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# Changing Paradigms: Community Policing in Calabar

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# **Changing Paradigms: Community Policing in Calabar**

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SIT Culture, Development, and Social Justice Fall 2012  
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## Abstract

On April 27, 2011<sup>1</sup> the first community base of Salvador was installed in the neighborhood of Calabar representing a new model of policing focusing more on prevention rather than repression. Before the arrival of the base, Calabar was a community where many feared to enter. Constant shootings between rival gangs and sporadic police invasions made it a dangerous places to live in. Since the implantation of the base a new era for the community has begun and people can now walk up and down the streets of their neighborhood freely without fear of being struck by stray bullets.

Additionally, the base has brought to the community social programs, but most residents in the community agree that these programs are not enough and that trafficking continuous to have a strong footing in the neighborhood. Due to the heavy trafficking, police officers conduct stops and searches of many residents in the community and this has proven to be a very contentious issue.

The three weeks I spent researching in Calabar showed me the complexities of the relationship between the police and residents and most importantly, that all relationships and individuals are different. Some residents welcome the police with open arms while others have deep mistrust because of the experience they've had with police brutality. Some police officers see their work as a social response to the public's need while others who are more fit for gunfights see community policing as merely decorative work. Different institutional and historical factors come into play in the relationship between the police and residents, but one thing is certain, had there been no base there would be no relationship to analyze except for one of violence and mistrust. Thus the base represents a new beginning and this paper will show the ways in which old paradigms are broken, some are maintained and new ones are created.

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<sup>1</sup><http://www.blogdapacificacao.com.br>

## Methodology

November 1<sup>st</sup> 2012, was my first contact with the community of Calabar as part of a group of exchange students seeking to understand the struggles of the community and the effects of the new community base. After that day I didn't return to the neighborhood until November 11<sup>th</sup> during which I officially began my three weeks of research. During those three weeks I lived a 15 minute walk away in a neighborhood called Federacao with a professor of the community school in Calabar.

My research consisted of trips to the neighborhood with a pen and notebook in hand and making observations. I also conducted informal interviews with people I met in the community and the police officers I met at the base. None of my interviews were audio-recorded due to the sensitive nature of my research topic so I relied on my new found Portuguese skills and my ability to write quickly to take down all the information people gave me. I also participated in two discussion groups. One of which included professors, academics, residents and a police officer. The other discussion group was with all the professors of the community school of Calabar. I was also lent a book called *Cala a Boca Calabar* which told the story of a community organizer of Calabar and I have used to help establish the context and history of resistance of the community.

At all times my research was centered around the relationship between the residents and the police, but as time went on I began learning about many different important aspects that play into the relationship, therefore I let the research guide me rather than me guide the research. However, I did try to speak to a wide array of people in order to obtain the whole picture which included police officers, academics, community leaders and both residents who viewed the police negatively and positively. It is in this way that I sought to create a holistic vision of the relationships evolving between the police and residents of Calabar.

## **Initial Research and Subsequent Changes to my Approach**

Before beginning any field research I conducted a literature review of previous work that had been done on the topic and other related areas. This included research similar to my own carried out in Rio de Janeiro and I principally focused on two works. One was done by July Tierney called *Peace Through the Metaphor of War: From Police Pacification to Governance in Rio de Janeiro* and another by James Freeman called *Neoliberal Accumulation Strategies and the Visible Hand of Police Pacification in Rio de Janeiro*.

Tierney's work had a greater focus on the way the role of the police has changed and how the Police Pacification Units in Rio have worked to pacify the police itself. In her work Tierney spoke about how much of the training for the military police in Rio works to develop an inclination towards violence in the soldiers and they are trained to not recognize the humanity in the residents.<sup>2</sup> However, through the pacification polices' interactions with residents, they are being molded into better community policemen and breaking down their warrior ethos in order to take a more social approach to their job.

This social approach, as Tierney explained, includes attending community meetings and sponsoring activities like martial arts, music and dance classes which are often taught by the police in order to establish circumstances in which residents and police can recognize each others humanity.<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, many pacification policemen in Rio are responsible for regulating parties in the neighborhoods which has proven to be a main point of conflict between the youth and the police. Tierney's work inspired me to further research the way the police institution affects the work of the policemen both through its violent history and institutional pressures of what a policeman should be. Additionally, Tierney's research regarding the way the role of the police has changed inspired me to research how the changes within the policemen are changing the relationship with the residents.

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2 Tierney, July. *Peace Through the Metaphor of War: From Police Pacification to Governance in Rio de Janeiro*. Pg 61

3 Tierney, July. *Peace Through the Metaphor of War: From Police Pacification to Governance in Rio de Janeiro*. Pg 48

In her research, Tierney also explains how many police officers find themselves dealing with complaints made by residents regarding a lack of services or infrastructure. The new peace that is brought by the police is giving residents the opportunity to voice their opinions regarding community problems and Tierney explains how the role of the police extends past just security, but also as an advocate for urban development and the implementation of services.<sup>4</sup> I then became more interested in how the role of the police has changed, and how/if at all are government services being extended into the community of Calabar with the arrival of the community base.

