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Entering female student housing: oppression and dehumanization in the context of poor students

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ABSTRACT

The student residences, spaces destined for the housing of students benefiting from student assistance in universities, are among the public policy actions for the permanence of poor students in higher education. However, identifying the profile and actively listening to the voices of the students who live in these student residences still seems to be an extensive gap in research in the Human Sciences. In this sense, the present article is the result of an investigation that aimed to build an understanding about the ways of life of students in a dormitory of a university in the countryside of Minas Gerais. Through participant research, we immersed ourselves in the daily life of a women's dormitory and focused on the experience of four student-owners who told us about their daily lives, in order to have a critical look at the reality of individuals coming from the lower social classes in their university trajectories. Based on Freire's theoretical framework, we focus on the themes unveiled in the process of participant observation and interviews conducted with the female residents: racism, machismo, and hunger. In the midst of the search for resistance in the university space, the students denounce the dehumanization to which they are subjected in their daily lives and expose the radical ethical-political demand of our universities to guarantee protection to vulnerable students who seek, in higher education, opportunities to change their oppressive realities.

KEYWORDS

Student housing. Student assistance. Public University. Paulo Freire.

Adentrando uma moradia estudantil feminina: opressão e desumanização no contexto de estudantes pobres

RESUMO

As moradias estudantis, espaços destinados para a habitação de estudantes beneficiados por assistência estudantil nas universidades, constam dentre as ações de políticas públicas de permanência do estudante pobre no ensino superior. No entanto, a identificação do perfil e a escuta ativa das vozes dos estudantes-habitantes destas moradias estudantis parece ser ainda uma extensa lacuna nas pesquisas em Ciências Humanas. Neste sentido, o presente artigo se constitui como fruto de uma investigação que objetivou construir uma compreensão acerca dos modos de vida de estudantes em uma moradia estudantil de uma universidade do interior de Minas Gerais. Por meio de uma pesquisa participante, imergimos no cotidiano de uma moradia feminina e debruçamos na vivência de quatro estudantes-moradoras que nos relataram seu cotidiano, tendo em vista um olhar crítico para a realidade de sujeitos advindos de camadas populares em suas trajetórias universitárias. Com fundamento no referencial teórico freireano, enfocamos as temáticas desveladas no processo de observação participante e de entrevistas realizadas com as moradoras: o racismo, o machismo e a fome. Em meio à busca pela resistência no espaço universitário, as estudantes denunciam a desumanização a que são submetidas em seu cotidiano e expõem a exigência ético-política radical de nossas universidades na garantia de proteção a discentes vulneráveis que buscam, no ensino superior, oportunidades de mudança em suas realidades opressivas.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE

Moradia estudantil. Assistência estudantil. Universidade Pública. Paulo Freire.

La entrada en la vivienda de las estudiantes: opresión y deshumanización en el contexto de las estudiantes pobres

Las residencias estudiantiles, espacios destinados a alojar a los estudiantes que reciben ayudas en las universidades, forman parte de las acciones de política pública para la permanencia de los estudiantes pobres en la enseñanza superior. Sin embargo, la identificación del perfil y la escucha activa de las voces de los estudiantes-habitantes de estas residencias estudiantiles parece ser todavía una amplia laguna en la investigación en Ciencias Humanas. En este sentido, el presente artículo se constituye como resultado de una investigación que tuvo como objetivo construir una comprensión sobre las formas de vida de los estudiantes en una vivienda estudiantil de una universidad en el campo de Minas Gerais. A través de una investigación participante, nos sumergimos en la vida cotidiana de una vivienda femenina y nos centramos en la experiencia de cuatro estudiantes-propietarias que nos contaron su día a día, para tener una mirada crítica sobre la realidad de los sujetos procedentes de los estratos populares en sus trayectorias universitarias. A partir del marco teórico freireano, nos centramos en los temas desvelados en el proceso de observación participante y en las entrevistas realizadas a los residentes: racismo, machismo y hambre. En medio de la búsqueda de la resistencia en el espacio universitario, los estudiantes denuncian la deshumanización a la que son sometidos en su vida cotidiana y exponen la radical exigencia ético-política de nuestras universidades a la hora de garantizar la protección de los estudiantes vulnerables que buscan, en la educación superior, oportunidades de cambio en sus realidades opresivas.

PALABRAS CLAVE

Alojamiento para estudiantes. Asistencia a los estudiantes. Universidad pública. Paulo Freire.

Introduction

I insist again on the need to permanently stimulate curiosity, the act of asking, instead of repressing it. Schools sometimes refuse questions, and sometimes they bureaucratize the act of asking. The issue is not simply to introduce into the curriculum a time for questions, from nine to ten, for example. It is not this! Our issue is not to bureaucratize questions, but to recognize existence as an act of asking!

Paulo Freire

According to the epigraph that opens this article, we begin our argument by raising the need, almost immanent to the human being, to express questions about his condition, his social environment and the inequalities to which men and women, children and young people are subjected every day in our country. According to Freire (1985), the act of asking is driven by curiosity, which should not be repressed, but stimulated, since it is by asking, questioning, and experiencing the world that we learn to be with it, that we develop as people in the world.

As Paulo Freire problematizes in relation to the school curriculum, it is not enough that questions be systematized or bureaucratized, but that there be a stimulus to the real act of asking, which makes the progressive teacher happy when he notices the interest and willingness of his students to be more, building with them the knowledge and not hindering their questioning and, moreover, their identity. Likewise, the research questions must be developed respecting the creative attitude, the epistemological curiosity, and not the pure scientism that only collects, bureaucratically, information, used in quasi-laboratorial analyses, in a hard way, understanding, subjecting the participant, endowing him/her with the same rights granted to phenomena seen through the microscope.

On the contrary, we insistently sought to get to know and feel in the skin the issues experienced by a group, considered a minority, made up of four Black women who live in student housing at a public university in the interior of Minas Gerais. Inspired by Paulo Freire, we asked them about their life trajectories, about the difficulties they faced in their schooling, about the mishaps that were reflected in their admission to the university, not always an absolute sign of success and guarantee of completing their studies. We questioned and experienced the routine of these women and their daily life in the university environment, having in mind the problematization of the effectiveness of the public policies offered to them.

We found, during our incursion in the field, students and, above all, extremely strong and hardworking black women, who struggle daily to deal with the different difficulties and oppressions found inside the university environment, among which we highlight racist and sexist attitudes and the financial and assistance difficulties that lead them to feel the cry of hunger, a hunger that does not free even one of the students, who was pregnant, during our brief stay in the dorm. We understand that oppression is established through different alleys.

Freire (2019, p. 43) teaches us that "oppression only exists when it is constituted in a prohibitive act of men's being more", and from this assertion we bet on the poor student of public higher education as a subject also dehumanized, forbidden in his right to be more, as a result of the deprivations and violence imposed on him, from the beginning of his social trajectory, to the school benches of his student life. To be hungry and not have a place to live is an inhuman violence. To be cold, thirsty, needy, and frustrated of all kinds, which often culminates in exclusion from the school system, is also violence.

Thus, we coin the tone of denunciation, in demonstrating how this oppression is established in the university environment; however, we are also happy to announce that the struggle expressed by the participants of this research can inspire other people in situations of oppression, being and being in a world in which dehumanization, especially of poor and black people, is a common tonic. We point with hope to the work of Student Aid, as well as to the need for participation and engagement of the Student Movement for better living and study conditions for young people assisted in the university, to conquer and maintain a place historically denied to them: the university benches.

Being a poor student in a public university: dialogues with Paulo Freire

Who, better than the oppressed, will be prepared to understand the terrible meaning of an oppressive society? Who, better than they, will feel the effects of oppression? Who, better than they, to come to understand the need for liberation? Liberation that they will not reach by chance, but by the praxis of their search; by the knowledge and recognition of the need to fight for it.

Paulo Freire

We can better approach the object of our reflection - the reality of poor students who inhabit a university student housing - by arming ourselves with the thoughts of educator Paulo Freire, who has evidenced in his works a class clipping, marked by relations of oppression and dehumanization in our society. Although the etymological meaning of the word oppression is established as situations of violence and/or tyranny, the category of oppression, built by Paulo Freire (2019), goes beyond the limits of the etymological understanding, because it concerns a situation or condition of being in the world that demarcates the denial of the humanity of the subjects.

