malandro/outlaw
criminals;” “the
i.e., “*capoeiristas* were considered
reputation of a *capoeirista* is someone that is
not to be trusted;” “*capoeiristas* are good at
disguising their intentions;”
- 6.2. Harm - Training Challenges
three
i.e., “we haven’t actually trained together in like
months so online classes don’t have that
same feeling as in person;”
- 6.2.1. Physical
changing so I can’t
i.e., “I have a bad knee;” “my body is
do the same things;” “we’re all aging;” “you
can hurt yourself if you don’t stretch
properly”
- 6.2.2. Accessibility
circumstances;”
i.e., “he couldn’t train because of his life
“I never had the opportunity when I was
younger”
- 6.2.3. Consistency/Responsibilities i.e., “he stopped teaching because he had a family;”
“people aren’t always training as much as
they should;” “people have to work”
- 6.2.4. Money
i.e., “I couldn’t afford classes at the time;” “in some

- groups, if you can't pay, you're not allowed to come;" "I have to pay bills, I have to eat"
- 6.3. Harm - People, not *capoeira* would i.e., "I wouldn't say that *capoeira* harms people, I say people harm people;"
- 6.3.1. Intent i.e., "people with malintent can hurt others;"
- 6.3.2. Aggressive "people i.e., "I've seen teachers push people too hard;"
- 6.3.3. Division, no sense of community are gunning for me;" i.e., ""we need to create unity amongst people"
- 6.3.4. Ego i.e., "want to be seen as the toughest guy;"
- 6.4. Harm – physical injury/martial someone;" "I

saw a guy's orbital socket get shattered;" "he broke my ankle;"

7. Identity

circles as identified by participants

- 7.1. Student/learner "I'm still i.e., "I'm a student of myself and the world;" learning and studying Portuguese;" "I see myself as a student and teacher"
- 7.2. Most marginalized/least mainstream i.e., "*capoeira* is definitely not mainstream;" "being a Black person in America identity;" "actually thinking critically"
- 7.3. Most important when doing *capoeira* moves i.e., "being a creator so I can think multiple ahead;" "being Black because that's the first thing they see;" "playing games because I enjoy interacting"

7.4. Being a *capoeirista*

i.e., “means that you can’t go without it;” “when a person is really into, wanting to learn more, practicing the music, learning the history;” “I used to play [*capoeira*] in the streets with my brother;” “we would walk around with berimbaus for no reason;” “whenever I hear a berimbau I’m just like ‘let’s go!’”

7.4.1. Entre
know

i.e., “I was walking across campus and saw what I was a *batizado*;” “I saw a flyer in my neighborhood and looked up some videos;”

7.4.2. Former experience
around

“I was searching for an African martial art;” i.e., “I taught in a different state;” “I grew up

7.4.3. Stopping
now, I still feel

martial arts;” “I started fighting when I was eight;”

7.4.4. Longevity
do this, but I

i.e., “even though I stopped training for

like a *capoeirista*;” “I think I will get back into it one day;”

i.e., “I don’t know how long I’ll be able to

hope it’s a long time;” “I want to do this for as long as I can;”

7.5. Identity - Function/influence
me to

i.e., “they [identities] walk with me;” “they allow

do whatever I want;” “everything is influenced by everything else;”

7.6. Identity – connection/congruence

i.e., “it resonates with me;” “I am learning more and more about my Black history;” “I have been doing more research about the Diaspora;” “it

[*capoeira*] kind of fits my personality;” “the spirit kind of pulls you in;” “it really drew me in;

8. Why *capoeira* is unique aspects that differentiate *capoeira* from other martial arts

8.1. Multifaceted i.e., “it’s a place where you can consolidate your feelings, spirituality, and physical self;” “there are so many layers;” “it’s complete with mind, body, and spirit”

8.2. Historical relevance resistance;” i.e., “this is an art that was developed as a

“it’s still applies today;” “there is no other martial art that has the history of overcoming for survival”

8.3. Family /Closeness/community i.e., “in other martial arts you’re trying to kill each other,

but not with *capoeira*;” “I’m still friends with people, six, seven years later; “ “I told them we hung out and they were like, ‘whatt???? You *hung out*????”

8.4. Integration with daily life with i.e., “even though I’m not training, I still carry it

me;” “I sing *capoeira* songs while I’m cooking;” “you might *ginga* across the floor instead of walking”

9. Other/misc. comments that do not fit into any other category

9.1. Other systems i.e., “services in schools are directed to a certain demographic”; “this is not new, it’s just being documented now and getting more attention in the media;”

9.2. Feedback i.e., “I enjoyed talking about this;”

9.3. Questions for principal investigator
“how are you

i.e., “how did you get your *apelido*?”

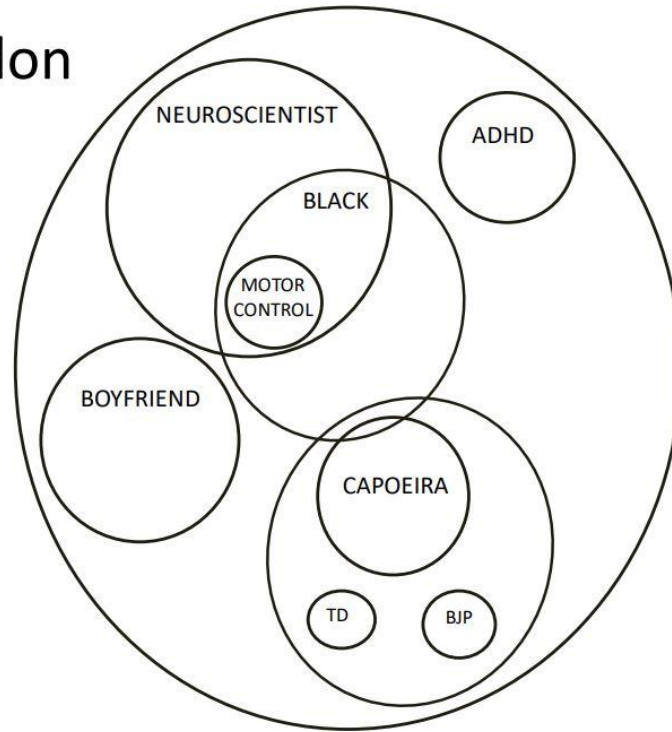
going to summarize your findings?” “what’s
next as far as your training?”