James Freeman's work in *Neoliberal Accumulation Strategies and the Visible Hand of Police Pacification in Rio de Janeiro*, speaks about how the government is gaining a stronger foothold in communities and this doesn't just mean the extension of government services, but also the opening of favelas to neo-liberalism. In his work, Freeman speaks about how many informal economic sectors of the pacified favelas are being criminalized and the new peace brought on is opening venues for stores and tourism.<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, much of the urban development is employed to improve tourism rather than the community and many of these new construction projects are being carried out by foreign companies. Having read Freeman's work I decided to further research not just the ways residents perceive the policemen, but also how they perceive all the changes occurring in their community.

Both James Freeman's and July Tierney's work proved to be invaluable in formulating the focus of my research. However I found that Freeman's research focused too much on the residents and Tierney's research focused too much on the police. I therefore set out on my research to create a holistic view that included both the police and residents. In terms of the police I sought to find out more about how their experience in the institution of the military police and their new work as community police officers affected the way they perceived themselves, their work and the residents. In terms of the

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4 Tierney, July. Peace Through the Metaphor of War: From Police Pacification to Governance in Rio de Janeiro. Pg 66

5 Freeman, James. Neoliberal Accumulation Strategies and the Visible Hand of Police Pacification in Rio de Janeiro. Pg 117

residents I sought to find out how their past experiences with the police and new ones are affecting their views on the police and how there are interpreting the changes occurring in their community. Furthermore, I sought the opinion of a professor of community policing in order to establish a full framework and analysis of the new growing relationship between the residents and police.

### **Introduction**

It was a typical warm afternoon in Salvador when I was laying on a couch watching T.V. and the news came on. The television announcer was yelling “The war continues! The police are really at war today!” The community of Pernambues in Salvador was being invaded by the police. The previous day the rival gangs announced to the community that they were going to have a gun fight and that everybody should go inside their homes and close their windows. The streets were entirely empty except for the policemen who had been tipped off and were going through the neighborhood searching for a drug dealer and murderer that went by the name of Babalu. From the camera of a news helicopter I could see everything that was going on. The television announcer's voice raised in excitement every time the police started running, every time there was some hint of action. “They're here to fight today,” he said.<sup>6</sup>

Scenes like the one mentioned above were typical in Calabar before the community base arrived. When I spoke to residents about the arrival of the base the first thing they mentioned was usually the decrease in violence. A local barber told me that before the base you couldn't even walk on the streets.<sup>7</sup> The rival gangs would constantly be having their gunfights and although they didn't target the innocent local residents, one could never tell when a stray bullet would strike an unintended bystander. A local teacher told me that the traffickers would sometimes announce when they would have their gun fights and everybody had to stay in their houses hiding and waiting for the storm to pass.

6 Personal Observation. November 20<sup>th</sup>, 2012, Federacao, Salvador, Bahia

7 Lima, Eduardo. Personal Interview. November 21<sup>st</sup>, 2012, Calabar, Salvador, Bahia



Another professor mentioned how at times they would have to cancel school because of the gang fights. On some occasions they would be trapped in the school with their 8 to 13 year old students waiting for the gun shots to cease.<sup>8</sup>

Daily life, for a resident of Calabar meant taking into account when and where the next gunfight might happen. Residents lived in fear and weren't able to simply walk to the store at night, everything had to be planned.<sup>9</sup> A local professor told me how parents couldn't simply send their kids to school. They had to walk them and pick them up in case their kids ran into the drug traffickers who openly stood around the neighborhood with their weapons in hand.<sup>10</sup> I heard a story of a woman who was walking down the neighborhood and ran into a group of adolescents smoking marijuana and they had a huge sack full of weapons including machine guns and they were selling them openly during the middle of the day.<sup>11</sup> Kids couldn't go out to play in the streets without running the risk of accidentally getting shot. Homicide rates were skyrocketing as traffickers fought amongst each other, but they weren't the only ones participating in the violence.

Like most people from outside Calabar, the police wouldn't even enter the community except for the times it went in to arrest or kill someone. The only type of police presence that existed in Calabar was usually when the civil police would violently enter the community, and as one young man mentioned, they usually already knew who they were looking for and who they were going to execute. He referred to them as the extermination police.<sup>12</sup> This is only a glimpse of Calabar's long history of violence and police brutality, but there is also a history of resistance and perseverance.

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8 Discussion group with professors of Escola Aberta do Calabar. November 14, 2012. Calabar, Salvador, Bahia.

9 Jaime, Santos. Personal Interview. November 20<sup>th</sup>, 2012. Calabar, Salvador, Bahia.

10 Discussion group with professors of Escola Aberta do Calabar. November 14, 2012. Calabar, Salvador, Bahia.

11 Jenifer, Madeira. Personal Interview. November 16<sup>th</sup>, 2012. Federacao, Salvador, Bahia.

12 Jaime, Santos. Personal Interview. November 20<sup>th</sup>, 2012. Calabar, Salvador, Bahia.

## The History of Calabar

*“A funcao da Policia deveria ser proteger os cidadaos, com medidas de prevencao ao crime. Mas hoje as pessoas ja nao sabem o que e pior: se os bandidos ou os policiais, que normalmente se confundem. Sao raras as execoos... Quem sustenta a policia sao os duros impostos que todos nos pagamos. Entao, a gente paga para morrer? A populacao nao pode ficar de bracos cruzados diante da violencia policial crescente. O povo nao deve aceitar calado que lhe matem. Devemos portestar contra esses abusos. Temos o dever- e o direito- de repudiar essas arbitrariedades.”*