In a context marked by domination, oppression, and injustice, human beings become dehumanized, and are therefore diverted from their vocation to humanize themselves. Oppressive relations obstruct the possibility of human beings to affirm themselves as persons and to live out all their vital potentialities in conditions of equality and human and social dignity. Being more is, then, a challenge for the liberation of the oppressed as a search for humanization; and the possibility of building concrete paths for the conquest of the right to be more lies in the recognition that this right has been denied to many. In this way, from the critical and problematizing dialogue, the oppressed can, by recognizing themselves as oppressed, find ways to fight for their emancipation - a fight that, as Freire (2019, p. 44)

guides us, is always guided by the belief that "change is difficult, but not impossible.

Something proper to oppression, according to Freire (2019, p. 174), is "to kill life, to curb it, with the reduction of men to pure things, alienating them, mystifying them, violating them." In this love of death possessed by those who oppress, people are victims of "thingification" - the tactic of seeing and treating human beings as if they were inanimate; a strategy of domination, the fruit of an oppressive reality, a reality created so that the dominators can continue to dominate without hindrance. Freire (2019) refers to the oppressors saying that, for them, the oppressed are just "things" and the existence of rights is a reality only of the oppressors, who have the right to live in peace, admitting to the oppressed only the right to survive.

Oppressors possess a kind of "possessive consciousness of the world and of men," according to Freire (2019, p. 63). Hence their inhuman tendency to turn everything around them into objects of their domination, including men and women. For oppressors, money and cost-cutting is the measure of everything and profit their main goal in life, even if it costs the existence, energy, or deep suffering of other human beings. In this way, we see a violence of the oppressors that dehumanizes the oppressed and does not allow them to have their own consciousness, as a person or as an oppressed class (FREIRE, 2019).

Paulo Freire (2015) denounced the social inequality that brings misery, poverty, drastic and dramatic experiences to human beings, preventing them from obtaining their most basic rights, such as

the right to life, which implies the right to be born, to eat, to sleep, to be healthy, to wear clothes, to mourn the dead, to study, to work, to be a child, to believe or not believe, to live out one's sexuality as one pleases, to criticize, to disagree with the official discourse, to read the word, to play no matter what age one is, to be ethically nonconformist of what occurs at the local, regional, national, and global levels (FREIRE, 2015, p. 203). 203).

This way of proceeding, of understanding the world and men/women in this way (which necessarily makes the oppressors react to the installation of a new power) is explained in the experience in which they constitute themselves as the dominating class. This dominating class uses violence to maintain the "social order", which subjects the oppressed to the hardships of having no voice, no space in the social environment, not even being considered a human being who deserves a full life, with such basic rights, such as housing and food, assured.

With Paulo Freire (2019), therefore, we understand that oppression is instituted from a prohibitive act of being more of men and women, and from this assertion we recognize the poor student of public higher education as a subject also dehumanized, prohibited in his right to be more, as a result of the deprivations and violence imposed on him, from the beginning of his social trajectory, until the school benches of his student life.

Sarti (1996) alerts that in the sociological view of the poor, especially from the 1960s on, a tendency to define them negatively prevailed. Even acknowledging changes in the interpretation of poverty as the absence of rights, when a relationship is established

between poverty and citizenship, the author states that the risk of seeing the poor "as the opposite of what they should be" ends up being the "inattention to the social and symbolic life of the poor (...), from which the horizon of their actions in the social world is defined and the possibility of transposing these actions to the political level itself" (SARTI, 1996, p. 41).

In Brazil, economic and racial inequalities blend, building a scenario in which one cannot talk about poverty without talking about color. The vestibular and selection processes of public institutions of higher education have become a bottleneck for Black and poor students coming from public schools. This observation was widely denounced by social movements (by the Black Movement) that sought to demolish the myth of racial democracy in our country.

The consequence of the scarcity of public policies for the Black population resulted in a social abyss between blacks and non-blacks, which extends to the present day. To problematize the re-significations of racial exclusion throughout the years means to understand a Brazil that reproduces and maintains mechanisms of inequalities perceptible in the life of the Afro-Brazilian population in several social areas, especially in relation to Education.

On the other hand, a critical education in which there is room for debate about public policies widens and opens possibilities to think about other forms of social participation, as well as to awaken in the student's reflections about being black and young in an unequal capitalist structure. The Central Única das Favelas (CUFA¹) presented a study, dated June 2020 with statistical data showing that Black people are the majority in public education (except in higher education) and non-blacks are the majority in private education in basic education. Through its quantitative research, CUFA concluded that black and poor Brazilians have fewer educational opportunities, even today.

Regarding the symbolic plane in the analysis of the educational context, the forms of differentiated treatment for Black children and young people are denounced. According to Halsenberg (apud SILVA, 2005, p. 21), "in certain schools, teachers presented a predominantly stereotypical view of the students, difficulty in dealing with race and class heterogeneity, and reinforcement of the belief that poor and black students are not educable".

It is through the comparison between the symbolic level and the racial inequality evidenced in the structural level, together with the analysis of the rates of educational exclusion and ways of serving the black population, that one can see that the Brazilian educational system perpetuates the culture of racism, through discriminatory and prejudiced practices that reaffirm the situation of oppression of this social group (CAVALLEIRO, 2003). The Black Movement emphatically positioned itself against racial discrimination in the 1970s and 1980s, claiming the incorporation of Black men and women in formal education so that they could compete on an equal basis for the prominent spaces in society. The struggle of the Black Movement was not only restricted to the inclusion of the black population in the

¹ The Central Única das Favelas (CUFA) is a Brazilian organization recognized nationally and internationally in the political, social, sports, and cultural spheres that has been in existence for 20 years. It was created from the union between young people from various favelas, mainly black, who were looking for spaces to express their attitudes, questions, or simply their will to live. It has the rapper MV Bill as one of its founders. CUFA promotes activities in the areas of education, leisure, sports, culture, and citizenship, such as graffiti, DJ, break, rap, audiovisual, street basketball, literature, and other social projects. The center uses these activities for the integration and social inclusion of the residents of the peripheries.

educational system, but to the right to an education that valued this ethno-racial segment, so that students could know and recognize themselves within Brazilian history and culture, considering that education has privileged a Eurocentric thinking, focused on a single racial segment, the white one, to the disadvantage of the black one.

As far as higher education is concerned, the studies by Portes (1993, 2001) show that, since the creation of higher education courses, the presence of poor and black students has occurred without the knowledge of the institutions, without any care or action to facilitate their permanence and the conclusion of their courses. At most, they received charity from better-off students, were favored in some way by the Church or engaged in paid work. These three strategies could appear allied to certain aspects, revealing to be interdependent, so that they could provide better results to those who needed them.

In this scenario, the challenges to reinvent the university as a non-elitist institution, at the service of social and human emancipation are many. But almost all of them converge towards the perspective of reconnecting the university with the dynamics of life in its complexity. To make the university distant from social demands, which are urgent, makes no sense. Politically, the university needs to be an institution in dialogue with the citizens and the public sphere that constitutes its target audience. In other words, it is necessary to maintain a permanent dialogical relationship between all social subjects involved in the university project without failing to understand the demands of socioeconomically vulnerable subjects.

Assis et al. (2012) consider that Student Assistance brings the possibility of making Higher Education in Brazil more equitable. These authors state that assistance to students cannot be restricted to fighting poverty, with programs and aid that aim only at providing subsistence conditions, ignoring other forms of social vulnerability other than the financial one. According to what Moraes and Lima (2011) propose about the scope of the term social vulnerability, it is necessary to build a policy that also covers all those subjects who find themselves in situations of risk, such as families or individuals with fragile or lost affective bonds; stigmatized identities in ethnic, cultural and sexual terms; exclusion by poverty; use of psychoactive substances, among others.

We note that the perspectives presented find repercussions in the assertions of Pequeno (2011), an author who seeks an understanding of the poor student (who is mostly black) as a subject of human rights, opposing the situations of oppression that aim to deny these subjects their humanity. As Pequeno (2011, p. 31) explains

The idea of subject not only reveals our capacity to think, act, and relate to the physical and social world, but also defines our condition as bearers of rights. But what does it mean to have a right and to what kind of right do we refer when we affirm our condition as a subject of rights? The idea of right has several meanings. Its meaning can be related to the notion of human nature, the foundation of some rights, such as the right to life, to liberty, to protection, but it can also be linked to the world of politics and the sphere of the State, in the form of legal principles intended to guarantee and defend our dignity. Here man is obliged to follow laws and to recognize in the other the same qualities that define his humanity (Kant, 1980). In addition to being known for the need to live in society, the subject is endowed with the ability to reflect and act autonomously, the power to subdue instincts, and to create norms of conduct founded on reason.

The emergence of the subject of rights is one of the most important current achievements. With this notion, some of the fundamental principles of social life are also developed, such as the definition of law as a moral quality and the characterization of the individual as a person with dignity. The term person leads us to the idea of a moral subject endowed with autonomy, freedom, and responsibility. The human person is also the central subject of human rights. The subject, when presented in the form of a human person, will now have a privileged instrument for the defense, promotion, and realization of his dignity: human rights.