10. --

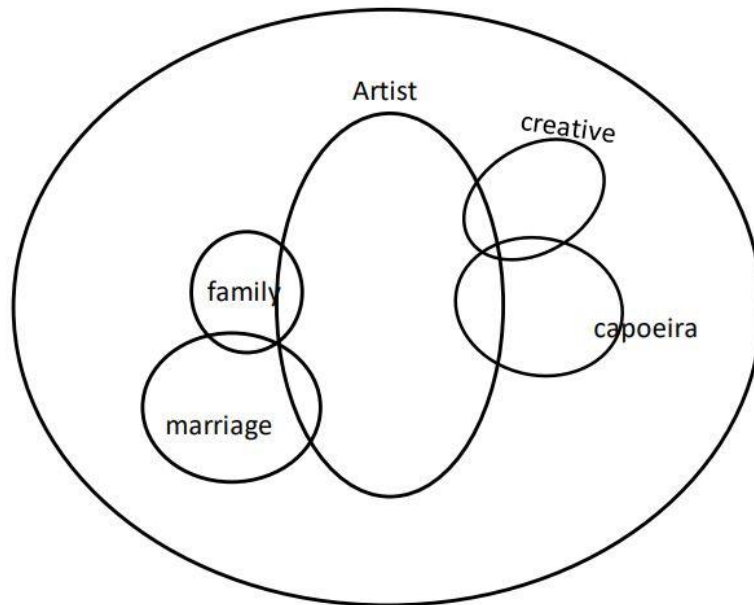
Appendix L

Identity Circles

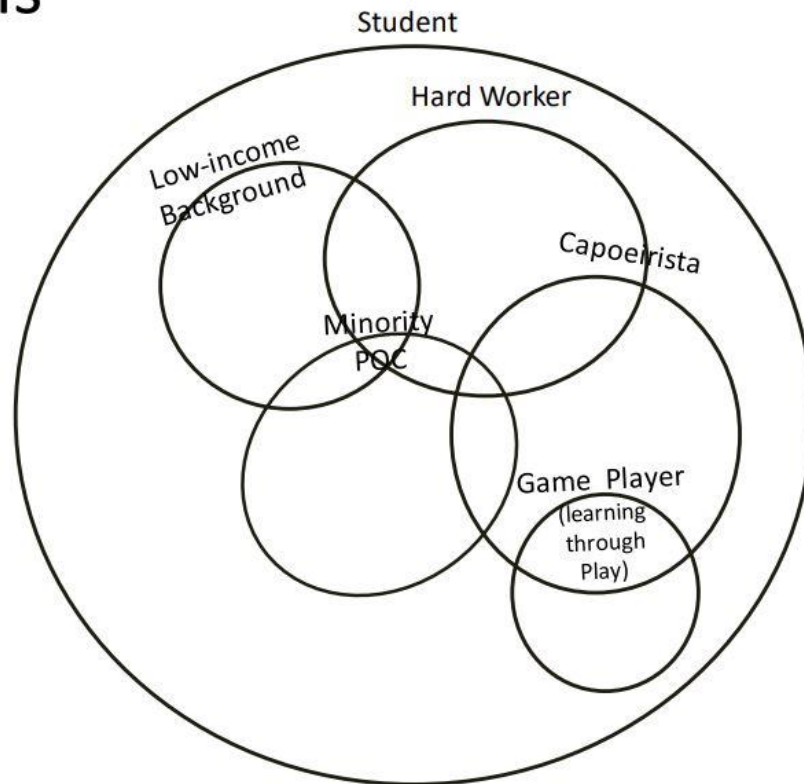
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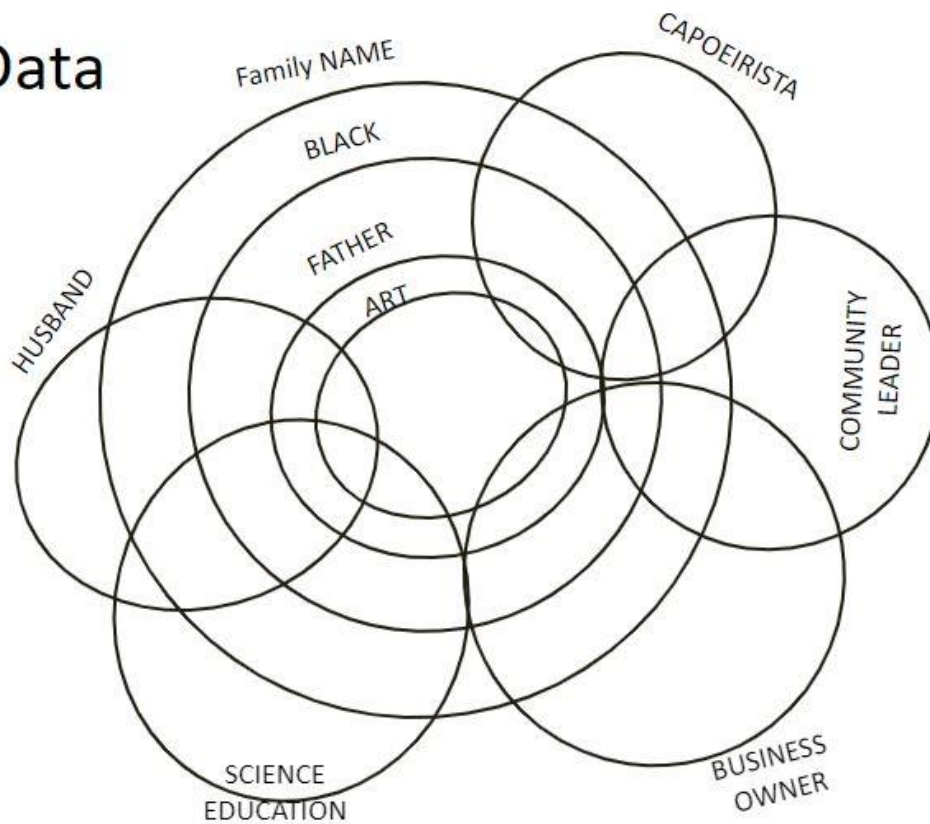
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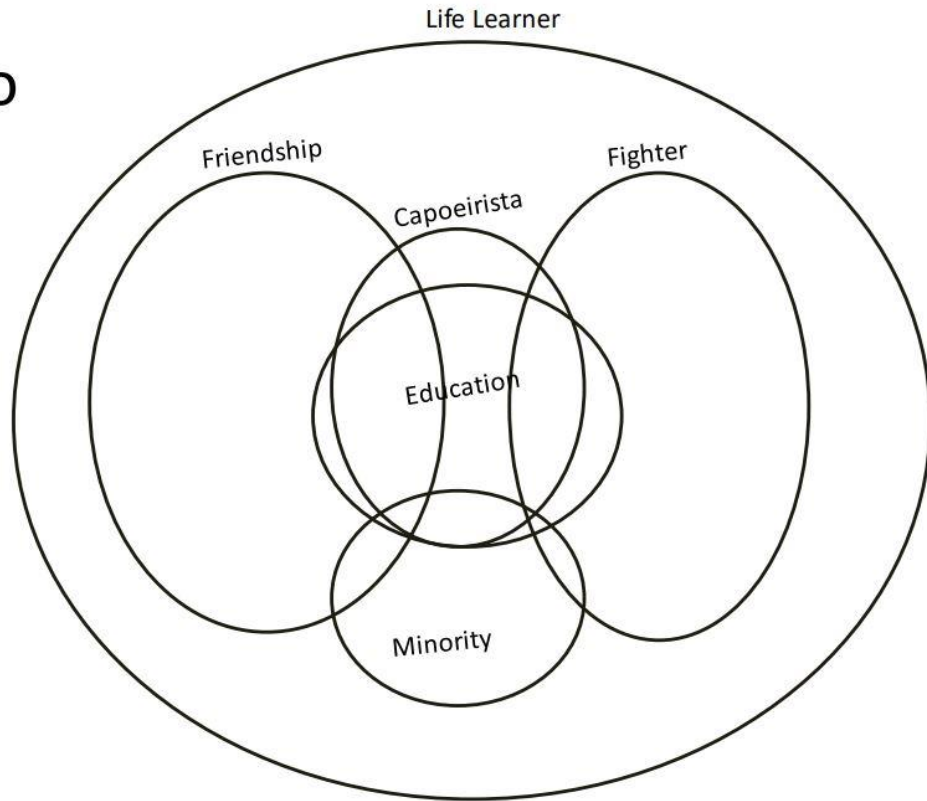
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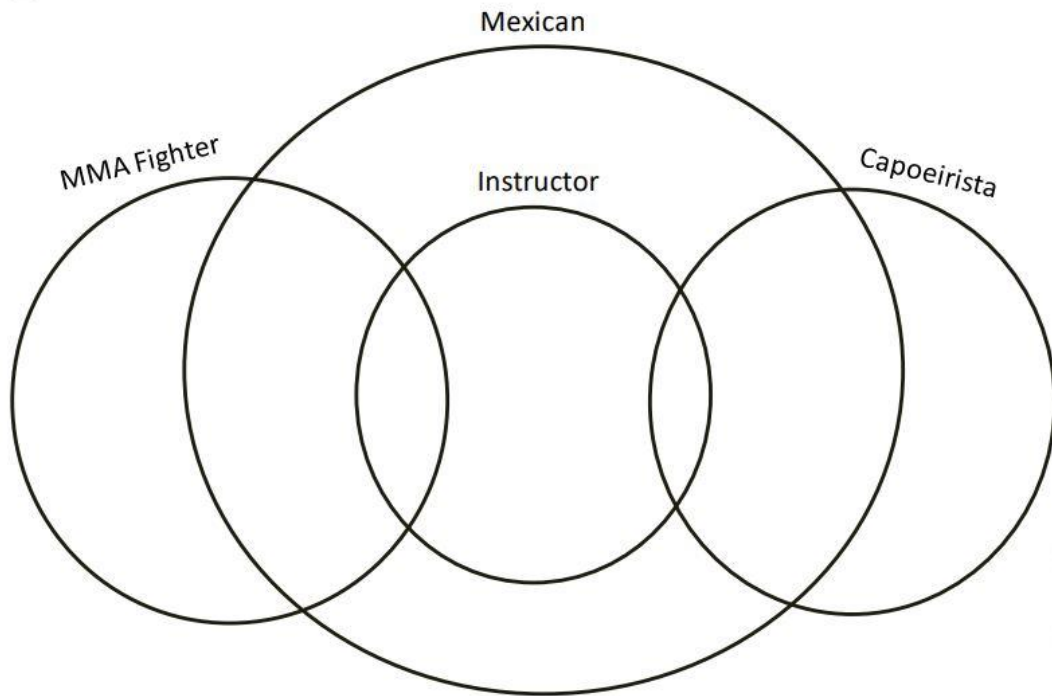
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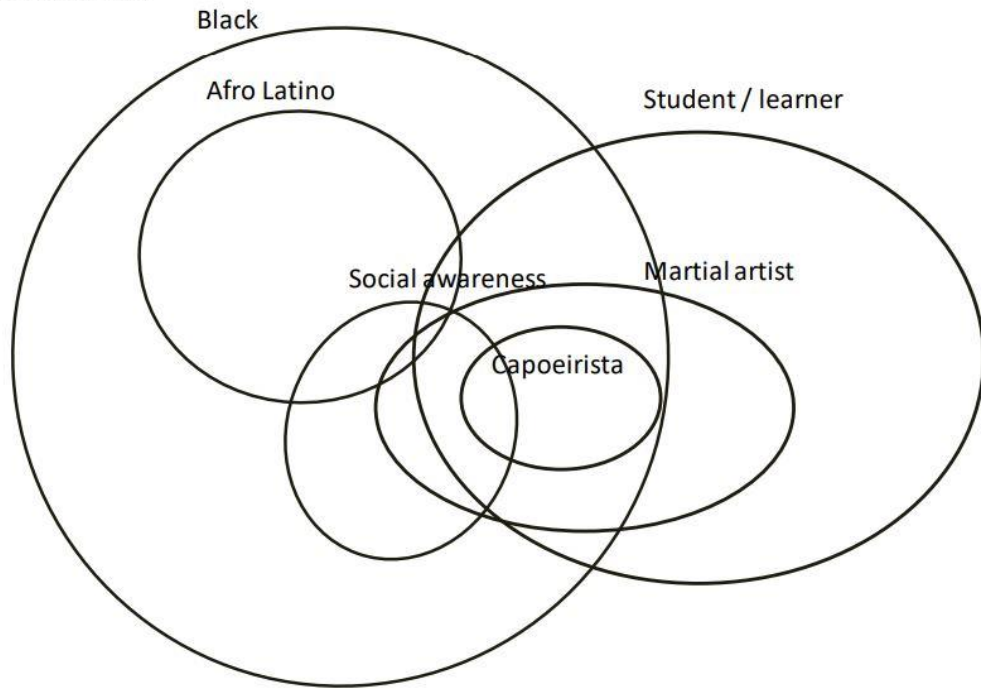
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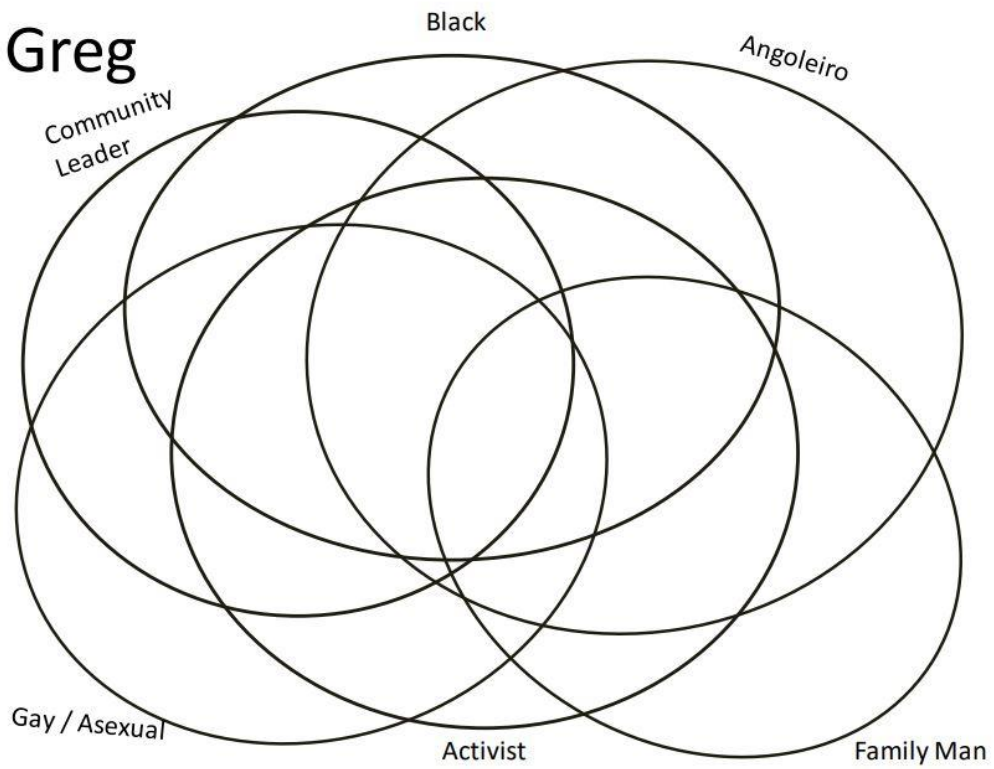
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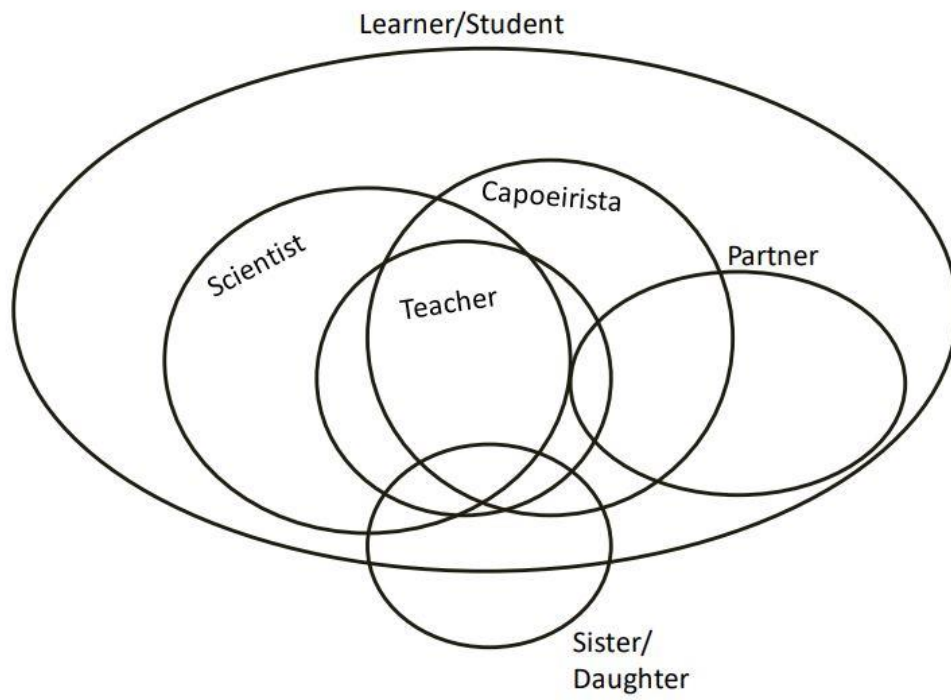
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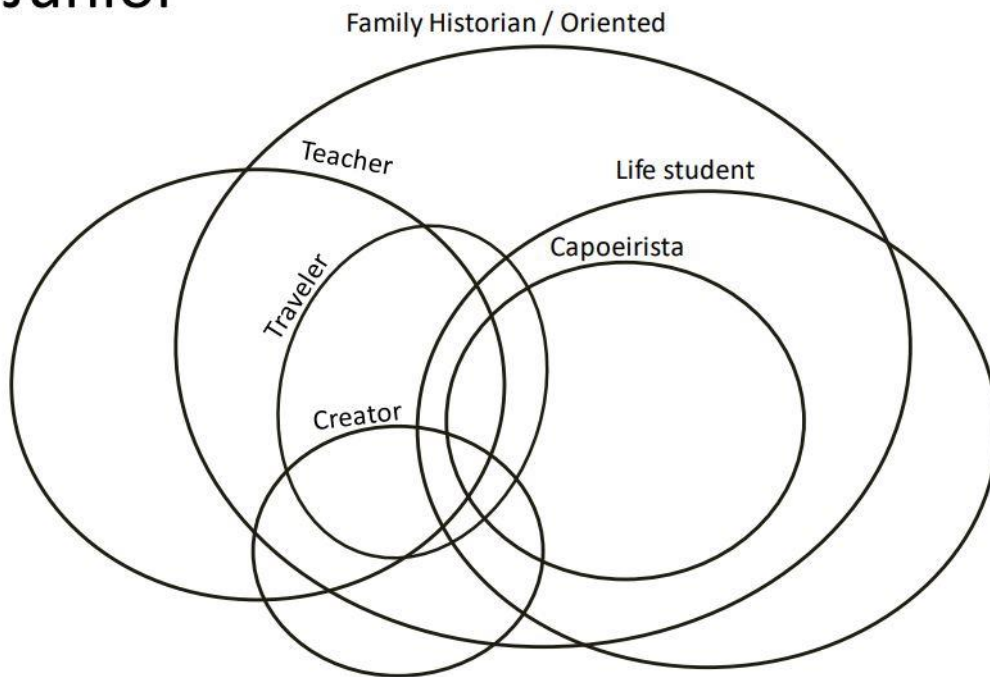
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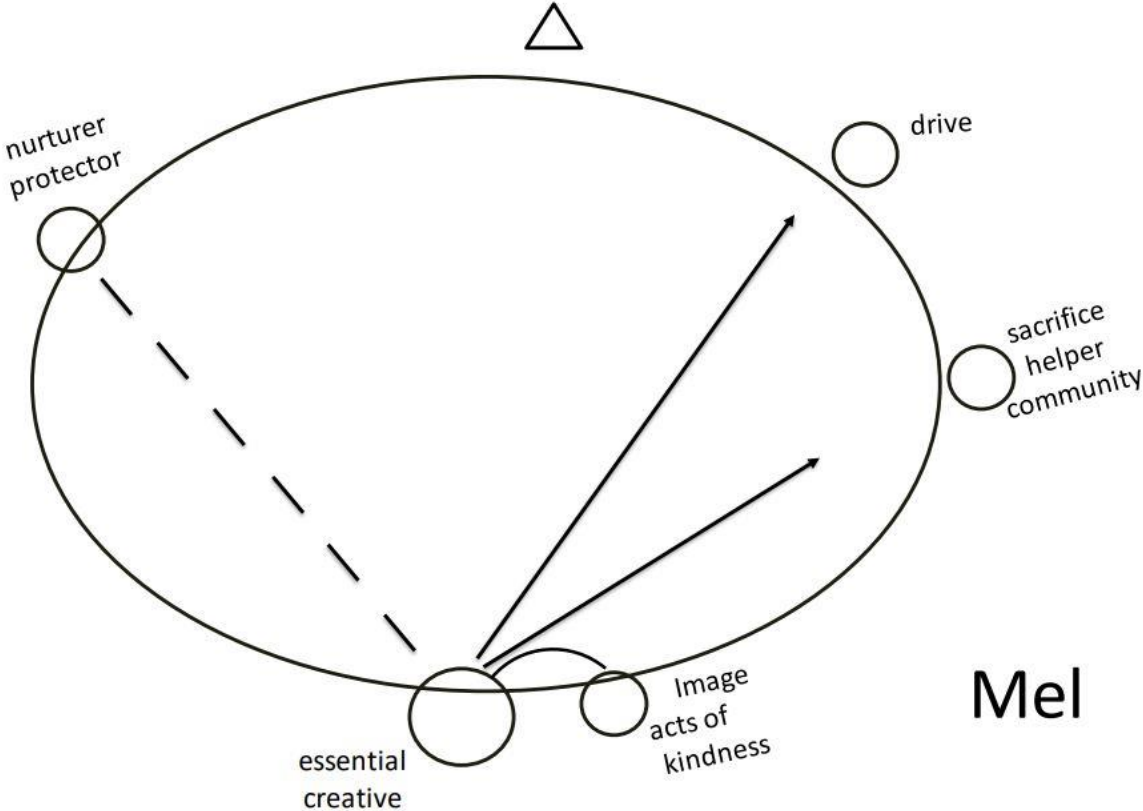
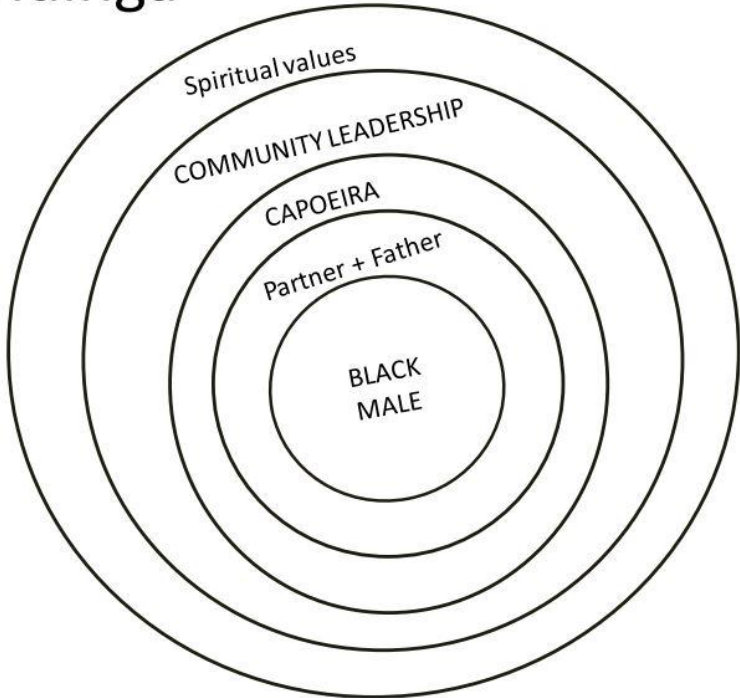
Ica