*The function of the police should be to protect its citizens, with measures of prevention of crime. But today people no longer know what is worse: if the criminals or the police, which are normally confused with one another. The exceptions are rare... Who is supporting the police are our hard earned taxes that we pay. So are people paying to die? The population can't remain with its arms crossed in front of the growing police violence. The people can't accept being killed silently. We must protest against these abuses. We have the need and the right to repudiate these arbitraries.*

The paragraphed quoted above was part of a flier distributed during the early 80s when the group called Juc-Sobe- Associacao do Moradores do Calabar was organizing protests regarding the spark in police brutality that was ravaging the community.<sup>13</sup> The rise in police brutality began shortly after December 12, 1981 when the government of Salvador began operations against illegal invasions which included many residents of Calabar and especially the neighboring community of Alto de Pombas, whose residents were facing evictions off of land they had lived on for over 30 years.<sup>14</sup> The group Juc-Sobe- Associacao do Moradores do Calabar had been working for many years to improve the conditions of their community and by the early 80s already had a rich history of community organizing and social resistance. However, Calabar's history of resistance goes back even further.

Calabar's story of struggle has its origins in slave times. Many of its first residents were brought from an area in Nigeria called Calabar and when they arrived to Bahia many managed to escape and establish the community of Calabar. Calabar became a quilombo, a community that resisted against slavery. The community was known as Quilombo dos Kalabari and Calabar was a symbol of African

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<sup>13</sup> Conceicao, Fernando. Cala a Boca Calabar. Pg 180.

<sup>14</sup> Conceicao, Fernando. Cala a Boca Calabar. Pg 167.

history against slavery and today it can be seen as a symbol of resistance against neo-slavery.<sup>15</sup>

The community of Calabar grew the most during the end of the 60s because people were getting kicked out of their neighborhoods and fleeing to Calabar. People were evicted in order to make way for five star hotels and apartment complexes for the middle class. Every day the tall luxuries buildings were closing in on Calabar and on June 12<sup>th</sup> of 1977 the group called Grupo de Jovens Unidos do Calabar (JUC) was formed to not only help maintain permanency in their neighborhood, but also improve some of its terrible conditions.<sup>16</sup>

For a long time, Calabar residents lived under inhumane conditions. One of the major problems Calabar faced was a basic sewage system which led to many sanitation problems. Many residents were getting sick from coming into contact with the sewage and the situation became especially unbearable when it rained. Like many neighborhoods of Salvador, Calabar is located on a hill and its center is located on the bottom of the hill while a cemetery lays on the top. When it rained the water used to seep through the graves of the cemetery and bring contaminated water down to the community. During the raining season, families would place their chairs on the tables to avoid coming into contact with the dirty water that carried diseases.<sup>17</sup> A piece of work that was published in the Journal of Bahia was titled “No Calabar a chuva desenterra mortos e pode enterrar vivos,” meaning “In Calabar the rain digs up the dead and can bury the living.”<sup>18</sup> Heavy rain would drag the remains of the dead from the graves and it would fall on peoples houses. On one occasion a skull was found when a family was washing up their home after a heavy rain.<sup>19</sup>

Calabar suffered other conditions such as a lack of health services, electricity and also garbage

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15 Conceicao, Fernando. Cala a Boca Calabar. Pg 22.

16 Conceicao, Fernando. Cala a Boca Calabar. Pg 29.

17 Conceicao, Fernando. Cala a Boca Calabar. Pg 17.

18 Conceicao, Fernando. Cala a Boca Calabar. Pg 148

19 ibid

collection which would leave piles of trash in the neighborhood that would attract horrible diseases. Additionally, the small alleyways that wind up and down the hill and lead to people's homes weren't paved in. The community itself began resolving this issue by putting planks of wood down, but when there wasn't enough wood there was only mud and this proved disastrous during the rainy season, making it hard for residents to reach their homes.<sup>20</sup> Furthermore, drinking water was found in three fountains in the community and people would have to wait on long lines for water because they would dry up very quickly. The potable water system that was used in the community can hardly be called potable because the main fountain ran through three holes in a wall whose base was submerged in the sewage which had feces and dead animals running through it. People had to wait 15-30 minutes with the water on until clean water came through.<sup>21</sup>

It was the Grupo de Jovens Unidos do Calabar (JUC) that finally got together in order to raise money and fix the fountain. Together with the community, the youth group JUC helped resolve many of the neighborhood's problems. When minimal government services finally arrived to Calabar in order to establish light posts, set up garbage collection and fix the sanitation problem, it was only after years of pressure by the community through marches and protests. The right to basic human services only came after a long worn out fight during the 70s and early 80s with the municipal government. On May 11<sup>th</sup>, 1981, with the coordination of JUC and the residence association of Calabar, there was a huge protest that marched to the Mayor's office because of a lack of government services.<sup>22</sup> This protest later served as an example for other communities to demand their rights. The community of Calabar proved to be one with a spirit of resistance.

Today Calabar is very different from what it used to be. It has its own community school called the Escola Aberta which promotes critical thinking and gives its students an education that relates to

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20 Marquez, Anna. Tour of Calabar November 1<sup>st</sup>, 2012. Calabar, Salvador, Bahia.

21Conceicao, Fernando. Cala a Boca Calabar. Pg 32.