In Freire (2019) we understand that the education that opposes the practice of domination is the one based on a pedagogy in which the oppressed can discover themselves as the subject of rights, the subject of their own history, when they discover themselves also oppressed. This education, which would not be based only in the negation of the conditions of oppression, but in the collective search for transformation, should recognize that, as human beings, we make history and, in this making of history, we are making ourselves, since our condition of unfinished beings and our vocation, projected towards being more, launch us to a permanent task and commitment with the conquest of a humanized existence, which breaks with the diverse forms of oppression.

According to FONAPRACE (2012), in face of the complexity of human needs, the Student Assistance policy in the university context should not only contemplate the basic needs of food, housing and transportation. But, thinking about an expanded education for students, it should enable the development of actions of universal character through programs and projects of attention to physical and mental health; incentive to citizenship formation and culture; sports and leisure; accessibility; digital inclusion; foreign language teaching and pedagogical support, collaborating for a full academic education, awakening the critical and citizen conscience, beyond the technical and professional training.

The recognition of students' demands, in all its amplitude and complexity, is a great challenge for universities, especially when the technical staff responsible for this task and the budgetary limits of the Student Assistance policies are considered. These issues may function as limiting factors for the Student Assistance programs, which end up being reduced to the granting of scholarships/financial aid, whose amounts are generally unsatisfactory, and the quantity of benefits granted is not able to reach all the demand (OLIVEIRA; VARGAS, 2012).

The issue of access and permanence of individuals from the lower social classes in educational institutions is no longer, legally, a matter of individual "good will" based on the principles of good deeds and charity. We observe, for example, Article 206 of the 1988 Federal Constitution, which deals with education as a common right to all, based on "equal conditions for access to and permanence in school" (BRASIL, Art. 206, paragraph I). The political execution of the legal provisions brings into play the need for the expansion and visibility of Student Assistance as a public policy capable of enabling the improvement of conditions for poor students, so that they can be truly included in universities.

The conception of history as possibility and the hope in building a political struggle authentically committed to humanization are hallmarks of the Freirean legacy. Such characteristics identify a new meaning for reinventing education in all modalities and levels of schooling, serving, therefore, as potentialities for thinking about the issue of permanence of poor students in the university. It is the broad sense of education and pedagogy as

challenges to develop the "being more" of all people. Freire always made clear in his works the importance of an education politically committed to the organization of the popular classes in progressive movements that produce the most radical changes in human history.

This is the social-historical horizon that Freire proposes as the inspiration for human formation experiences in a sense that transcends purely technical-scientific education, or an education restricted to certain social groups. Reflecting on Freire's work, we find the proposition that the stimulus for our struggle for the humanization of oppressed students should be hope in the potential of human beings to change themselves and the world, a hope without which the conquest of freedom is not possible, which can only be affirmed through an ethical and socially involved political-pedagogical action.

Participant research and the challenge of living in student housing

The radical, committed to the liberation of men, does not fear to face, does not fear to listen, does not fear the unveiling of the world. He is not afraid of meeting the people, he is not afraid of dialog with them, which results in the growing knowledge of both.

Paulo Freire

The methodological path followed in the research that gave rise to this text was constituted by means of participant research. We sought to build an investigative look that is not afraid of listening and the movement of encounter, which allowed us to "feel in the skin" the daily life of four student-dwellers and listen closely to subjects that are usually silenced and invisible.

According to Brandão and Streck (2006), participant research should be understood as a multiple and differentiated repertoire of experiences of collective creation of knowledge proposed to overcome the opposition subject/object within processes that generate knowledge and in the succession of actions that aspire to generate transformations from this knowledge. Participatory research comprises experiences that intend to replace the polarizations researcher/researched, knower/knowning, scientist/scientific, by the creation of networks, webs, and plots formed by different categories among equals/different people, solidary knowers of what is sought to be known.

A multiple web of and between people that, instead of establishing hierarchies according to established patterns of preconceived ideas about knowledge and its value, involves them in the same broad exercise of building knowledge from the idea so simple and so forgotten that any human being is, in and of itself, an original and irreplaceable source of knowledge (BRANDÃO and STRECK, 2006, p. 12-13).

Brandão is aligned with Paulo Freire's thought, which has as one of its main assumptions the idea that changes are built through the knowledge of science in interaction with other spheres of knowledge. It is, therefore, about learning through experience and coexistence with others, generating diverse knowledge capable of meeting the various demands of individuals and groups. According to Brandão (1999, p. 20), the "point of origin of participant research must be situated in a perspective of social reality, taken as a totality in its structure and dynamics. In participant research, the researcher starts from the concrete

reality of the daily life of the participants themselves, in different dimensions and interactions.

Given the intersubjectivity present in each moment, observation in situation allows and facilitates the apprehension of reality once essential aspects are gathered in the field. Correia (2009) points out that participant observation is configured as fieldwork, which continues in each moment/"time" of presence and until the researcher leaves it, after a more or less long stay. In this type of research, there is a kind of respect for the other that is concretized in the interest for their ways of living, feeling, and thinking, without demanding that the subjects be what they are not.

In the field situation, Oliveira (2000) shows us that researcher and research subject make an intellectual, cognitive, and affective effort of mutual understanding, negotiating the relevance of certain themes, deepening the exposure of ways of feeling and thinking, retaking lacunae or intriguing aspects of the reports and observations, and re-settling, whenever necessary, a kind of shared work pact. When the researcher is "outside" the research field, he takes up again not only the field records, but the scene in which a relationship of trust was established and in which he was entrusted with ways of feeling, thinking, and living. In this scene, the ethical and political commitments assumed with the interlocutors are actualized, in such a way that the planning of the next stages of the research and the writing work take place under the impact of these commitments.

To conduct the participant research, we used well-known instruments used in qualitative research with a participant approach: the interview, participant observation, and the field journal. Several interviews took place by means of spontaneous conversations with the student-owners, conversations that were intentional, but free, occurring naturally without any structured questions. The field diary was the instrument used to record ideas, reflections, and patterns. The diary and field notes are the written account of all that was seen, heard, experienced, and thought during the field research and were indispensable for the analyses and problematizations that were conducted from the participant observation.

Freire (2019 p. 81) states that "knowledge only exists in invention, in reinvention, in the restless, impatient, permanent search that men make in the world, with the world, and with others. From the dialogue, the respectful insertion to the research field and the intention of building knowledge not "for" or "about", but "with" the research subjects, this participant investigation took place over a period of seven days in the Student House. The only way of living in the Residence was as a visitor in a female apartment, because the female apartments can only receive women for the night, and the male apartments can only receive men.

During the immersion in the research field several conversations took place, some long and lasting, others short, between brushing teeth, combing hair, washing dishes, among other common activities performed collectively. In order not to lose the richness of these dialogues, the conversations were recorded with the express authorization of the student-owners. It is also important to mention that all the transcriptions of recorded conversations

and interviews were made safeguarding the way the subjects pronounce themselves, the language and orality of each one, including slangs and grammatical inconsistencies.

From the first moment in the research field, a dimension of the difficulties that are constantly faced by the students in the silence of their daily lives became evident, and that, many times, go unnoticed to the eyes of many or, even, are noticed, but are silenced so that the troubles experienced by the poor students are not recognized and seen as worthy of concerns and solutions.

Addressing more specifically the research trajectory, we installed ourselves in the Housing, with the intermediation of the university's Student Assistance, for seven days, seeking an immersion in the routine of the participants and performing with them all the activities common to their daily lives. The apartment was chosen according to the multiplicity of majors studied by the residents: theater, architecture, biological sciences, and geography, with the intention of understanding the implications of living in Student Housing in the academic life of students from different courses of the institution.

Addressing each of the residents more specifically, it is important to clarify that all of them are black, from poor families, of which, in all cases, they appear to be the first in the family to attend higher education, with parents with low education levels, little incentive to attend an undergraduate course and several reports about situations of financial difficulties before, during and after moving to the city where the university is located and also during the courses. Staying in an unknown city, with the objective of attending Higher Education, even if in a public university, is a concern that shares space with the university activities, influencing the participants' learning and performance. In these elements, the participants resemble each other. The participants chose the pseudonyms themselves. Two of them chose the name inspired by important black women, and two chose it because of affinity with the name and beauty (according to the participants): Lélia Gonzalez, Viola Davis, Ane and Ruth.