Junior

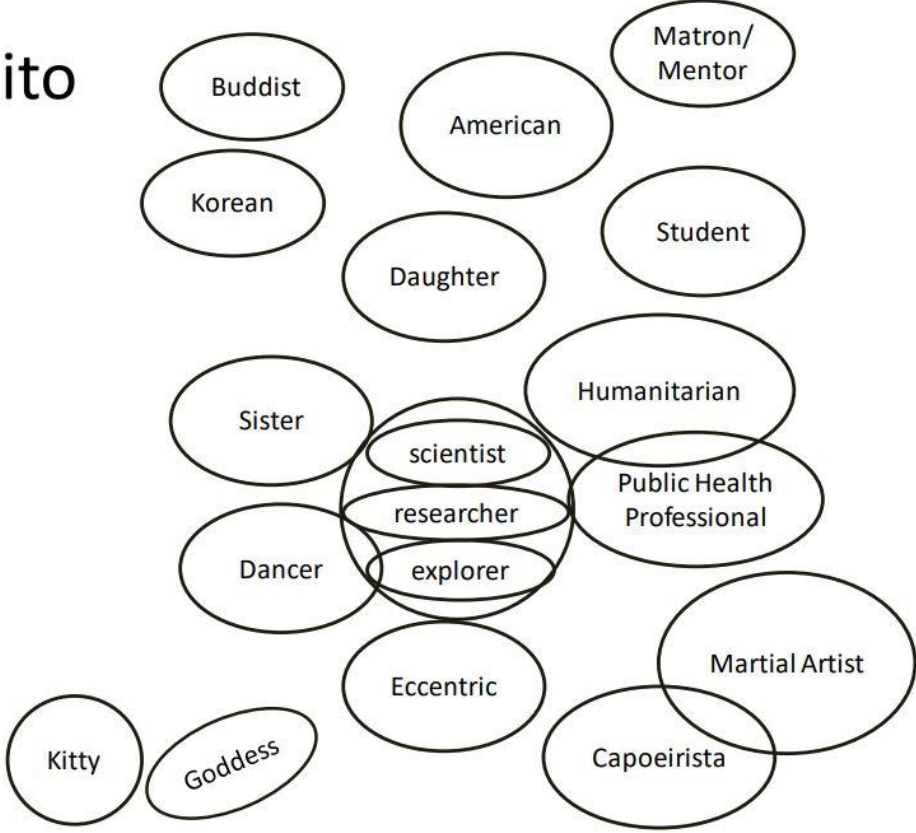


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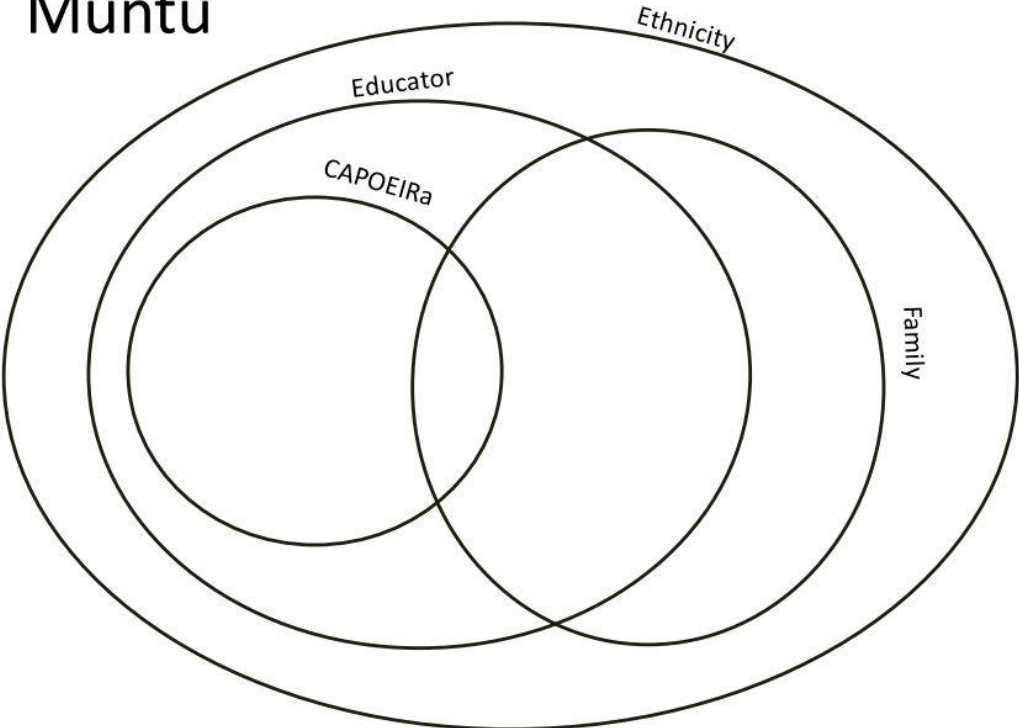