22Conceicao, Fernando. Cala a Boca Calabar. Pg 60.

them and their community. There is also a community library and radio station. The streets and alleyways are paved and light posts shine brightly throughout the night. There is also a government school and building that provides health services. A constitutional law that was passed in 1988 called “lei de usucapião” stated that if a resident had permanently lived in a location for more than 5 years he or she was guaranteed permanency.<sup>23</sup> Therefore residents no longer have to worry about getting kicked out of their homes. However, it is important to realize that most of the victories that the community has achieved have been through long struggles of community organizing and protest. The community of Calabar has resolved many of its issues on its own and despite the fact that it was asking the government for a community base to help resolve its safety issues, in many ways there is still a deep mistrust of the government. For decades the relationship between Calabar and the state has been one of abandonment and police brutality. Therefore the arrival of the community base is more than just a closer contact with the police, but also closer contact with the state itself. However, before beginning to analyze the effects of the community base there needs to be an understanding as to why Calabar was chosen as the first neighborhood to receive the police.

### **Why Calabar?**

The question of why Calabar was chosen as the first neighborhood to receive a community base reveals a lot of the skepticism of the government amongst the residents and many possible ulterior motives for implanting the base. There is no doubt that Calabar needed government intervention considering the extremely high levels of violence that were making life for its residents nearly unbearable. However, many residents that I spoke to said that it was more than just the high levels of violence that brought the base, it was also the location of Calabar.

Today Calabar is considered high valued property because of its short walk to the the beach and

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<sup>23</sup> Ortiz, Maria. Personal Interview. November 29<sup>th</sup>, 2012. Calabar, Salvador, Bahia.

proximity to the center of the city. Many high rises have been encroaching on the neighborhood and from the center of the community you can look up and see how tall apartment buildings and luxurious hotels are completely encircling the neighborhood. When I spoke to Maria Betania, a professor of community policing, she told me that the base served to help protect people in these upper class neighborhoods from the violence and crime that was spilling over from Calabar.<sup>24</sup> Additionally she said, because Calabar is near the center of the city it is a very visible neighborhood. Therefore, the base was used to clean up the image of Salvador for tourists. Maria mentioned how many of the bases that have been implanted all across Brazil have been placed near famous tourist sites. She mentioned how in Salvador there are many neighborhoods that are a lot more dangerous than Calabar and have higher rates of homicides, but that these neighborhoods are in the suburbs and therefore invisible to tourists and unworthy of government attention.

Many residents I spoke with mentioned that one of the main reasons why the community base arrived to Calabar was because of the upcoming World Cup. One of the stadiums which will be hosting many of the World Cup soccer games is a short distance from Calabar and many residents feel that that is why the community was chosen.<sup>25</sup> Additionally, many residents are nervous that once the World Cup and Olympics are over, the base will leave which will bring on a huge wave of violence in the community carried out by the drug traffickers who were kicked out of the neighborhood or forced into hiding. A lot of the mistrust that residents have regarding why the base has arrived and how long it will actually last manifests itself in their relationship with the police. However it is important to realize that this mistrust is not misplaced considering the history of Calabar that I explained earlier. The community had been abandoned by the state and the services it did receive were a result of constant political pressure. Additionally, many of the improvements that have been done in the community have been a result of their own work, which Maria Betania explained, to be another reason why Calabar was

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24 Betania, Matilda. Personal Interview. November 14<sup>th</sup>, 2012. Federacao, Salvador, Bahia.

25 Jenifer, Madeira. Personal Interview. November 16<sup>th</sup>, 2012. Federacao, Salvador, Bahia.

chosen.<sup>26</sup>

During an informal interview, Maria Betania explained to me how one of the reasons why Calabar was chosen was because it had already been able to provide itself with many services and had won many victories against the government for further assistance. Therefore, unlike other neighborhoods which hadn't been able to achieve what Calabar had, Calabar wouldn't create any more financial burdens on the state by needing to improve its infrastructure. It was for this reason that I didn't find police officers taking up the position of advocates for the urban development in the community described in Tierney's research, *Peace Through the Metaphor of War: From Police Pacification to Governance in Rio de Janeiro*. However, just because Calabar has managed to develop a lot of its own infrastructure doesn't mean it doesn't require additional social services. Part of the negotiations for the arrival of the community base meant that the residence association of Calabar allowed the police to occupy its community building in exchange for more social services such as courses to create employment opportunities. Additionally, by allowing the police to use the residence association's building the police arrived sooner to Calabar, which as one community resident mentioned would have taken a lot longer, but not because of a lack of resources to building a police station, but because of a lack of will on part of the government.<sup>27</sup> Therefore the exchange of the residents association's building meant a speedy arrival of the community base and new social services.

### **Initial Changes Brought on by the Base**

As stated earlier, the most important change for residents with the arrival of the community base was the freedom to walk in their neighborhood without worrying about the violence brought on by the gun fights between the traffickers. The importance of this change cannot be understated. The freedom from violence is the most fundamental right any citizen has in their country. The arrival of the base

<sup>26</sup> Betania, Matilda. Personal Interview. November 14<sup>th</sup>, 2012. Federacao, Salvador, Bahia.