In our plot, Viola Davis is from São Paulo and is 32 years old. In several moments she related difficulties of her life as a student, poor and black. When telling about her family history, Viola seems to recognize situations of oppression present in her daily family life, which permeate her stay at the university, and she always faces these situations with the spirit of confrontation, as for example the tense relationship with her father, with aggressions and humiliations, the family judgments about her choice of course: Theater, devalued in a labor-professional context, to the situations in which Viola needed to work as a juggler on city signs, to raise resources to support herself, since the financial aid distributed by the institution, in many cases, was not enough.

When telling about her family history, Viola characterized her mother as "very submissive", but, on the other hand, she seems to find in her an inspiration for confrontation (since her mother takes a critical stance towards her father's discourse). In lines like "nobody will ever hit me again", or "if he wants to stop sending me money, let him. I don't have to, I work", Viola seems to recognize the need to fight and resist the oppressions that come from

her father, according to the fragment below:

Viola: He [the father] said: "you are only there [at the university] because I support you" [...]. I said "honey, do you live on 200 reais? He said: "no". I said "and why do you think I live? If you want, I'll give you back the 1,200 reais that you gave me. You only gave me six months and you are saying that you are supporting me, help me out. Then he cursed me, called me a tramp. [My mother said: "Oh, [the relationship is like this] because you hit him [...] I didn't even do a martial art, I didn't do anything... like this, I only prevented him from hitting me. I didn't hit him, because I didn't even have the strength to hit him, you know? I didn't have any technique [...]. I decided: I started to learn too; you know? Nobody will ever hit me again. Then my mother wanted me to apologize to my father, because he would stop sending me money. Then I said: "Hey, if he wants to stop sending me money, let him. I don't need to, I work. And then, after that when I came back, I started to work at the sign. And then I was able to pay my bills with the money from the signal.

Researcher: Did he stop sending money or did he continue sending money?

Viola: He sends, yes. But he sends because my mother tells him to. [It's not that he wants to, no. It's because my mother tells him to. It's because my mother tells him to. And now that my mother has retired, he says that my mother must be the boss. He says: "you send money to your daughter". Then, my mother says to him: "I didn't make a daughter by myself, you are a father as much as I am a mother, so you send her" (RECORDED TALK, VIOLA, 11/07/19).

In turn, Ane was the pseudonym chosen by one of the four residents of the apartment, with the justification of being a "beautiful name". We will see that the beauty of the name contrasts with the difficult moments that are narrated in Ane's story. Ane is from Bahia, married, and 27 years old. Like Viola, Ane also encountered financial difficulties to stay in the institution, in addition to little family support. Ane was pregnant at the time of our research and faced several difficulties such as hunger, malnutrition, complications in pregnancy, distance in relation to the father of her child, and the awareness of the need to separate from him after his birth until she finished her studies. Ane's story is marked by the little assistance she received from her parents, which represented burdens that tired her throughout her life. In the account below she points out that her intention was to cancel the course at the university, due to external factors, but which had a great impact on her schooling:

gone so, so, so, so wrong, that I got tired. And my tiredness made me want to give up. And I wasn't supposed to feel that I was supposed to stop and rest. And I couldn't rest. I had to keep fighting with the weapons I had, going through a lot of difficulties, keep going, keep going... and today, just like when I got pregnant, I said "bitch, I failed". First feeling, ask my father-in-law, the day I found out I was pregnant I cried, cried, and said, "I failed". Did you understand? I was "supposed" to study, help my parents, and today I might not be able to help my son. I told him: I don't know if I will be able to support my son. So, it was an excessively big impact (RECORDED TALK, ANE, 11/08/19).

Our third participant to be introduced is Ruth, who is 24 years old and has a name inspired by the character played by actress Glória Pires in the soap opera *Women of Sand*, as

the participant told us. Outside of fiction, the Ruth in our research has a life story of struggle, just like the other participants. Coming from another town in Minas Gerais, she was orphaned by her father at an early age. This participant even moved away from the university, since she didn't get a place in the student housing as soon as she arrived. She lived with friends and relatives and had conflicting relationships in the city's sororities, until she was selected for a place in the housing.

Ruth shows us the incessant saga of her arrival in the city where the university is located. We perceive a problem that accompanies the students of the Student Housing as a whole; to study, these students give up their hometown and, consequently, they are far from their families. Ruth says, "since I was here, I wasn't there", this signifies the dilemma of a student who at the same time saw the need to take care of and help her grandmother also suffered the consequences of making long trips to get to the university and back to her city every day. The family represents one of the first environments in which the subject begins his or her life in society. In partnership with other institutions, including the university, the family can guarantee its loved one better conditions for development in all areas of life. In this sense we realize what a privilege it is to have a family close to the student; it is an important emotional, and sometimes also financial, support.

Finally, Lélia Gonzales, another of our student-residents, is 29 years old and comes from a city that is approximately 300 km away from her university campus. Her story is also one of struggle and suffering from social inequalities. With nine siblings, Lélia demonstrates that her childhood was damaged, since it was her responsibility to take care of them, even though she was still a child. Besides the difficulties reported about where to sleep and how to get settled in the university, this participant also highlights the issue of hunger, making us question: does the poor student have the right to a healthy diet, in all their meals? How can the university act to guarantee this right?

This participant was very encouraged by her parents to continue her studies, despite having to help her mother take care of her siblings, a fact that took her childhood. This is an important incentive to study for low-income students, because they do not have the "cultural capital", but they work hard to enter university and have the opportunity for better living conditions from their studies. Just like the life stories told in the previous sub-items of the other participating students, Lélia also went through setbacks that she identified as stemming from the difficulty in gaining access to the Student Assistance grants:

Lélia: After I came here [to the university], I didn't have a scholarship for a long time, and I did initiation, but I didn't have a scholarship and so on. And then I already had bigger problems with the people back home. Getting documentation from everybody was a shit, I never succeeded, I always tried and always failed.

Researcher: How did you get money to maintain yourself?

Lélia: How did I get money? Me and I [a colleague] sold candy. We made truffle cones, we made alfajores. What else did we do? Ah, we made a lot of things.

Researcher: And was it enough to survive?

Lélia: Ah, for the basic, it was enough. To eat. We worked to eat. And that was it until I managed to get into the theater project. Then, when I got into the theater

project, by coincidence, I got a scholarship from the university. We worked for a long time, [...] we even sold candy on the street [...] There was a time when we started to make alfajores (an alfajores) here at home, [...] we started to make alfajores and sold it to the neighboring city, all that stuff. But it was a very "bad" time of life. And we would spend our nights making sweets.

Researcher: And didn't this harm your studies? Did it make you less inclined to study?

Lélia: Very much. Every time we... every semester that we took these trains, we would get beaten up in our subjects, but that's life (RECORDED TALK, LELIA, 07/11/2019).

We see that in Lélia's story, as well as in that of many Brazilian students, working to eat means, very often, sacrificing their studies and their learning. And the fear of not having anything to eat or somewhere to live doesn't seem to leave the trajectory of these students even after they graduate. The shadow of homelessness still seems to haunt them. For this reason, the presentation of our research participants already points to the need to engage in a struggle, a struggle, as Freire states, for the reinvention of the world, so that Black college girls and women will no longer feel fear, hunger, or a sense of homelessness, as well as the faces of oppression, discussed in the next section. The struggle is no longer about delaying what will come or ensuring its arrival; it is about reinventing the world. Education is indispensable in this reinvention. To assume ourselves as subjects and objects of History makes us beings of decision, of rupture. Ethical beings (FREIRE, 2004 p. 40).

In Chart 1 we present a summary of the basic characteristics of the participants, highlighting common elements in their statements such as place of birth, age, number of siblings and the course chosen. This table helps us think about issues such as the challenges faced by poor students who come from large families, the age at which these students enter higher education, a little later than the more wealthy classes, the need, in some cases, to move to another city and even another state so that higher education studies can take place, and the choice of courses, not necessarily related to prestigious careers valued by the elites in the country.

Chart 1: Characterization of the research participants

Pseudonym	State	Age	No. Brothers	Course
Viola Davis	São Paulo	32 years	4 brothers	Theater
Lélia Gonzáles	Minas Gerais	29 years	9 brothers	Biology
Ruth	Minas Gerais	24 years	2 sisters	Geography
Ane	Bahia	27 years	1 sister	Architecture

Source: survey data

The family's subsistence conditions are a concern for the poor student who, besides worrying about his needs, still has the anguish of thinking about how his family's situation is and how he can contribute to the family's basic needs. We notice several marks of social inequality: unemployment, informal jobs, and lack of labor rights, thus preventing the family from leaving the vulnerable condition in which they find themselves. Given the context of poverty of the families, and the importance that education assumes in this process, since schooling is configured as an index of human development, we reflect on social inequality,

the importance of our participants being the first in their families to attend a university and the impact that this training can have on the lives of the participants and their families as a whole.