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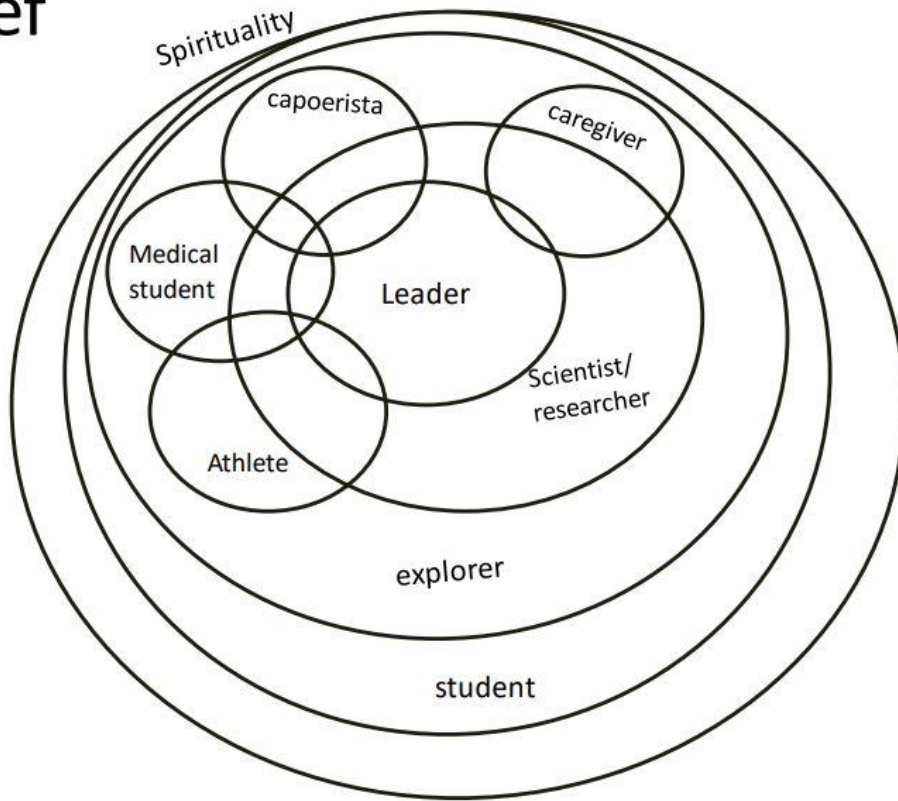
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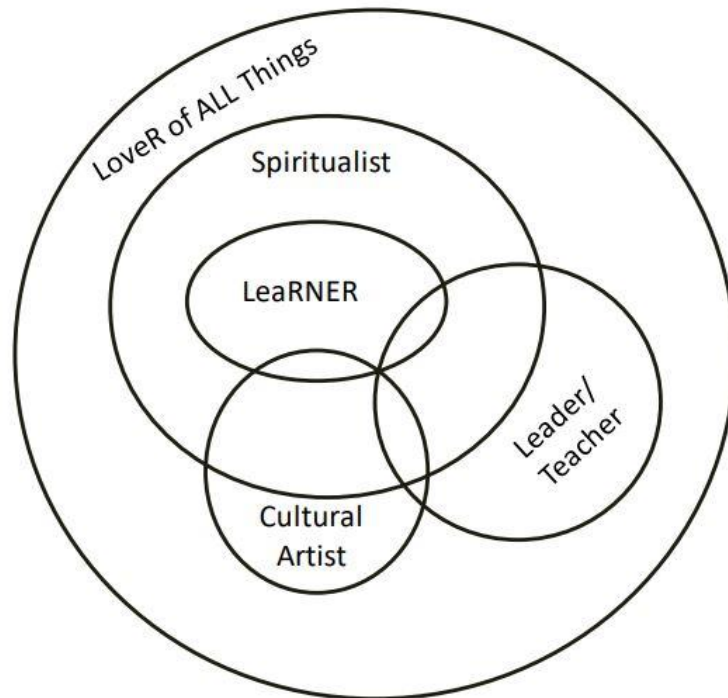
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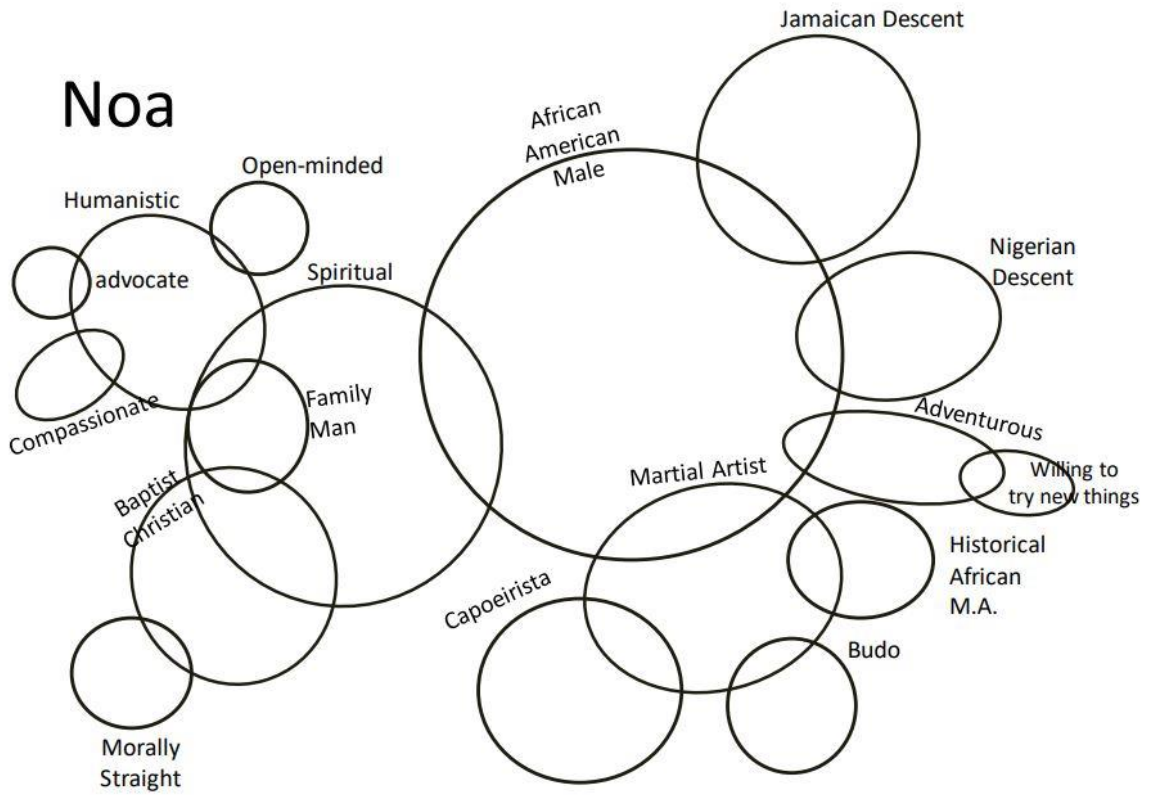
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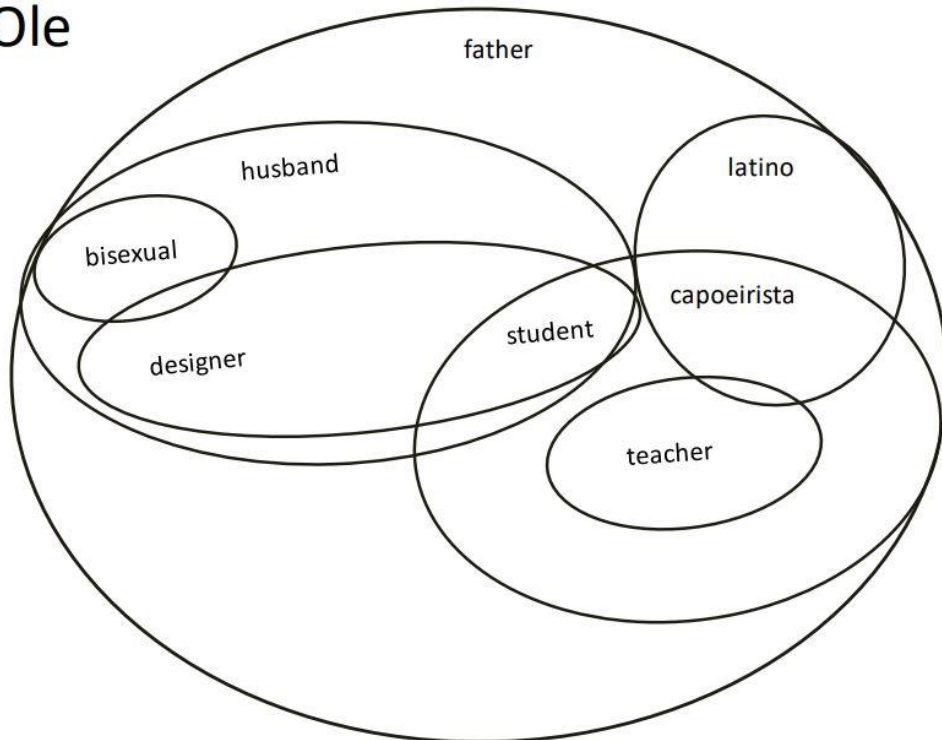
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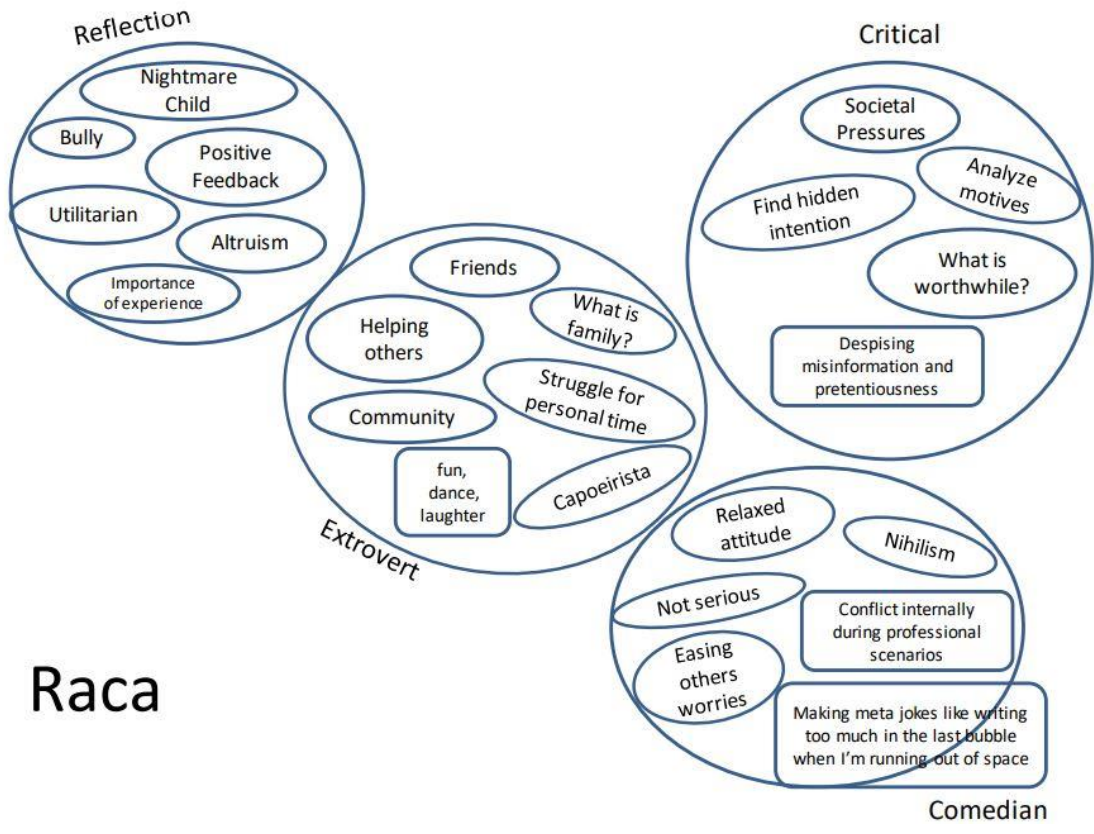