<sup>27</sup> Ortiz, Maria. Personal Interview. November 29<sup>th</sup>, 2012. Calabar, Salvador, Bahia.

marked the beginning of a completely new life for the residents of Calabar. During the times I visited I observed a constant flow of people walking up and down the streets, kids running around and playing soccer and men playing dominoes outside of bars.<sup>28</sup> Today the community vibrates with movement and life, but it isn't entirely for the better. I was told that the amount of alcohol consumption has also increased with the increase in security and Calabar was already one of the communities with the highest amount of alcohol consumption in all of Brazil.<sup>29</sup>

All in all things have improved for the better and since the arrival of the base there has only been one homicide which occurred during a police strike.<sup>30</sup> However it is important to note that the arrival of the police didn't mean the liberation from the horrible and violent dominating traffickers that one might have imagined, or the provision of government services that were previously unable to reach the community.

Through a conversation I had with a local barber in the community, he told me that before the base arrived the main worry for people was getting caught in between a gunfight, but not being harassed by the drug dealers. As a person that was born and raised in Calabar, he knew everybody and he mentioned that many of the drug dealers were people he had known since they were little kids. Therefore everybody knew each other and things were calm except for the moments that the gunfights broke out.<sup>31</sup> He told me that as long as you weren't involved in the drug trade which meant either consuming or selling, you wouldn't have to worry about the traffickers. It wasn't the same situation I had read about like in Rio de Janeiro, where traffickers controlled communities and didn't let certain services enter without their permission. Eduardo, the barber, told me that the only service that didn't arrive to the community was the mail, but other than that, things such as gas and electricity were fine. However, after speaking to a community leader, I found that many institutions stopped investing in

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28 Personal Observation. November 16<sup>th</sup>, 2012. Calabar, Salvador, Bahia.

29 Fernando, Paulo. Personal Interview. November 28<sup>th</sup>, 2012. Calabar, Salvador, Bahia.

30 Mar, Nina. Personal Interview. November 13<sup>th</sup>, 2012. Calabar, Salvador, Bahia.

31 Lima, Eduardo. Personal Interview. November 21<sup>st</sup>, 2012. Calabar, Salvador, Bahia.



programs in the neighborhood and a lot of community organizing was immobilized during the high levels of violence.

The arrival of the base opened many doors and during a conversation I had with one young man, he told me that it also allowed for delivery services to now reach the community. That same young man told me how he had never been ashamed to say that he was from Calabar, but that now that the violence has decreased and the image of his neighborhood has improved, he says he's from Calabar a lot more often.<sup>32</sup> The community has also been opened up to tourism and educational excursions and at one point I met a group of students doing research on the history of Calabar whom wouldn't have been able to enter the community safely without the arrival of the base.<sup>33</sup> Furthermore, the new safety brought by the community base has created more opportunities for businesses and stores to thrive in Calabar.

Through two conversations I had with two men from the community I learned that many more stores have opened up in Calabar since the arrival of the base. Eduardo told me that he probably wouldn't be able to have his barbershop if it weren't for the base. The new security meant more people out on the streets and also more costumers.<sup>34</sup> Another man named, Paulo, told me that a lot of people from outside the community came to set up new shops in Calabar.<sup>35</sup> Paulo mentioned to me that many of the residents prefer the store owners that come from outside the community because many of the residents have personal conflicts with the local store owners and don't want to go to their stores. From my conversations with the residents I didn't perceive any suspicion regarding the arrival of the new stories. This was contrary to what I had read in James Freeman's work, *Neoliberal Accumulation Strategies and the Visible Hand of Police Pacification in Rio de Janeiro*, where the arrival of the pacification police bases in Rio meant a criminalization of many economic sectors in the favelas and the

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32 Jaime, Santos. Personal Interview. November 20<sup>th</sup>, 2012. Calabar, Salvador, Bahia.

33 Personal Observation. November 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2012. Calabar, Salvador, Bahia.

34 Lima, Eduardo. Personal Interview. November 21<sup>st</sup>, 2012, Calabar, Salvador, Bahia

35 Fernando, Paulo. Personal Interview. November 28<sup>th</sup>, 2012. Calabar, Salvador, Bahia.

introduction of a new neoliberal market. Apart from the new liberties brought by the base, there was also an arrival of new social programs targeting youth.

### **Social Programs**

As part of the agreement to allow the police to use the residence association's building as a police station, new programs were set up for the community. The state program called *Pacto Pela Vida*, has brought to the community a wide array of programs such as a prep-courses for the vestibular which is the equivalent of the SAT in the United States<sup>36</sup>, classes teaching how to read and right for kids and adults, and other types of job training such as carpentry and sewing. Additionally, there is a computer room with access to internet that is available to the community everyday until 6:00 pm. The base has also worked on bringing the public minister to Calabar in order to help residents obtain legal documents and has brought in public defense lawyers to provide legal services. Additionally they have brought in services such as paternity tests.<sup>37</sup> Furthermore, some police officers have taken it upon themselves to work closer with the community by giving computer lessons, boxing and judou classes, work with the drug prevention program called PROERD and on fathers day the base helped organize a soccer tournament in the neighborhood.

There is also a program conducted by the Federal University of Bahia that is trying to fight obesity by promoting exercise and healthy diets. The program includes a musical percussion class during which participants must provide the teachers with their nutritional information before attending the class and after the class they sit down with the students and discuss different diets to improve their lifestyles.<sup>38</sup> In addition, an NGO named AVANTE, is also giving classes that include reading and writing, math and cultural classes that help kids build confidence and strong identities.<sup>39</sup>

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36 Cardoso, Laua. Tour of Community Base. November 1<sup>st</sup>, 2012. Calabar, Salvador, Bahia.  
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38 Cardoso, Laua. Tour of Community Base. November 1<sup>st</sup>, 2012. Calabar, Salvador, Bahia.