More specifically about the daily life of these participants, in the Student Housing, during living in an unknown city for study purposes, we identified in the reports a recurrence of the themes: racism, machismo, and hunger, as forms of oppression and dehumanization of these students in the context of Higher Education. We address these elements in the following section, understanding them as "borderline situations" (FREIRE, 2019), which influence the ability to "be more" amidst the possibilities experienced.

In this work, the political functions of the text are not underestimated: on the one hand, it expresses the politicized nature of fieldwork and, on the other, it enters the political struggle, serving, by the nature of its representations, the oppressed. We corroborate the understanding that it is essential to pay attention to whom or what a work serves, admitting that there is no neutrality, but rather an explicit political and ethical attitude, which recognizes and assumes Freire's posture and thought that science is never neutral.

In this way, the research we develop is assumedly political, and being participatory it is more sensitive to hear the voices of personal or collective recipients. The intention, here, is to make visible voices that are commonly silenced, proposing to listen to people that, in general, in repeated research, end up reduced to numbers and to the silent anonymity of graphs and statistics.

Racism, Machismo and Hunger: Oppression/Dehumanization in the daily life of student-inhabitants of a Student House

The participant observations made allowed us to discuss a series of situations marked by oppression in different aspects reported by the students during the field research. In our research, although we made the analytical effort to categorize these oppressions in order to better discuss them, they are interconnected and connected in such a way that, when we try to discuss one oppressive form in isolation, we actually find ourselves discussing a chain of oppressions. However, we seek to establish relationships among three oppressive faces recurrent in the reports, which are: racism, machismo, and hunger.

By mobilizing ourselves to understand these oppressions, we bring to the center the Freirean perspective of oppression, already expressed before. We recall that Freire was a humanist educator, who directed his work and all his pedagogical work towards a more humanized world. Within this perspective, we understand that Freire's pedagogy is radically committed to the struggles for humanization and resistance against any form of dehumanization in relation to the concrete life of people.

According to Freire, human nature itself in its form of existing in history - because it implies a permanent self-creation in the world - characterizes our vocation for the struggle for

humanization. Faced with the historical realities of the dehumanization of millions of people around the world, the struggle for humanization is anthropologically based on the process of construction of that unfinished being, who seeks to recover his humanity or overcome extreme situations in order to realize his own "being more." Freire (2019, p. 40) makes explicit what he understands to be the historical and human vocation of humanization of the world, then:

Dehumanization, which occurs not only in those who have their humanity stolen, but also in those who steal, even if it is differently, is a distortion of the vocation to be more. It is a possible distortion of history, but not a historical vocation.

In the face of oppressive realities, which dehumanize men and women all over the world in diverse realities, what we learn from Freire to do, as true humanists, is to fight in a hopeful and self-critical way for the transformation of society and the culture of oppression. Without hope, the ascendancy of utopia, which strengthens our fight for a freer and more humanized world, is not possible. The struggle to overcome the extreme situations in which we find ourselves conditioned is the reason for our existence and the practical impulse from which we humanize ourselves, because we are capable of building new meanings and ways of living in the world. This is the path that Freire points out to us, as beings endowed with an ethical-political capacity to intervene in the world and build something new in history. In other words, we are beings of an unprecedented viability, because we are not yet complete, we have made in history and we can always reinvent ourselves, according to the search for more humanity, for the reduction and eradication of oppressions.

When discussing the dehumanization experienced by students living in Student Housing in their daily lives, we present, at times, scenes that do not exactly report oppressions suffered within the university environment or Student Housing, but in other environments and situations experienced by them. However, we understand that bringing these scenes helps us to perceive the reality of these oppressed subjects within a broader context, that is, a context that goes beyond the limits of the university and exposes an inequality that is structural in our society.

Racism is the first form of dehumanizing oppression reported by our participants and analyzed by us in this article. Viola demonstrates a critical thinking about the issue and makes a movement in search of theorizing her experience, making academic knowledge a way to confront racism. The fragment below is the result of one of the field notes, which highlights the importance of the contact with the participants for learning about the black movement, as well as its history of struggle and injustices. We also highlight the engagement of the participants in the construction of a black identity and the search for recognition of themselves in the predominantly racist and sexist Brazilian society:

Viola told me about the genocide of the black population, about structural racism, the whitening of Brazil, and the term servitude complex. She explained to me that she realized that we, poor and black people, have a servitude complex. We can't stand still for a moment and look for things to do. Idleness is forbidden, we are always serving someone, doing things for other people. He explained: "My

girlfriend is white, the first time I saw someone asking her to pick something up and she said no, I was impressed and realized that although it was very strange, there was nothing to it. I just never thought I had the right to say no. White people don't serve everyone all the time, but we have this obligation, and we don't even question it. (FIELD NOTE, 09/11/2019).

Viola's account brings us back to La Boétie (2017), who broke with the assumptions that considered that actions of limitation of freedom, of submission to oppressive systems or other human beings, should necessarily occur through threat, coercion or, at least, bargaining, with the offering of certain advantages in exchange for restrictions. The philosopher studied voluntary servitude, pointing out that many people submit to situations of exploitation and oppression by their own will or, at least, accepting it without offering any resistance. The scholar then dedicated himself to the study of the mystery he perceived in civil obedience to tyrannies, trying to understand how it is possible for someone to consent to their own slavery.

In the life of another student, Lélia, racism also oppresses, even manifesting itself in people close to her, family members who should welcome her and help her engage in the struggle for better conditions in the face of such a racist and oppressive society. Although her own family scenario does not favor such potentialities, the student demonstrates empowerment and critical consciousness in the face of this oppression:

My grandmother is extremely prejudiced, she hates black people. And my mother is black. She hates black people. She says that when a black person doesn't shit on the way in, he shits on the way out. All these phrases like that, you know? It's very prejudiced. They shaved my mother's head, even against her will. They ran after her, to give you an idea. So much so that, when I said: "ah, I'm going to leave my natural hair", my mother asked me if I didn't have more money to fix my hair. And when she asked me that, I wasn't as disheveled as I am now, I was dressed to go out. And she turned to me and said: "ah, but don't you have more money to fix it? I said: "Mom, if you don't accept me like this today, you will never accept me like this. I like to be like this, and I am like this. And so, from time to time I had some crises with the people. Now, thank God, they are fine there, and I am fine here (RECORDED TALK, LELIA, 11/09/2019).

The sentence "now, thank God, they are doing well there, and I am doing well here" helps us realize the importance of the university and, consequently, of the Student Housing in the student's life. Perhaps because she recognizes that, although the university is a place to face oppression and dehumanization, it is also the space where one can fight against it in a more articulated way, close to peers and groups with similar ideas, which helps her in this search for her own identity, so denied in several social contexts, including the family one. In the following fragment, Ane perceives racism hindering her to perform an activity that, at first, could be seen as simple: buying clothes in a store. Let's look at this activity under her point of view:

Researcher: What about the racial issue? Did you ever suffer prejudice?

Ane: Inside [the university town], yes. I have already entered inside a store [...] that I couldn't be attended, and I had to ask a friend of mine, who lived with me, to go there to buy a blouse for me. And she went in, blonde, and was addressed, and I wasn't. I've already felt it in the supermarket. I have felt it in the supermarket. But inside the living room, no, not even that. Because I am a Northeasterner, I felt it. And I saw [being here in this city], in general, that it's my color [...]. I felt that my

hair and my color had a difference when I arrived here. Because not even BH, because BH has black people. Here people are stupid, you know? Everyone is very [racist]...and not even white. I don't understand these people (RECORDED TALK, ANE, 08/11/2019).

In the situation expressed by the participant, her color would have been a reason for her to be denied a dignified service in a clothing store, being dispensed only to her friend, white, when, intending to help her, she enters the store to buy Ane the blouse she needed. This passage marks one of the ways in which racism is incorporated in our society: Ane would be someone who, according to a salesperson, could not afford the cost of the product, so she would not need assistance. In other occasions, the fact could even lead to a veiled surveillance, so that a supposed "robbery" would not occur in the store, as it happens every day, when black people are confused and accused in commercial establishments. According to Silvio Luis de Almeida (2018, p. 25), racism

is a systematic form of discrimination that has race as its foundation, and which manifests itself through conscious or unconscious practices that culminate in disadvantages or privileges, depending on the racial group to which they belong.