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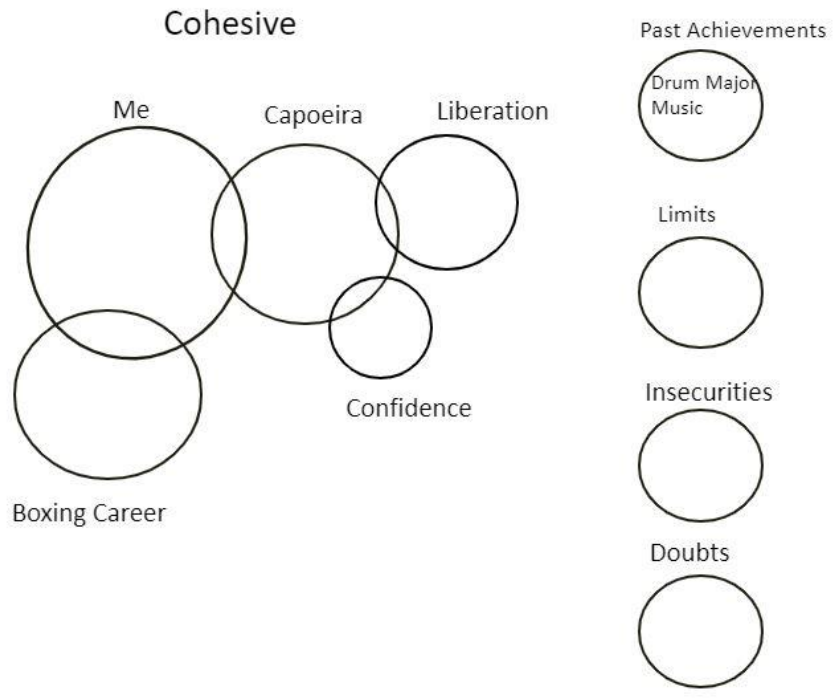
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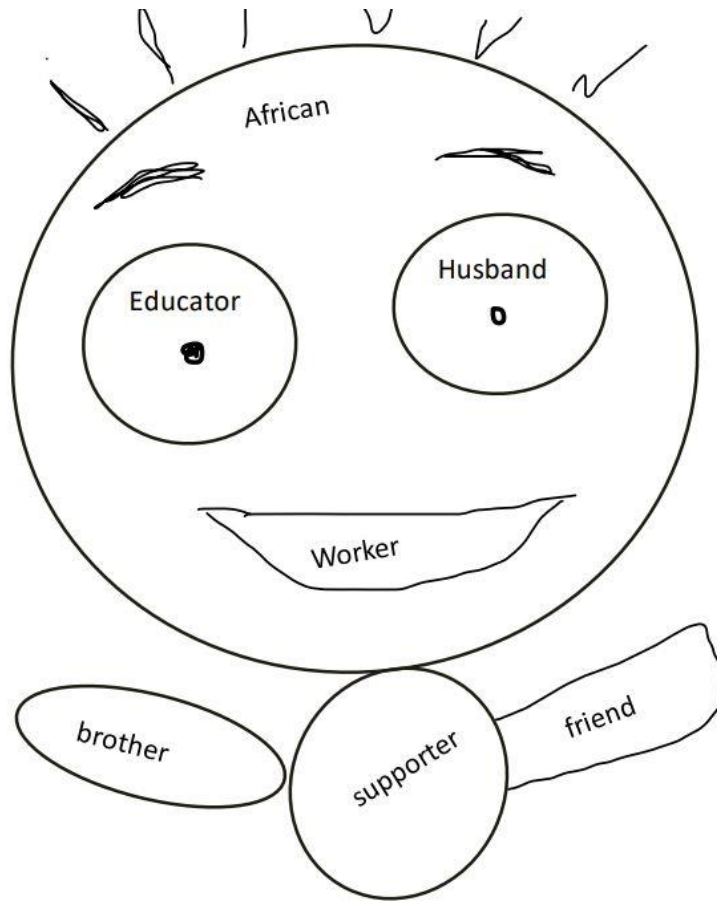


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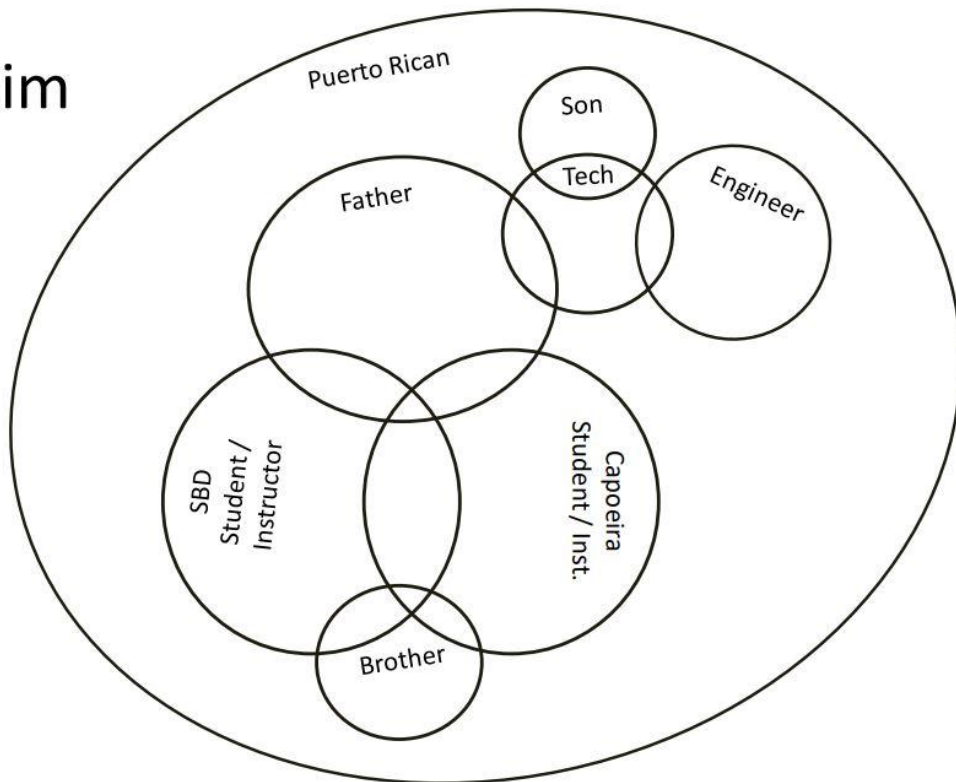
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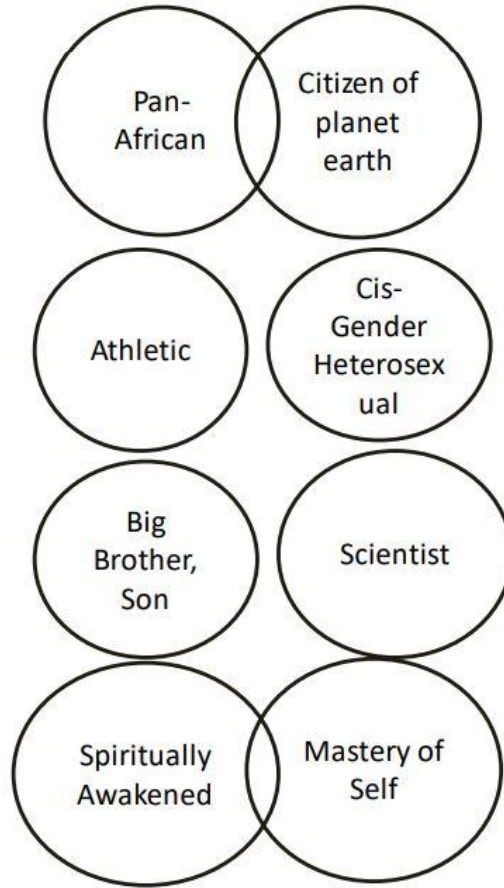
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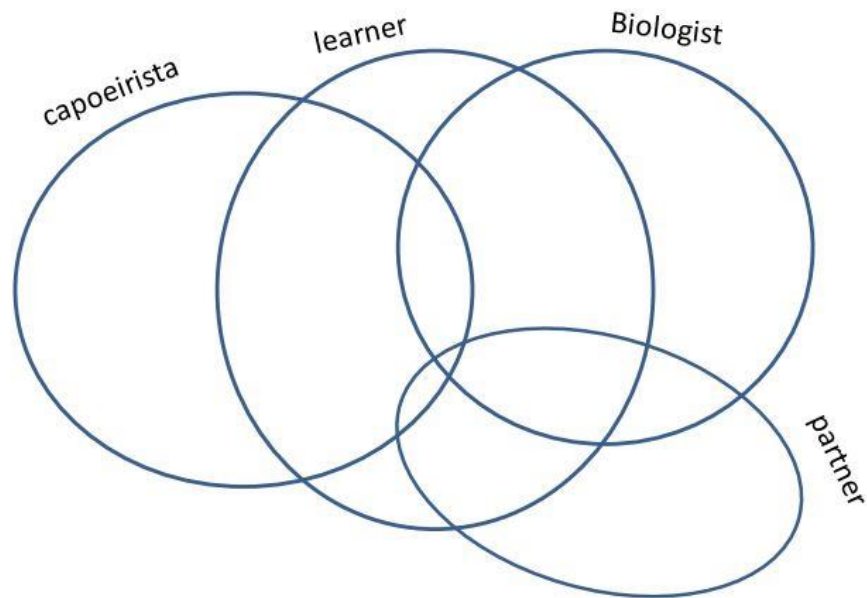
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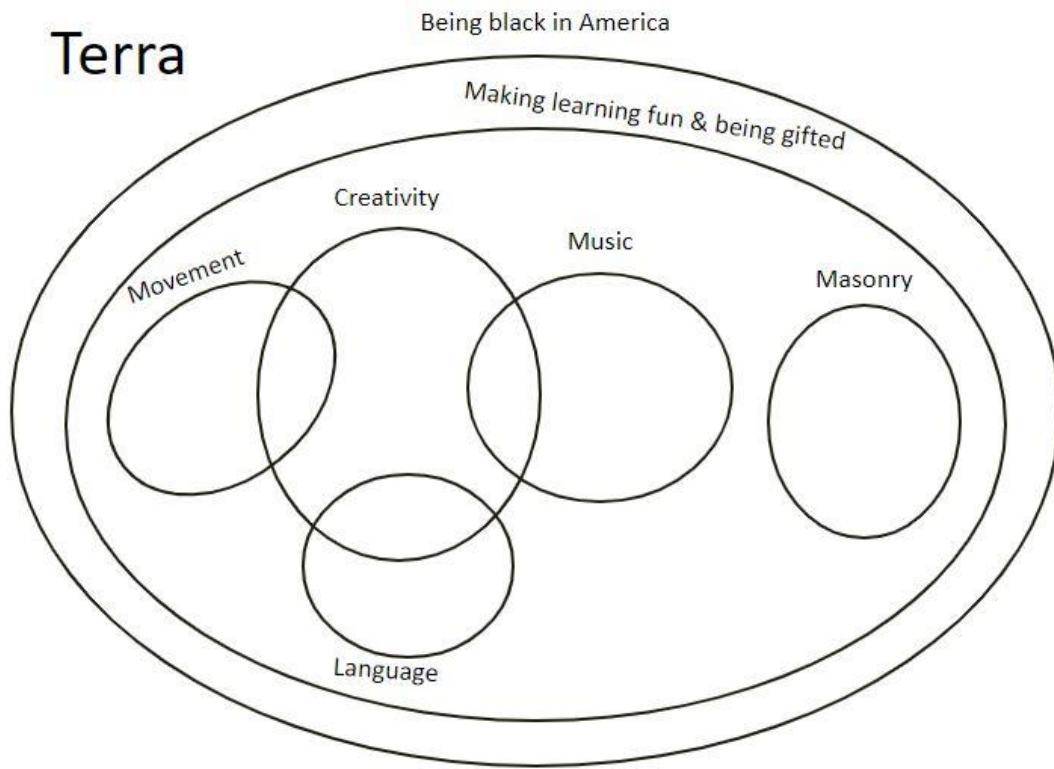
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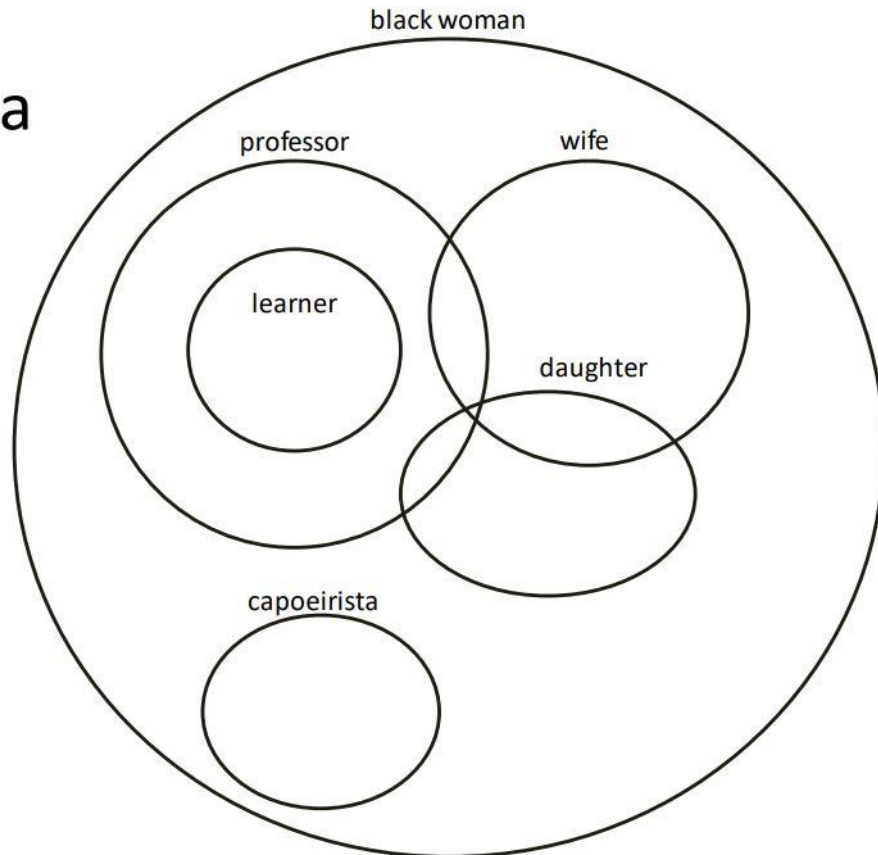
Student A