39 Mar, Nina. Personal Interview. November 13<sup>th</sup>, 2012. Calabar, Salvador, Bahia.

Despite the wide array of programs that have reached Calabar many feel that it is not enough. The municipal government barely invests in any programs and there are still huge problems with unemployment and youth turning to drug trafficking. Both police officers and residents feel that the government needs to create more programs especially for the youth who are so vulnerable to getting caught up in lives of crime.<sup>40</sup> During a discussion group with the professors from the community school in Calabar, they mentioned that there needs to be a greater investment in the youth. That when the kids leave school they have nothing to do because there aren't enough government activities and they become very vulnerable to drugs. Additionally, those that are older have no job opportunities and the courses being offered at the community base aren't providing enough opportunities. One of the teachers mentioned how the base came with the promise of providing more services and they still haven't delivered. She mentioned how she acknowledged that it isn't the role of the police to provide these programs, that it is the state government that needs to invest in its own people.<sup>41</sup> The overwhelming majority of people who speak about the need for more programs to keep youth away from drug trafficking shows a more preventative approach to the problem of drugs that is common in the community.

### **Trafficking**

It is no secret that drug trafficking continues to be a huge problem in the community of Calabar. Residents have told me that it continues just as it used to, but now it's hidden. However it is not nearly as hidden as I initially thought. I was able to see a few drug deals happen during the three weeks that I was visiting the community. On one occasion I was sitting on a stand about a 20 second walk away from the police station watching the kids play soccer. On one corner of the soccer court I could see a group of kids who were probably in their late teens or early 20s smoking marijuana while

<sup>40</sup> Cardoso, Laua. Tour of Community Base. November 1<sup>st</sup>, 2012. Calabar, Salvador, Bahia.

<sup>41</sup> Discussion group with professors of Escola Aberta do Calabar. November 14, 2012. Calabar, Salvador, Bahia.

little 11 year old boys played soccer. At one point I saw a young man sell what must have been crack or cocaine to a lady who was probably close to 7 months pregnant. That same drug dealer then proceeded to start rolling a joint and when three police officers walked by he merely set it down and waited for them to be gone to finish rolling it and smoke it.<sup>42</sup> It was after this observation that I was certain that the intention of the community base was not to seek out and arrest drug dealers by making constant raids and conducting several stops and searches, but the idea was to fight drugs with a more preventative approach and one that would work in the long term.

An overwhelming majority of people whom I spoke with knew about the drug trafficking going on and many said that as long as there was a consumer there would be someone to sell. From my conversations I got the sense that so long as there is demand, and drug trafficking continues to be a profitable business, it wouldn't cease. This type of mentality coincides with an approach to drug trafficking that is different from the more popular repressive method of arresting dealers and conducting raids which is often supported by governments. Even some of the police officers agreed that a more preventative approach was the right path. On one occasion I had the opportunity to speak to a police officer and he told me about the difficulties of arresting people for drug trafficking.

The officer told me that trafficking continues in the community, but that it has adapted to the new situation with the community base.<sup>43</sup> He told me that in Calabar there wasn't a huge fight between the military police and the traffickers to kick them out before the community base arrived. Some traffickers left and many just adapted to the new situation. He mentioned how before dealers used to carry up to four kilos of marijuana in their backpacks and would stand on the corner dealing. Now, he told me, they don't walk around with big amounts of drugs. This is because drug use doesn't constitute as a crime that deserves jail time in Brazil. If you are found to be a user you're giving community service or educational programs. Consequently, traffickers carry small amounts of drugs and they claim

42 Personal Observation. November 21<sup>st</sup>. Calabar, Salvador, Bahia.

43 Carlos, Luis. Personal Interview. November 21<sup>st</sup>, 2012. Calabar, Salvador, Bahia.

that they're drug users if they get caught. He first mentioned that this law is a problem, but then rephrased it and said that it is just the way the law is used. This was extremely important because it made notice that drug use isn't the real culprit in the scenario, and that a new method of drug prevention was the most viable path to success.

The police officer went on to show me a picture of a man holding his child. He told me that the man was a known drug trafficker in the community, but their priority wasn't him, it was the 8 year old son. He told me that their job now was to prevent the kid from leading a life of crime. He then asked me a rhetorical question of how the kid was to grown up to have an honest job when his father, his main role model, is a drug dealer? That was when he told me about the importance of education and prevention.<sup>44</sup>

The police officer told me that this strategy of prevention will work in the long run, maybe fifteen years from now. He said that the way to deal with trafficking is to end consumption. If there is no drug use, he said, there's no consumer and no vender and that education is the principal way to fight drugs, not violence. He went on to tell me about his fellow officers who were in the room that have adopted a more preventative approach such as Mario who uses his computer skills to teach computer lessons and keep youth away from drugs. Also, Luisa, who is part of the drug eradication prevention program called PROERD (Programa Educacional de Resistência às Drogas).<sup>45</sup> These officers do these programs and teach classes on their own accord and represent a new style of policing that has its main focus on social and preventative work which is a very different from that of your typical Salvadorian military police officer who uses violence. These officers represent a completely different role for the police in their community.