In search of a deeper understanding, we base ourselves on Almeida (2018), who argues, in his work: What is structural racism, that racism can be defined from three conceptions. The first would be the individualistic, by which racism is presented as a pathological disability, resulting from prejudice; institutional, by which privileges and disadvantages are conferred to certain groups because of race, normalizing these acts, through power and domination; and structural that, in view of the "normal" way in which racism is present in social, political, legal, and economic relations, makes individual and institutional accountability for racist acts do not extirpate the reproduction of racial inequality.

The violence of racism was also felt by Ane during her pregnancy, as we can see in the excerpt from the field diary transcribed below:

[On the way to the UK, Viola tells me about her play about the genocide of young black people (every 25 minutes one of them is killed!). We arrived and talked for more than two hours. She told me about her macho and homophobic father, her submissive mother, and her brothers and sisters who are just like their father. Ruth and Lélia were in class. I close this day thinking how privileged I am in this unequal society... Ane finally left the room and went to suck an orange. She said: "I'm going to start going out wearing only my university blouse because if I feel sick on the street someone will help me, if I walk around normally and they see a black girl feeling sick they will think I'm on drugs and I deserve to die right there. I am walking with my blood type written down too. I ask how long she is pregnant and Ane tells me that she is 8 or 9 weeks pregnant (Field NOTE, 11/07/2019).

When the participant talks about just going out wearing the university blouse, she seems to want to show society that, contrary to what they think, she is someone, she is a student and has an institutional bond. These measures appear as a way to protect herself and her baby from quick judgments and discriminatory situations. In the face of such injustice and dehumanization, in the face of such oppression and deprivation, how can one glimpse a future? How to put in the university the hope of a better tomorrow? Is it possible to affirm that these students will find in their studies liberation from the chains of oppression of which

they are victims? What can Student Services do in the face of these oppressions? Prompted by questions like these, participant Ane stated:

I don't know what the future is going to be like. We lose a little bit of hope. Then, these days I said: "no, black people, poor people, they were born to be screwed, because they don't have the conditions, because no matter how hard we fight, fight, fight, the train doesn't go in the right direction. It is as if I was tired. And the therapist said that my speech sounded like I was in a war. And for me the war has won because I don't have any more... it's as if I don't have any more strength. Because I try, I try, I try, and it seems like it's not worth it (RECORDED TALK, ANE, 09/11/2019).

Indeed, the above account portrays a scenario marked by a war in which racism and oppression have won. Ane is the only student in the house who is newlywed and was pregnant. She was going through a difficult pregnancy, reported feeling physical discomfort, also extreme insecurity, and many worries. The process by which an individual or social group is confined to an inferior position in society is called marginalization, according to Castel (2008). Marginalization is now considered to be a process involving different aspects, such as socioeconomic status and ethnic belonging. One of the consequences of this process is social exclusion, that is, when the individual or group is excluded from social and labor relations.

As explained by the participants in our research, racism occurs in different ways, expressed in different forms and situations. In the university, on the streets, and in the family itself, in many cases, racism is imbricated in the same society that created our participants, and is also part of them, perversely affecting their identities, either in the way they see themselves and compare themselves to colleagues and other women recognized as beautiful in society, because they are white, or in the movements of stubborn (re)existence, that go through the identity recognition promoted by the afro hair, or even by challenging the social conditioning, when entering and fighting to stay in a public university that, unfortunately, like other social spaces, still remains elitist and segregating, despite the many efforts for the democratization of higher education in our country.

The second oppression, object of our analysis, is possibly the most recurrent oppression faced by the participating students: machismo. Although this is a dehumanization present in the daily life of any Brazilian woman, we can ask ourselves: what is the specificity of machismo in the context of a university? What are the characteristics of the machismo suffered by the students at the investigated university? And how does this machismo manifest itself along the trajectory of these university students? Does this machismo intensify in face of the condition of the university students in relation to being a woman, black, and poor?

As a woman, during the field work in the Student Residence, we felt again the experience of those students, but this time, expressed in the machismo that frightens. Let's see the following excerpt from the recorded conversation:

Researcher: Ah, people, here, I think - I don't know, it must be common practice - there was a security guard... that we know when their eye is looking at you and when he is looking at your blouse. It seems that it is a scanner, like this, right? That sees you naked. It is very invasive; it invades a lot. And I felt this. But then I thought: "I guess not. We always think that it is something in our heads, right? But maybe he already has this practice of standing there, looking that way at the passers-by."

Lélia: Wow, I've seen it happen, like when I'm going up the stairs and the guard comes down. Then I go up the stairs and he stops and stares at my butt. I get terribly upset. The last time I was... it was on the hill. I was going up; he was coming down. And then, like, I climbed up sideways like this. And I stared at his face. And he wasn't intimidated. He kept looking. In the beginning, when we started here, there was one who was really abusive. Now, thank God, I don't know if he has retired, but they are...

Ruth: That old man who used to kiss your hand, right?

Lélia: Wow, that old man, [another housemate] was about to die. Because, like, he was super invasive. Just like I don't like someone to enter my house by opening the bedroom door, I hate someone to touch me without my permission. And he would come in and pick us up.

Ruth: I've already thought about complaining because there's one who, right? - This one who waits for us to come up - he even stops downstairs. One time I was coming down at night, to go to the theater, to see a play, and he was doing his rounds. And he came down whistling after me, you know? I hated him (RECORDED TALK, 10/11/2019).

It is important to think that this reported oppression comes from those who should be watching over/taking care of the students' safety. The machismo is revolting, as Ruth tells us: "I hated it. The "hate" reported makes us reflect about the condition of the victims of machismo and how much their lives are invaded by those who see women only as sexual objects, liable to be used, disrespected, and invaded in their privacy and in their bodies as a whole. A look can be as violent as sexist words and attitudes. In other moments, the students also denounced machismo, occurring inside the university campus:

Lélia: Wow, you don't know what happened when we got here. The Economy building was under construction, and the bricklayers there disrespected us to such an extent that you have no idea. One day it got to the extreme. One of them turned to me and said, "I would like to see her room". And that made me angry. Then we went there and complained. Then they told us to notify the company. Then he was, like, taken away from here, you know? But they didn't stop receiving the money.

Ruth: Surely, they must have sent him to another construction site, that kind of thing. They probably didn't even let him go.

Lélia: But it was very disrespectful. [...] There was even a boy from the housing project, he had long hair, he was coming down and they thought he was a girl. They started messing with him, and when they saw that it was a boy, they started to be really sexist, you know? But, well, the most ridiculous thing. They were ridiculous (RECORDED TALK, 10/11/2019).

We reflect, from the excerpt described above, on the (ir)responsibility of the University in this public-private partnership. By having an outsourced worker, the institution cannot be held directly responsible for the attitudes of these workers. If the fact occurred with a public servant, we would not have the guarantee that he would not be sexist, but we would

know that there could be more transparency and security in the way he would be penalized. He would be subject to a Disciplinary Administrative Process (PAD) to investigate the accusations. This PAD could even culminate in the dismissal of the employee. It is worrisome that a worker with macho attitudes goes to another site without any punitive/educational measures. He will probably harass other women in the new workspace.

As Lima (2017) points out, the university is an environment marked by social selection, a process in which those considered stronger and more intellectually and financially capable were the ones who should remain. Even after several movements for gender and race equality, in favor of equity, we are still permeated by a series of social rules that establish a kind of binarism between the feminine and the masculine. The supremacy of the masculine over the feminine makes situations like the ones pointed out here to be practices, in a certain way, naturalized, establishing in teachers, colleagues, and other people of the masculine sex. However, it is necessary that the role of the university be rethought if we really yearn for a democratic and inclusive higher education.

It is known that there is a link between structural machismo and gender violence and that this situation is strengthened in Brazilian daily life, marked by the culture of patriarchy, which comes from religion, jokes, and even a supposed biological nature of male superiority, being, therefore, the initial hypothesis to explain machismo in all spheres of society (LIMA, 2017). The issue gains more intensity, when movements for the fight for equal rights have commotion worldwide from the anti-racist struggle and symbolic cases such as those of Miguel and Floyd², situations that stimulated the need to fight against all forms of structural violence and the fight for equal rights for women.

However, as the philosopher Djamila Ribeiro has well noted in her work *Lugar de Fala* (Place to Speak), the issues related to racism and gender oppression are still seen as something boring, "mimimi", or other forms of delegitimization. And so, the necessary debate in search of awareness is naturally seen in an aggressive or inappropriate way, because it confronts power (RIBEIRO, 2017). It is certain that, because the University is a space that is part of a society in which oppressive relations are observable, the oppression of machismo would not be outside this environment, even if one has the expectation that this is a space free of dehumanization and oppression. In view of this, we highlight a report in which machismo is also exercised by a teacher of the institution itself:

Ruth: There's this professor in Geography... and it's not just with Geography, you know? It seems like the whole university. But with Geography, he uses: "I'm going to show the campus to the freshmen". And then he tried to make a move on a freshman. And it's heavy, it's a lot of history, a lot of stories. But the girls didn't report it, so it was very difficult. But now we said, "We can't take it anymore, we can't, we have to change."