Terra



Tiba



Zum



Illusion

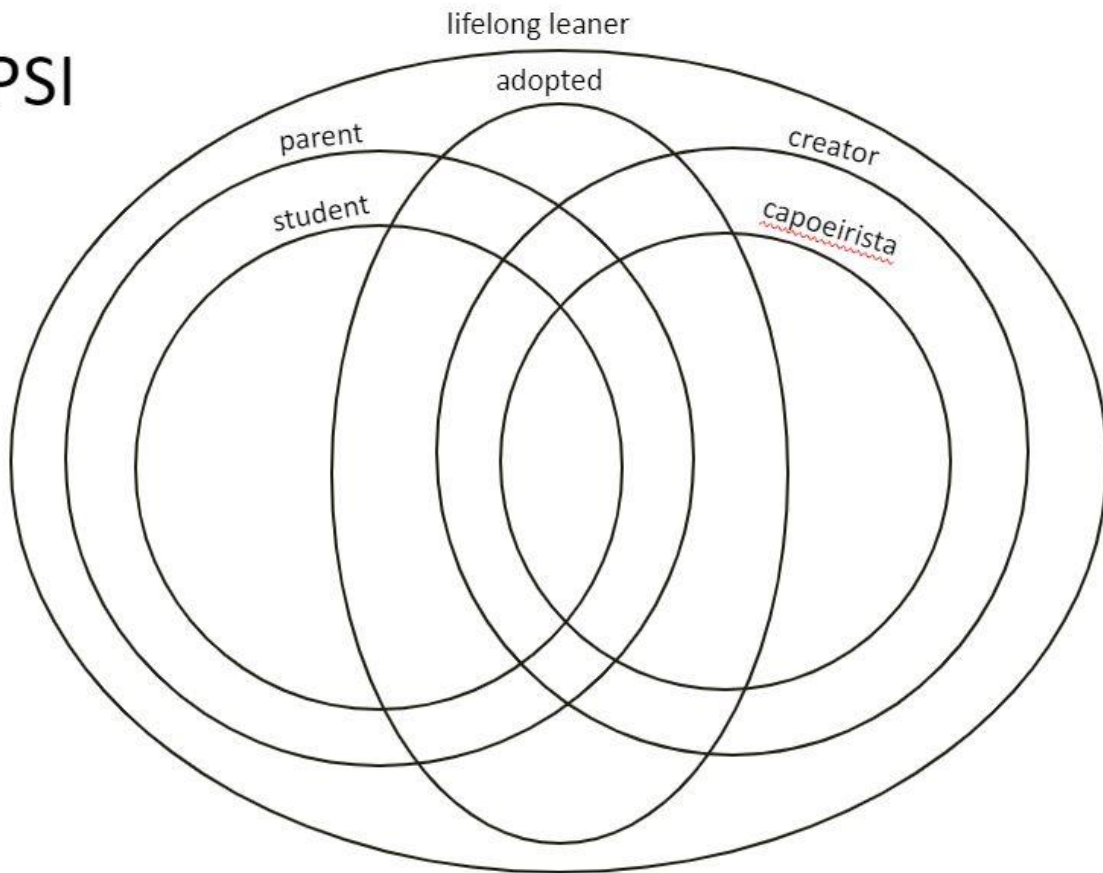


Intelligence



Ignorance

PSI



Appendix M

Informed Consent Form



Informed Consent for Research Participation

IRB #: 20.045

IRB Approval Date: 05/27/20



Study title	Capoeira, Cultural Healing and Identity
Researchers	Lauren Mascari, MS, LPC-IT, Dissertator, Counseling Psychology Nadya Fouad, PhD, ABPP

We're inviting you to participate in a research study. Participation is completely voluntary. If you agree to participate now, you can always change your mind later. There are no negative consequences, whatever you decide.

Overview

Purpose: The purpose of this study is to learn about the therapeutic benefits of participating in the Afro-Brazilian martial art of *capoeira*. *Capoeiristas* will be asked about aspects their own identity, important practices within their capoeira groups, and what has been helpful or healing about participating in *capoeira*.

Procedures: Interested participants will complete a screening online. Eligible participants will schedule a time to meet with Lauren via skype or Zoom. Group leaders will be interviewed separately to learn about their role within the group. Individuals will also receive a brief (two questions) post-interview survey online.

Time Commitment: The estimated duration of the interview is about 60 minutes; however this may vary depending upon what a participant chooses to share. The post-interview online only takes a few minutes to complete.

Primary risks: Primary risks include the potential for psychological discomfort in sharing about their experiences. At any time, participants can choose not to answer a question or can discontinue the interview. A list of resources can be provided to participants, and the principal investigator can support participants in developing a safety or crisis plan if needed.

Benefits: Previous research has found that capoeira participants report experiencing a sense of belonging, empowerment, increased self-efficacy, or belief in one's self, creative expression and identity development. Participants will contribute to the body of knowledge regarding culturally centered therapeutic interventions.

What is the purpose of this study?

We want to understand how people's participation in the Afro-Brazilian martial art of *capoeira* can be beneficial, how it relates to their identity, and what cultural pathways (i.e., practices, traditions, rituals, routines) of capoeira are most important for individuals who practice capoeira, also known as *capoeiristas*.

Some aspects of a person, such as *cultural identity*, have been found to help individuals maintain psychological well-being for individuals who are racial and ethnic minorities, or marginalized in other ways (i.e., religious or spiritual identity, gender identity, sexuality, etc.). Previous studies have found that participating in *capoeira* can increase belonging, empowerment, self-efficacy, and facilitate creative and non-verbal expression and identity development.

What will I do?

Individuals

Eligible participants will complete an individual interview via Skype or Zoom. Participants will be asked questions about their experiences with capoeira, their own identities, and what aspects of capoeira they find

most helpful or healing, as well as the challenges/drawbacks of participating in capoeira. Both group leaders and group members may participate. Interviews are expected to last about 60 minutes, depending upon what participants choose to share. Participants will also be asked to complete a brief (two-question) post-interview survey online after individual interviews for this study are completed.

Recordings

Individual interviews in-person and via Skype or Zoom will be audio recorded for the purposes of transcription and analysis. Audio recordings are preferred to handwritten notes, as a researcher cannot conduct a conversation and simultaneously capture all of the information that the participant provides. Audio recordings will be stored in the ‘voice memos’ application on a password protected phone that does not have cellular service. The phone will be kept in a locked filing cabinet in the principal investigator’s locked office. The audio recording will be deleted after the participant has reviewed their own transcript. Only the principal investigator will transcribe interviews to ensure the utmost level of confidentiality.