### **The Role of the Police**

Whereas the traditional military police officer is trained to use force as a main tool against

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44 ibid

45 ibid

crime, community police officers are taught to use more preventative rather than repressive measures and to view the community as allies rather than enemies. Social work is more prioritized and this new conception of the role of the police is reflected in the opinions of many residents. Many of the residents I spoke with went on to say that the role of the police in the community goes far beyond just providing security, but also getting to know the community and taking on a more social approach.

This view that the police should have a more preventative and social role in the community shows a new beginning of the conception of a police officer and therefore a new basis for a new relationship. During a conversation with one of the teachers at the community school, she told me that the police should learn how to live with the community and should work more preventively rather than repressively by giving youth more opportunities.<sup>46</sup> Another man told me that the role of the police is more than just protecting citizens, but also being good role models and giving good values to the youth. He went on to say that the police needs to change in the conception of what it is to be a soldier and it's not just about being violent and repressive. He mentioned that it has to be a more preventative job, that they have obligations and need to be more respectful.<sup>47</sup> If the police is arriving at gun fights it means that they aren't doing their job right, that they're too late. The conception of police is also changing within the officers themselves, marking an important change within the police institution.

During the same conversation I mentioned earlier with the police officer regarding drug trafficking, I asked him if his conception of what the role of the police is has changed since working in the community base. The officer told that it had changed significantly. He told me that he has come to realize that he can be useful to society without mistreating the community and using violence. He said that he can contribute to help people's lives with what he knows. He mentioned Mario, who uses his computer skills to give lessons. At that moment Mario told me that kids in his class used to say that

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46 Discussion group with professors of Escola Aberta do Calabar. November 14, 2012. Calabar, Salvador, Bahia.

47 Paulo, Pedro. Personal Interview. November 19<sup>th</sup>, 2012. Calabar, Salvador, Bahia.

they want to grow up to be like the drug traffickers, but now they want to be police officers.<sup>48</sup>

Luis, the police officer, went on to tell me that he has learned that he can be useful beyond just being a measure of security and that he feels more worth and value in society. This, he said, has a fomented a stronger feeling of public service and made him realize that he is paid to help people, not repress and live apart from them.<sup>49</sup> This change within the police officers is incredibly important because in order to begin having a more equal and human relationship between citizens and the police, there has to be a change regarding the conception of what the role of the police is. Only after there is a change and realization that the work of an officer does not just mean using violence can there truly be a more equal and just relationship between the police and citizens. However, when I asked Luis what the military police in general thought of community policing, it revealed that this change that is occurring in the community base of Calabar is relatively small compared to the entire military police and that these officers are rowing against a sea.

### **The Military Police**

When I asked Luis about how community policing is seen within the general police academy he first asked me if I meant the program itself or the officers and I said both. He laughed uncomfortably and said that this was a very complicated question and got extremely quiet. I could immediately tell how sensitive the question was and he began by telling me that Brazilian politics is complicated. He said that people see any government action as some political ploy so they don't trust the intentions of the program. In terms of the police, they think community policing is just decorative work, not real work. They are just making friends with people and not actually doing anything.<sup>50</sup> This revealed to me something that I had previously researched and spoken about with a professor of community policing.

The military police is an institution that has its roots in repression and violence so for a police

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48 Carlos, Luis. Personal Interview. November 21<sup>st</sup>, 2012. Calabar, Salvador, Bahia.

49 *ibid*

50 *ibid*

officer to begin a new relationship with citizens based on respect and dignity, he needs to re-envision a new role for himself that is contrary to what the military police has historically promulgated. Therefore, in order to begin to understand the relationship between citizens and police it is important to understand where that officer comes from and how the institution of the military police has evolved.

To begin with, the police has historically been an institution of repression and not promotion of citizenry. A lawyer and professor named Marcos who spoke in a discussion group I participated in, stated that racism and violence is institutionalized and reproduced within the police.<sup>51</sup> He said that this has been historically true and that when the government was first organizing and recruiting a police force in Brazil it sought out those who repressed quilombos. Therefore black repression in the police dates back to its very origin when slave hunters made up the first police force. The police was founded on the negation of citizenry, mainly of the black population of Brazil. The police was created for the legal use of violence and not the promotion and protection of citizenship. It is a tool of repression and this was further consolidated during the military dictatorship.

Brazil's military police has for much time now adapted a mentality of warfare when it comes to policing favelas and this is in many ways rooted in the conception of national security established during the military dictatorship. At a time when political unrest was a top priority during Brazil's military dictatorship, a pervasive national security doctrine was adopted that placed the Brazilian police at war against a segment of the population that was designated as enemies of the state. This ideology legitimated increasing levels of violence against a wide segment of the Brazilian population and police transgressions were explained as protecting national security. By the 1970s torture and murder by security forces had been fully institutionalized as government policy and institutional violence became so prevalent that it was difficult to meet a Brazilian who had not come into direct or indirect contact with a torture victim or witnessed a violent search-and-arrest operation.<sup>52</sup> Additionally, because all

51 Discussion group. November 1<sup>st</sup>. Calabar, Salvador, Bahia.

52 Huggins, Martha. Violence Workers: Police Torturers and Murderers Reconstruct Brazilian Atrocities. Pg 77



police were subordinated to the military, every security institution was plagued by the same culture of war and violence. Therefore, from the military dictatorship comes a reinvigorated doctrine of violence and repression and since the democratization of Brazil the role of the police has not changed much because a majority of generals who committed atrocities during the military dictatorship are still in charge now.<sup>53</sup> The community bases that are now being implemented in Salvador and other major cities in Brazil are therefore a way to correct this history and begin changing a violent and repressive institution.