²

his Miguel was a 5-year-old boy, killed in Brazil in May, killed in June 2020 in Recife (PE), was one of the innocent victims of the United States by Derek Chauvin, a white policeman who choked him to death in May 2020. Both are just two of the countless victims of racism, which kills innocent people every day.

Lélia: There is a leftist professor in my course too [...]. He dates a girl that was... like, he was married for a long time to his wife and so on. Then, like this, he did something bad with his wife. They broke up and he is dating a girl who was his student. Every time he was going to say something stupid in class, he would start his sentence like this: "I am not a chauvinist, but...". The rest I would abstract, pretend dementia, leave the room, because nothing good was going to come of it. There was one time that he talked about rape in the room, and he used this about the clothes the woman was wearing... look at this ridiculous thing. It is because there is a kind of shark, when it is born it is very small, it is much smaller than the female, so they put two together to be able to mate with a female. Then he talked about this and so on, and he said: "You know what this means for the human species, right? Then we were like, "What are you implying", you know? And then, gee, every time he used this expression "I'm not chauvinistic, no, but..." (RECORDED TALK, 10/11/2019).

We return again to Paulo Freire (2011), who tells us about the necessary teaching ethics:

The ethic I am talking about is the one that is known to be attacked in the discriminatory manifestation of race, gender, and class. It is for this ethic that is inseparable from educational practice, no matter if we work with children, young people, or adults, that we must fight. And the best way to fight for it is to live it in our practice, to witness it, alive, to the students in our relations with them. In the way we deal with the content we teach, in the way we quote authors whose work we disagree or whose work we agree with (FREIRE, 2011, p. 10).

Ethics is an essential condition for educators. When we come across a report of machismo, sexism, and lack of ethics from a teacher, we ask ourselves: are there, in the institution researched, spaces of education for a non-machist culture? If there are, does it happen at the student level or do the professors also participate? Are there channels to denounce machismo in the university in question? Lélia tells us that she developed a defense and had to change her way of being, becoming a serious person to defend herself from possible aggressors. The oppression of machismo hurts, violates, and kills women every day. Higher Education Institutions cannot ignore this sad reality. It is necessary to think of ways to diminish and overcome this condition, which dehumanizes women constantly, even on university campuses. They are victims of aggressors - professors, students, employees, and outsourced workers. There seems to be no safe, comfortable place for women, and this needs to be solved with concrete attitudes from managers and all those who understand the gravity of this oppression.

We confirm that machismo is structural and permeates different classes, sexualities, and socioeconomic realities. We reflect: are there diffusion campaigns against machismo in the university? Are there spaces for debate about machismo? How can educational work be done to start thinking about overcoming this oppression, within the walls of the university? How can we overcome the hypocrisy of those who know about women's rights, but don't recognize them as holders of these rights and especially as worthy of respect in any place they occupy in society? These reflections make us think that there is still a lot to advance in overcoming machismo in our society.

The third form of oppression highlighted by the participants in our research is perhaps the most painful and most dehumanizing of all: hunger. The nutrologist and professor Josué de Castro dedicated himself to studying hunger in Brazil. In his book *Geography of hunger - the Brazilian dilemma: bread or steel*, the author shows a close look at the subject, presenting and analyzing the peculiarities of hunger in one of the largest countries in Latin America. According to Castro's studies (1948), around 1930, about 50 million Latin Americans suffered from food shortages, which predisposed them to many diseases. The scholar points out that, differently from the social imaginary that hunger is present only in the African or Asian continents, or even in countries that have been hit by significant economic crises or wars, it is actually widespread throughout Brazil and is an issue of relevance and large scale in the current context. It is important to point out that hunger deprives citizens of one of their most basic rights: food, which is recognized in the Constitution of the Federative Republic of Brazil, along with other essential demands for the survival of men and women in society. In its 7th article, item IV, the document states:

Urban and rural workers have the following rights, in addition to others aimed at improving their social condition: Minimum wage, established by law, nationally unified, able to meet their basic living needs and those of their families with housing, food, education, health, leisure, clothing, hygiene, transportation and social security, with periodic adjustments that preserve its purchasing power, being forbidden to link it for any purpose (1988, p.18).

Another important document that deals with the relevance of this condition for the well-being of citizens is the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, evidenced in Article XXV, in which food is considered an essential element: "Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food (1948, s/ p). This is yet another document that is sensitive to individual human basic needs, which seeks to achieve dignity and fundamental rights.

In addition, Paulo Freire (1993; 2015) makes mention of the *Geography of Hunger* in some of his most important works: *Politics and Education*, as well as *Letters to Cristina*. Freire, a defender of human emancipation and the need to be more through the liberation of the oppressed in a world dominated by a system of exclusion of the poorest and needy people, relates his own experience of misery, when he experienced hunger, illustrating the effects of hunger on the body and, consequently, on the soul:

Real, concrete hunger, with no date set for its departure, even if it is not as rigorous and aggressive as other famines, I have known [...]. Hunger that, if not alleviated, as ours was, takes over our bodies, sometimes turning them into an angular sculpture. It refines the legs, the arms, the fingers [...]. How to learn, however, if the only possible geography was the geography of hunger? (FREIRE, 2015, p. 44).

The words above describe the cruelty of this evil, which can only be truly felt by those who live/live it, and it becomes even more brutal when it affects people information, both biologically and cognitively. This evil, which compromises the various dimensions of human

life, affects thousands of people around the world, and especially in Brazil.³ Despite its gravity, the subject is not exposed in depth and with the importance it deserves, and it seems not to persist in a country with so many natural riches, cultural attractions, and diverse beauties.

In defense of the needs and rights of the people, treating hunger as an atrocious and real problem, in view of the need to discuss the issue, Freire shows his indignation at the situation of a large part of the country's population, denouncing the alienation process imposed on so many people.

My radicalism demands from me absolute loyalty to men and women. An economy that is incapable of programming itself according to human needs, which lives indifferently with the hunger of millions who are denied everything, does not deserve my respect as an educator, nor, above all, my respect as a person. And don't tell me that 'things are like this because they can't be different'. They cannot be otherwise because, if they were, they would hurt the interests of the powerful: this cannot be, however, the determinant of the essence of economic practice. I cannot become a fatalist to satisfy the interests of the powerful. Nor can I invent a 'scientific' explanation to cover up a lie (FREIRE, 2004, pp. 22-23).

In Ane's experiences, hunger is an oppression that leaves marks and is still threatening in the present. In the excerpt below, Ane tells us about how hunger impacts her studies and her stay at the university, since she does not have the financial support of her family:

Researcher: Didn't your parents suffer when you left home?

Ane: No. My mother suffered, but she didn't speak. My father doesn't ask if I am ok. My father waits for me to call him to ask if he is ok. Do you understand? I, who am the daughter, have to ask him if he is ok. Now that I'm pregnant, that has changed, literally. He keeps asking me if I'm eating and so on, but he never asked before. It's so much that he never worried if we had food here. I have been hungry. Twice, to go to college. So, I reached a moment when I wanted to stop. But my professors wouldn't let me. I regret it. I think that in 2015 I should have stopped and gone back home (RECORDED TALK, ANE, 11/08/2019).

In Ane's reality, hunger also punishes her during the early morning hours, when the attempt to study is defeated by the "lack of basics":

Once a friend of mine said "Ah, Ane, you become a noodle, but I eat every three hours. I said: "I eat noodles when I am very hungry. Because he said: "for me to endure, I eat every three hours, even if I am not hungry, I eat something. There was one day that I ate every three hours. I said: "gee, it pays off a lot more. Because you can stay up all night trying to do it, because I said: "people, these people stay up all night and hold on. I stayed up all night because everyone else stayed up all night, but I didn't get as much as they did. Why was that? Because I didn't have the basics (RECORDED TALK, ANE, 11/08/2019).

³ According to an article published by the website Observatório do Terceiro Setor, among 68.9 million households in the country, 36.7% were victims of some type of food insecurity, this corresponds to about 84.9 million people, not counting people living on the streets. According to information from the Unified Registry for social programs, there are about 14 million Brazilian families living in extreme poverty and registered in this program. The per capita income of these families does not exceed R\$89 per month. Available at: [https://observatorio3setor.org.br/noticias/atingidos-pela-fome-no-brasil-populacao-inteira-de-israel/#:~:text=Dos%2068%2C9%20milh%C3%B5es%20de,Geografia%20e%20Estat%20C3%ADstica%20\(IBGE\)](https://observatorio3setor.org.br/noticias/atingidos-pela-fome-no-brasil-populacao-inteira-de-israel/#:~:text=Dos%2068%2C9%20milh%C3%B5es%20de,Geografia%20e%20Estat%20C3%ADstica%20(IBGE).). Accessed on: apr. 25, 2021.