Any identifying information or proper nouns will be redacted (removed) and replaced with a generic term for the protection of the participant. For example, rather than a specific group or name (i.e., ASCAB Mestre Doutor), a generic term will be used (i.e., ‘capoeira group’; ‘MESTRE’). Participants will choose a pseudonym, or fake name (not their capoeira name) to protect their confidentiality. For example, although my capoeira name is ‘Miao’ I would choose a different name such as ‘Mea Lua’ or ‘Paula’. Transcriptions will be used to identify themes across participants.

After redacting (removing) any identifying information, participants will be provided with a password protected link to access a written transcript of their individual interview. This will be done to ensure accuracy of the collected data and will allow the participant to provide any corrections. The link allowing access to the individual transcript will expire 7 days after it is emailed to the participant to prevent unauthorized access. Participants may request more time to review their own transcript if needed.

Risks

Possible risks	How we’re minimizing these risks
Some questions may be personal or upsetting	You can skip any questions you don’t want to answer. If severe distress is experienced, the participant and principal investigator can work together to develop a safety/crisis plans. Some bodily signs of distress could include shallow or rapid breathing, sweaty hands, armpits or head, increased heart rate, and so forth. All participants will also be offered a list of resources for additional support, as well as coping, or de-escalation techniques if the interviewer notices these external signs.
Breach of confidentiality (your data being seen by someone who shouldn’t have access to it)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Your real name will not be used for the interview. Instead, you will be asked to choose a <i>pseudonym</i>, or fake name, that will be used throughout study. Only the person who obtains your consent and conducts your interview will know your real name. Any other research team members will only see your pseudonym, or fake name.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any identifying information will be removed and replaced a generic term. For example, “capoeira group” will replace a capoeira group’s name, or “training location” will replace the name for a specific training academy. We’ll store all electronic data on a password-protected, encrypted computer. We’ll store all paper data in a locked filing cabinet in the principal investigator’s locked office. The phone used to audio record interviews will be stored in a locked filing cabinet in the principal investigator’s locked office. The audio recording will be deleted after the transcript has been reviewed by the participant. We’ll keep your identifying information separate from your research data, but we’ll be able to link it to you by using your pseudonym. We will destroy this link after we finish collecting and analyzing the data.
Group leader retaliation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To protect group members, the group leader will be first asked for permission to speak with group members. If group members are being approached to participate in this study, it means that their group leader is okay with group members discussing their capoeira group. If group leaders do not provide permission for the principal investigator to talk to their group members, group members will not be asked to participate. Participants will also select their own fake name, or pseudonym, which will be different from their actual capoeira name. This allows for their thoughts to be shared without fear that it will negatively impact their relationships with other group members and the group leader.

There may be risks we don’t know about yet. However, throughout the study, we’ll tell you if we learn of anything that might affect your decision to participate.

Other Study Information

Possible benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You can share about your experiences with capoeira, which may be enjoyable, or cathartic. You will help psychologists understand more about the experiences of <u>capoeiristas</u>, both negative and positive. Positive aspects may inform future interventions that are culturally centered.
Estimated number of participants	5-14 capoeira group leaders and up to 2 respective group members until no new themes in the responses are shared. It is possible that: 1) a group leader chooses not to ask group members to participate; 2) group leaders ask group members to participate but group members decide not to participate in the study; 3) group leaders are not currently teaching and do not have group members to ask for participation.

How long will it take?	Interviews are expected to take about 60 minutes (depending upon what you share). The post-interview online survey is expected to take a few minutes to complete.
Costs	There are no costs to participate in this study.
Compensation	Interview participants may choose to withdraw from the study at any time and still receive a \$10 amazon gift card.
Future research	Your data <u>won't</u> be used or shared for any future research studies.
Recordings	<p>Individual interviews will be audio recorded so the conversation can be transcribed. This process allows the interviewer to focus on what you are saying, rather than trying to take notes and hold a conversation at the same time. Only the person who conducts the interview, also known as the principal investigator, will know your real name.</p> <p>After the interview is transcribed and identifying information has been redacted, a link to the transcript will be emailed to the interviewee to review for accuracy and to provide any further clarification. After an interviewee has reviewed of the written transcript, the audio/skype recording will be deleted. Only the written transcription will be used to identify and understand themes across participants.</p> <p>The audio/skype recording is necessary to this research. If you do not want to be audio/skype recorded, you should not be in this study.</p>

What if I am harmed because I was in this study?

This harm involves minimal risk, however if you're harmed from being in this study, please let us know. If it's an emergency, get help from 911 or your doctor right away and tell us afterward. We can help you find resources if you need psychological help. All participants may develop a safety/crisis plan with the principal investigator and will be offered a list of resources for on-going support. You or your insurance will have to pay for all costs of any treatment you need.

Confidentiality and Data Security

The principal investigator will collect the following identifying information for the research: your name and email address. This information is necessary to confirm your scheduled interview. Your name and email will be saved on a password protected account provided by the University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee. Your email will only be used for the purposes of scheduling your appointment, in order to provide a link to review your own transcript and to provide any corrections, and to schedule the group debriefing. Your email will be securely stored separately from your interview information so that you will only be identified by your pseudonym.

Where will data be stored?	Digital information will be stored on a password protected account provided by UWM. Any physical papers will be stored in a locked filing cabinet in a locked office.
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How long will it be kept?	Data will be kept for 7 years, in accordance with data guidelines established by the American Psychological Association and IRB. After that point it will be confidentially deleted or shredded.
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Who can see my data?	Why?	Type of data
The researchers	To conduct the study and analyze the data	Coded (a self-selected pseudonym will be used rather than identifiable information).
The IRB (Institutional Review Board) at UWM The Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) or other federal agencies	To ensure <u>we're</u> following laws and ethical guidelines	Coded (a self-selected pseudonym will be used rather than identifiable information).
Anyone (public)	If we share our findings in publications or presentations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aggregate (grouped) data • De-identified (no names, birthdate, addresses, etc.) • If we quote you, <u>we'll</u> use your pseudonym (fake name). You will first be asked permission to use a direct quote.

Mandated Reporting

We are mandated reporters. This means that if we learn or suspect that a child (under the age of 18) or elder (age 60 or older) is being abused or neglected, we're required to report this to the authorities.

Conflict of Interest

There is no conflict of interest.

Contact information:

For questions about the research	Lauren Mascari, MS, LPC-IT Nadya Fouad, PhD, ABPP	lmascari@uwm.edu nadya@uwm.edu
For questions about your rights as a research participant	IRB (Institutional Review Board; provides ethics oversight)	414-662-3544 irbinfo@uwm.edu
For complaints or problems	Lauren Mascari, MS, LPC-IT Nadya Fouad, PhD, ABPP	lmascari@uwm.edu nadya@uwm.edu
	IRB	414-662-3544 irbinfo@uwm.edu

Signatures

If you have had all your questions answered and would like to participate in this study, sign on the lines below. Remember, your participation is completely voluntary, and you're free to withdraw from the study at any time.

Give a copy of this form to the research participant



Informed Consent for Research Participation

IRB #: 20.045

IRB Approval Date: 05/27/20

If we are not meeting in person, please complete this form online at
https://milwaukee.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_2tTeQnfzGV6fbVj

Name of Participant (print)

Signature

Date

Name of Researcher obtaining consent (print)

Signature of Researcher

obtaining consent

Date

capoeira,

Cultural Healing & Identity

Illustration by Carybé



PURPOSE: The purpose of this study is to learn about the benefits of participating in *capoeira*.

TO PARTICIPATE: Individuals are eligible to participate if:

- They are at least 18-years-old
- They have participated in *capoeira*
- They identify as a minority in any of the following categories: race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religious affiliation or practice, gender identity, legal status, language ability, learning ability, etc.
- They are proficient at speaking and verbally understanding conversational English

Individuals may choose to withdraw from participation at any time with no consequence. Your decision will not impact your current or future relations with your *capoeira* group or the University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee.

BENEFITS: Benefits of participating include being able to share your experiences and contribute to the body of knowledge about culturally centered therapeutic practices. Participants may realize their strengths and resilience within their environments and situations and enjoy sharing about their experiences.

COMPENSATION: Participants will be offered a \$10 amazon giftcard or \$10 cash if access to the internet is not available.

DATE & TIME: Eligible participants will be contacted via email to schedule an interview either in-person or via skype or zoom. The group will be offered a debriefing session in order to discuss what it was like to participate in the individual interview. Participants will be contact via email to establish the time and date for the group debriefing.

CONTACT: For more information about the project, contact Lauren Mascari at lmascari@uwm.edu. The project is being supervised by Nadya Fouad, PhD, ABPP, who can be reached at nadya@uwm.edu.

If you are interested in participating, please scan this QR code

or follow the link to complete the initial screening

https://milwaukee.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_081xdUwDoZe38t7



CURRICULUM VITAE

LAUREN H. MASCARI, MS, LPC-IT

EDUCATION

University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee August 2021
Doctor of Philosophy – Educational Psychology
Concentration: Counseling Psychology

University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee May 2016
Master of Science – Educational Psychology
Concentration: Community Counseling

University of Wisconsin – Madison December 2008
Bachelor of Science – Art
Concentration: Graphic Design

LICENSURE

Professional Counselor Training License No. 3375-226 Exp May 2022
State of Wisconsin – Department of Safety and Professional Services

APPLIED EXPERIENCE

Rogers Behavioral Health Child and Adolescent Day Treatment Program 2020 - 2021
West Allis, WI
Pre-Doctoral Psychology Intern
Supervisors: Nancy Goranson, PsyD, License 1624 ; Kristin Miles, PsyD, License 3011

Walker’s Point Youth and Family Center, Teen Crisis and Runaway Program 2018 - 2020
Milwaukee, WI
Bilingual (English/Spanish) Therapist
Supervisor: Ryan Miller, MS, LPC, NCC, License 6312

Rogers Behavioral Health, Child and Adolescent Day Treatment Unit 2018 – 2019
West Allis, WI
Doctoral Practicum Counselor
Supervisor: Kristin Miles, PsyD, License 3011

Aurora Psychiatric Hospital, Eating Disorders Unit 2017 – 2018
Wauwatosa, WI
Doctoral Practicum Counselor
Supervisor: Munther Barakat, PsyD, License 2780
Secondary Supervisor: Sandra Blaies, LCSW, License 2587

Aurora Psychiatric Hospital, In-Patient Programming 2017 – 2018
Wauwatosa, WI
Behavioral Health Therapist
Supervisor: Brooke-Bennett-Pfister

Aurora Psychiatric Hospital, Child and Adolescent Day Treatment Program 2016 – 2017
Wauwatosa, WI
Doctoral Practicum Counselor
Supervisor: Munther Barakat, PsyD, License 2780

Student Conservation Association 2016
Milwaukee, WI
Crew Leader
Supervisor: August Ball

Rogers Memorial Hospital, Child and Adolescent Day Treatment Program 2015 – 2016
West Allis, WI
Masters Practicum Counselor
Supervisor: Katie Chin, MS, LPC, License 5126

Fica International Preschool 2010
Playa Hermosa de Jaco, Costa Rica
Exceptional Education Liaison
Supervisor: Elsa Feeny

Respite Care Provider 2008 – 2010
Madison, WI
Supervisor: Kari Bloedel & Lee Dresang, MD

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

The Afro-Brazilian Martial Art of *capoeira*: Cultural Healing and Identity 2019 - 2021
Dissertator
Narrative qualitative study regarding cultural traditions, rituals, and culturally-centered healing among *capoeira* practitioners.
Supervisors: Nayda Fouad, PhD, ABPP, License 1130