Ane reports understanding that she "didn't have the basics" and how much the food issue hindered her from "making progress" in her studies. The fight against the exclusionary capitalist system is also hindered by hunger, which is effective as an instrument of accommodation. As Castro (1948) explains, this evil does not involve only the physical aspect of the subjects, but acts on factors that limit thinking and acting:

It is not only by acting on the body of the scourged, gnawing at their viscera and opening wounds and holes in their skin, that hunger annihilates the life of the sertanejo, but also by acting on their spirit, on their mental structure, on their social conduct. No calamity is capable of disintegrating so deeply and in such a harmful way the human personality as hunger when it reaches the limits of true starvation (CASTRO, 1948, p. 261).

Facing these questions, it is possible to affirm that hunger becomes an instrument of control and silencing of the oppressed. In this sense, it is worth questioning what is the role of higher education in this scenario, as a trainer of citizens and an institution committed (although often only in discourse) to social transformation? Far from ready-made and finished prescriptions, one of the arguments that can help in the reflection on this issue is the possibility that people consider that they can problematize their condition, in the direction that it can be reversed. This can be thought of from a process of awareness that food is a right to be experienced and demanded.

These arguments point to the Liberation Education, advocated by Paulo Freire. This education is committed to "uncovering the truth" (FREIRE, 1993, p. 45). In this sense, education should aim at promoting the discussion of what is hidden in the Brazilian society, and what prevents the liberation of the oppressed from the exclusionary, unequal, individualistic, and competitive system that prevails in our country. However, this task is challenging, according to Freire (1993, p. 48), when he highlights the obstacles to confront and overcome the situation in the country: "evidently, in a class society like ours, it is much more difficult to work in favor of unhiding, which is swimming against the current, than to work by hiding, which is swimming upstream. It is difficult, but possible.

In the oppressed and oppressor reality, food ceases to be nourishment and becomes a barrier. This is what Ane tells us again:

here [in the Student Residence] nobody touches anybody's food. And then there were weekends when I couldn't buy food, but I didn't have the courage to ask. I was hungry. Because of this, this barrier to talk about food (RECORDED TALK, ANE, 11/08/2019).

These reflections leave us with the following questions: How to overcome hunger? How to study, even if hunger hurts? How to go on when suffering is so unfair that it makes one despair and becomes a barrier, often almost insurmountable? Ane encourages this discussion by telling us what she thinks when she feels hungry: "you stop and think that this is the condition of many Brazilians, and of families" (RECORDED TALK, ANE, 11/08/2019). Indeed, despite not literally solving the problem of hunger, student assistance has appeared in official statistics as a hope for poor students to be kept in Higher Education.

Supported by Freire (1992), we can again find the path of hope, a hope that has nothing to do with waiting, but with hoping, a hope imbued with action, attitudes, and struggle for a more just society.

Without a minimum of hope, we cannot even begin the struggle, but without the struggle, hope, as an ontological necessity, collapses, unravels, and becomes hopelessness, which at times stretches into tragic despair. Hence the need for a certain education of hope. Hope is of such importance in our existence, individual and social, that we must not experience it in the wrong way and let it slide into hopelessness and despair. Hopelessness and despair, consequence and *raison d'être* of inaction or immobility. In limit-situations, beyond which we find the "viable unheard of", sometimes perceptible, sometimes not, we find reasons to be for both positions: the hopeful and the hopeless. One of the tasks of the progressive educator, through political analysis, serious and correct, is to unveil the possibilities, no matter the obstacles, for hope, without which we can do little because we hardly fight, and when we do fight, as hopeless or desperate, ours is a suicidal fight, it is a purely vengeful body-to-body. What there is, however, of punishment, of pity, of correction, of punishment in the struggle we make moved by hope, by the ethical-historical foundation of its rightness, is part of the pedagogical nature of the political process of which the struggle is an expression (FREIRE, 1992, pp. 15-16).

Our hope is watered by findings such as the data from a survey conducted by the Central Única das Favelas, which shows that blacks are the majority in public universities, this makes us hope for better days ahead.⁴ The V Research of the Socioeconomic Profile of Undergraduate Students of Federal Universities promoted by Andifes and based on information from 63 federal universities in the country, involving 420 thousand students, shows that, despite the mishaps evidenced by us, student assistance has been the factor responsible for the inclusion of more students from classes C, D, and E. This is possible because the investments in assistance have grown, even impacting measures such as digital inclusion, improved accessibility, more items present in the housing, transportation, aid to students with children, and increased participation of students in the decision-making process regarding student assistance policies. Besides this, this report points out that the greater student participation in the educational policies has influenced the dropout rates and the increase in the course completion rates, raising the participation and political engagement of these students.

The Census of Higher Education (INEP, 2017) shows that higher completion rates and lower dropout rates are associated with student participation in academic activities and programs of teaching, research, and extension, as well as their coverage by student assistance programs. But the V Survey identifies another factor associated with higher completion rates and lower dropout rates: political participation (FONAPRACE, 2019, p. 74).

⁴ Available at: <https://oglobo.globo.com/sociedade/educacao/negros-sao-maioria-pela-primeira-vez-nas-universidades-publicas-aponta-ibge-24077731>. Acesso em: 28 abr. 2021.

Allied in Freire, we remember that existing, resisting, being and being in the world is a great political act. Therefore, we move in hope as we struggle, without ever crossing our arms and surrendering to inertia, but fighting bravely and "hoping" (Freire, 2019) that this work can be inserted in the struggle for Student Assistance policies, as an important ally for students from the student movement who, day by day battle for better opportunities and conditions of access and permanence in Brazilian public universities. We also announce that even though the students participating in this research are being dehumanized, they continue to fight, to hope, to seek in their studies the possibility of transforming their realities and guaranteeing a better future for themselves and their families.

Temporary Considerations

In this article we aim to demonstrate that being a poor student means facing immense difficulties and hardships that daily test the resilience of the student in a perverse way. Lélia, Ane, Ruth, and Viola have in common the fact that they are poor, black, women, and extremely hard working, each of them has a history of great obstacles overcome and the expectation of many more to come.

Thus, there is a need for increased awareness of the close relationship between race, ethnicity, class, and bullied, stolen lives. Walter Benjamin (2012 p. 93) states, "if for the oppressed the State of Exception has always been the rule in times when the State asserts itself as a political Exception, the exceptions on the oppressed increase. They are exceptions from the right to live. Black students, poor, from the outskirts, from the countryside, although they get to the university alive and maybe even receive a Student Assistance grant to survive, they always feel afraid, condemned to just survive and not to actually live and in constant threat about the loss of these possible subsidies.

In view of the analyses conducted, we have evidence that point to ways of life guided by oppression and dehumanization, but also by work and by the hope for a better future, to be conquered through the act of studying. We realize that the experiences at the public university allow these students a formation beyond the formal university spaces and classrooms. In this sense, the Student Housing itself emerges as an educational space. Although it educates about suffering and abandonment, the experience in the Student Housing can also educate for collective construction, organized struggle, and confrontation against social inequalities.

It is about perceiving oneself as a poor and vulnerable student, but also perceiving oneself as the holder of the right to have access to Student Assistance and to the public university, although one is aware that such assistance is still in need of improvement. It is, therefore, essential to discuss the necessary creation and expansion of public policies, as well as the improvement of the policies in effect, with a more effective follow-up on the need for the expansion of assistance resources or even on the effectiveness of the policies already in place. It is necessary to consider that being in an unknown city to take a higher education course brings with its situations that include financial difficulties, but not only these, and it is necessary that more sectors of the institutions mobilize themselves so that there is a more

integral assistance.

We realize that the greater the needs faced, the greater is the radical ethical demand for universities and their managers, teachers, and administrative technicians. To assume in policies, in management and in the role of educators the protection of these vulnerable students, who seek in higher education opportunities to change their oppressive realities, is an ethical and political demand that cannot be ignored. Lélías, Anes, Ruths, and Violas must have their journeys for humanization protected, respected, and welcomed. As Freire (2019) points out: the oppressed do not get out of their condition alone. Therefore, it is urgent for our public universities, through student assistance policies, to provide protection to these human lives already so oppressed in their life trajectories.

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