Community Building through the Afro-Brazilian Martial Art of *capoeira* 2017
Student Principal Investigator
Conducted focus group and analyzed results for themes and future directions of study including peer support, developing insight, communication skills, and the impact of music and movement.
Supervisor: Marty Sapp, EdD, License 1404

Gender Health and Identity Survey 2017

- Volunteer
Facilitate screening and completion of questionnaire regarding health experiences for transgender youth in the LGBT community.
Principal Investigator: Lance Weinhardt, PhD
- Survivors of Sexual Assault in the Military** 2017
Volunteer
Completed qualitative coding of transcribed interviews of women who experienced sexual trauma during their time serving in the armed forces.
Principal Investigator: Rae Ann Frey/HoFung, PhD, License 3695
- Perceptions of Opportunities** 2016
Research Team Member
Investigate contextual factors of women and underrepresented minority populations pertaining to career development.
Supervisor: Nadya Fouad, PhD, ABPP, License 1130
- Resiliency Project** 2015 – 2017
Bilingual Research Team Member
Collected data in Spanish for Collaborative Community Based Research Project assessing resiliency and financial stress to evaluate a total of 150 families.
Supervisors: Shannon Chavez-Korell, PhD, NCC and Markeda Newell, PhD
- Exceptional Education Department** 2016 – 2017
Research Assistant
Conduct literature review regarding exceptional education interventions and practices in West-African countries, as well as a review of sheltered workshops, culturally relevant assessment and edTPA, the history of special schools and case studies within exceptional education.
Supervisors: Elizabeth Drame, PhD, Margaret Bartlett, PhD, Amy Otis-Wilborn, PhD
- American Indian Youth in Detention Settings** 2015
Research Team Member
Focused on case studies of American Indian female adolescents in detention setting.
Supervisor: Leah Rouse, PhD, LP, License 3221
- Exploring the Educational Trajectories Among Undocumented Latinos** 2015
Research Team Member
Participatory Action Research exploration of the experiences of undocumented Latinos during a critical transition period who are actively considering entering college.
Principal Investigator: Michelle Parisot, PhD, License 3538

UNIVERSITY EXPERIENCE

- Graduate Assistant** 2016

- Exceptional Education 559: Communication in the Classroom for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
- Exceptional Education 600: Survey of Exceptional Education
- Exceptional Education 635: Individualized Planning and Instructional Methods
- Exceptional Education 679: Critical Issues in Planning for Students with Disabilities

Executive Assistant to the Vice Provost 2015 - 2016
Supervisor: Phyllis King, PhD, FAOTA License 199

Bilingual Program Assistant, Roberto Hernandez Center 2014 – 2015
Supervisor: Enrique E. Figueroa, PhD

PRESENTATIONS

Hlwan, B. T., **Mascari, L. H.**, Kuramoto, R., Hanesakda, A., & French, K. Stop Asian Hate Panel. *University of Wisconsin – Parkside, Office of Multicultural Student Affairs*. April 14, 2021. Racine, WI. <https://www.facebook.com/OMSAuwp/videos/286292703073847>

Mascari, L. H. & Glenn, S. Diversity mini-series: Self-care and grad school life. *University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee*. February 12, 2021. Milwaukee, WI.

Wallace, C., & **Mascari, L. H.** Coping with Anxiety. Marquette University High School – Sophomore Wellness Week. February 10, 2021. Milwaukee, WI.

Davison, E., & **Mascari, L. H.** Staying sane in the midst of pandemic. *Milwaukee Public Schools - Professional Development for School Social Workers and School Psychologists*, December 23, 2020. Milwaukee, WI.

Songco, D., **Mascari, L. H.**, Vang, G. F., & Lim, P. Model Minority: How racial stereotypes and cultural expectations contribute to mental health issues among Asian-Americans. *Milwaukee Minority Film Festival*, September 24, 2020. Milwaukee, WI. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fYStHZLEXRw>

Mascari, L. H. Building allies during pandemic. *University School of Milwaukee, SEEK meeting*, April 16, 2020. Milwaukee, WI.

Mascari, L. H. Trauma informed care: From knowledge to engagement. *Walker's Point Youth and Family Center*. January 6 & 28, 2020. Milwaukee, WI.

Mascari, L. H. Resident engagement and cultural competence. *Walker's Point Youth and Family Center*. May 13, 2019. Milwaukee, WI.

Mascari, L. H. Who is it?: A narrative exploration of culture and identity through interactive installation. *Midwest Interdisciplinary Graduate Conference: Artifice*, February 15, 2019. Milwaukee, WI.

Mascari, L. H. Resident engagement and cultural competence. *Walker's Point Youth and Family Center*. January 15, 2019. Milwaukee, WI.

Mascari, L. H. Redirection and resident engagement. *Walker's Point Youth and Family Center*. August 22, 2018. Milwaukee, WI.

Mascari, L. H. Multicultural connections through the Afro-Brazilian martial-art of capoeira. *126th American Psychological Association Convention*, August 10, 2018. San Francisco, CA.

- Mascari, L. H.** Community building through the Afro-Brazilian martial-art of *capoeira*. 14th *International Congress of Qualitative Inquiry*, May 19, 2018. Champaign, IL.
- Trager, B. W., Cass, T. J., & **Mascari, L. H.** Initial approaches to a collaborative hermeneutic process. *International Congress of Qualitative Inquiry*, May 19, 2018. Champaign, IL.
- Mascari, L. H.** Sustainable leadership through identity exploration: Intersections of privilege and marginalization. *International Institute of Restorative Practices: Leading & Sustaining Change*, May 1, 2018. Toronto, Canada.
- Mascari, L. H.** Kuei, Hsiao-ling. *Organization for Chinese Americans – Intergenerational Storytelling*, September 23, 2017. Milwaukee, WI.
- Mascari, L. H.** Adolescent females and martial arts: A review of psychology literature. *Association for Women in Psychology*, March 5, 2017. Milwaukee, WI. 6
- Mascari, L. H.**, & Ramos, E. Social media connectedness and use: A mental health perspective on social media use in higher education. *Student Personnel Young Professionals Learning Network*, February 25, 2017. Milwaukee, WI.
- Mascari, L. H.** Diversity, equity, & inclusion. *Student Conservation Association Orientation*, July 7, 2016. Milwaukee, WI.
- Mascari, L. H.** (2016, March 22.) *Untitled poem*. Retrieved from <http://www.neciamediacollective.com/neciamedia/untitled-poem-lauren-mascari?rq=untitled>
- Salas-Pizaña, S., Frey, R. A., Lucci, S., Benally, N., **Mascari, L.**, & Rouse, L. American Indian Youth in Corrections: A Study for the Prevention and Reduction of Trauma. *International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies – Child Trauma Track Paper Presentation*, November 15, 2015. New Orleans, LA.

SCHOLARSHIPS & AWARDS

National Register of Health Service Psychologists	2021
National Register Associate Credentialing Scholarship	
University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee, School of Education	2020 - 2021
Joseph and Loretta Eiserlo/Robert Keuhneisen Teachers for a New Era Scholarship	
Wisconsin Psychological Association	2019
Asher Pacht, PhD Graduate Award	
University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee, Greater Milwaukee Foundation	2019 - 2020
Donald Timm Fund Scholarship, Greater Milwaukee Foundation	
University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee, Graduate School	2017 - 2019
Advanced Opportunity Program Fellowship	
Organization for Chinese Americans, Wisconsin Chapter	2017
RP & JL Carr Social Justice Award	
University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee, School of Education	2016 - 2018

Joseph and Loretta Eiserlo/Robert Keuhneisen Teachers for a New Era Scholarship

University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee, School of Education 2017 - 2018
School of Education Scholarship

University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee, Children’s Learning Center 2016
Child Care Expense Award

Southwest YMCA, Greenfield 2005
Mind, Body, Spirit Award

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

- American Psychological Association, Graduate Student 2017 – present
- Midwest Psychological Association, Graduate Student 2018 – present
- Organization of Chinese Americans, Wisconsin Chapter 2016 – present
- Wisconsin Psychological Association, Graduate Student 2019 – present

BOARD & LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE

- University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee, Children’s Learning Center 2016 – 2018
- PALM Committee, Roberto Hernandez Center, Co-chair 2014 – 2015
- Grupo *capoeira* Nagô, Inc., Secretary 2014 – 2015
- Latino Non-Profit Leadership Program, Class IX 2013

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

PRIDE Month, Rogers Behavioral Health 2021
Volunteered to contribute to program celebrating LGBTQIA+ PRIDE.

Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month, Rogers Behavioral Health 2021
Volunteered to contribute to program celebrating AAPI accomplishments.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mv9lFa5Zob8>

Resume Reviewer, University School of Milwaukee 2021
Provided individual feedback to high school student regarding current resume and interview skills.

Parents of Students of Color, University School of Milwaukee 2021
Attended and contributed to monthly meetings regarding how to diversify and increase multicultural competence throughout the University School of Milwaukee community.

Mask Up Milwaukee, United Way Milwaukee 2020
Volunteered to make 750 disposable masks for essential care workers due to COVID-19 pandemic.

- Taiwan Booth Host, University School of Milwaukee** 2020
Developed interactive booth to provide PK-high school students with education about Taiwan regarding the physical place, history, food, and culture.
- Girls on the Run, Southwest, WI** 2020
Raised \$960 during Lakefront Marathon registration and event preparation to directly benefit program operations wherein girls ages 8-14 are empowered to recognize their strengths and unique qualities through the sport of running.
- China Lights, Organization of Chinese Americans Wisconsin** 2017 – present
Facilitated traditional craft projects with community members attending China Lights Exhibit on an annual basis and share knowledge about traditional folk tales about the Harvest Moon.
- Staff Appreciation Event, Walker’s Point Youth and Family Center** 2019
Organized logistics of staff appreciation event to increase morale within the Teen Crisis and Runway Program and bridge connections with the Impact Transitional Housing Program staff.
- For the Culture Fashion Show, Ohemaa Evolve** 2019
Invited by the designer to runway model apparel featuring Ghanaian clothing to celebrate heritage, strength, and creativity.
- National McNair Scholar Day, University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee** 2019
Panelist for the Advanced Opportunity Program Award for group of 200 McNair Scholars from across the United States.
- Legacy of Hope Gala, Walker’s Point Youth and Family Center** 2019
Invited by Executive Director to facilitate celebration of 43 years of providing services to homeless and runaway youth and families.
- Team PAWS, Lakefront Marathon** 2017
Ran 26.2 mile race as a member of the University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee's team.
- OCA – WI, Dragon Boat Race** 2015
Competed in annual Dragon Boat Race with teams comprised of members from OCA - WI
- LeadHER, University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee** 2015
Volunteered to be a part of sexual assault public service announcement video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RCDNplZUKnQ>
- Mental Health Action Team, Milwaukee Latino Health Coalition** 2012 – 2014
Collaborate with community stakeholders to reduce stigma and increase outreach education through speaker’s bureau.

Madison Ballet

2013

Tailored costumes under direction of Costume Director to best fit company members and repaired costume issues that occurred during performances resulting from movement.

Survivors Helping Survivors, Mental Health America – Wisconsin

2012 – 2013

Co-facilitated monthly support groups for family members and friends who have lost a loved one to suicide in the community setting by maintaining safe space, identifying themes, and bridging group members

EXPERIENCES ABROAD

- Bahamas, Canada, Cayman Islands, Costa Rica, Cuba, Egypt, Mexico, Nicaragua, South Africa, Trinidad and Tobago, United Kingdom

LANGUAGE ABILITY

- Spanish: Verbal