### **The Formation of Community Police Officers**

In order to obtain a more in depth understanding of the community policing I interviewed Matilda, a professor who teaches violence prevention as part of a program of the Federal University of Bahia to qualify police officers in human rights and preventative policing. She began the interview by telling me that the topics she teaches in her violence prevention class are human rights, citizenry, respect, gender, ethics, race and self-reflection.<sup>54</sup> She mentioned how most of her students are from the military police and that in Salvador there are 35,000 military policemen and 5,000 civil policemen. She told me that a big part of what they train them for is to avoid repression. The policemen learn how to adapt to the environment of the favelas and in many situations they come from the same environment and live in very similar neighborhoods. She mentioned that the program used to only include high ranking officials, but it is now accepting all levels of policemen because there is an acknowledgment that each person can make a difference and it is also an attempt to break the strict hierarchy that exists within the military police.<sup>55</sup>

She said that there is a selection process for police officers to enter the course. First, they need

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53 Betania, Matilda. Personal Interview. November 14<sup>th</sup>, 2012. Federacao, Salvador, Bahia.

54 *ibid*

55 *ibid*

to be allowed by their commander to take the course. Then there is a selection process where they are given a written test, are interviewed and finally they are introduced to the curriculum. She said that there are 40 students with 150 applicants and she said she wanted more soldiers in her courses. However, she felt that her work with community policing isn't really changing too many attitudes and is far from making any significant changes in the police institution itself.<sup>56</sup>

Part of the reason why the community policing courses are not being effective is because they are not being put into practice. One of the reasons is that some officers are only taking the course because of the opportunities for promotion with the new qualification and therefore don't have the intention in reforming their style of policing. Additionally, those officers who are interested in putting into practice what they learn find it difficult. One of the officers at the community base in Calabar who took the course told me that the course is all theory. There aren't any practical exercises during their classes and it is therefore hard to take what they learned and be able to apply it.<sup>57</sup> Furthermore, Matilda mentioned how within the military academy the community policing is looked down upon, so commanders will give the graduating officers desk jobs so as to not practice what they've learned.

Another problem is that the military police is such a constraining institution in many ways that it doesn't give space for police officers to redefine themselves. Matilda said that many police officers who take the course don't understand that change that is occurring within them. There is no open space for self-reflection and to conceive of their work in another way and in many situations nobody else to talk to. Also, she said, some students of hers are afraid of not using violence and being killed in the community. She said this fear isn't just of criminals they might encounter on the job, but that some honest cops are sometimes killed by corrupt police especially in situations in which the police carry out extrajudicial murders.

Matilda mentioned how the military police takes over the lives of officers. She mentioned how

<sup>56</sup> ibid

<sup>57</sup> Lourdes, Brena. Personal Interview. November 17<sup>th</sup>, 2012. Calabar, Salvador, Bahia.

as police officers they have no privacy and they must ask for the permission from their captain if they want to travel somewhere during their vacations. Matilda went on to say that the job in many occasions changes the personalities of the officers. They become much more suspicious of everyone and they fall in love with the power. She mentioned that this is much more prevalent among men because many times they feel the need to prove their vitality through force.

She said that the police officers confuse the power granted to them by their job with their own personal lives and this many times foments many feelings to prove one's strength. Matilda also spoke about how police officers that come out of poor communities are sometimes even worse because they believe that they are different and better for being able to succeed and therefore see other people as inferior and treat them accordingly. Matilda mentioned that women were just as bad as men. She mentioned how within the military police there aren't any women in very high rankings and therefore have to prove their positions to men and end up being just as brutal and sometimes treating people even worse. This violent and disrespectful relationship between the police and population doesn't just come from the unequal power balances that occur, but also from the training that officers undergo.

Much of the training for the military police is designed so that officers don't recognize the humanity in the people they are paid to protect. Matilda described to me that the training includes sessions of humiliation especially for new recruits. These sessions degrade training officers into positions of weakness in order to create a need for power. Matilda also mentioned that a part of their training involves surviving in the jungle and preparing for war. She said that this is used to create a sense that they are combating an enemy in order to not see people as equals. She told me that they are trained for repression combat and the main focus is physical training and use of weaponry.. The Civil police on the other hand is trained for more investigative work, but she mentioned that in many ways they are worse than the military police.<sup>58</sup>

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58 ibid

When talking about the civil police, Matilda mentioned that one of the reasons they are worse than the military police is because of lack of discipline. Although there are many problems with the hierarchical system of the military police, in some senses it gives the institution order and its police officers are more controlled and obey orders. Unlike the civil police which lack discipline and have been known to take justice into their own hands. When I spoke to the residents of Calabar, many mentioned that it was the civil police that carried out most of the extrajudicial killings. Additionally, since it is the civil police that is in charge with cleaning up crime scenes, many times they get rid of evidence of police carrying out executions. Additionally, the military police receives much more investment and because of its training process its officers feel like they are a part of a bigger organism and are much prouder of their jobs. Unlike the civil police who don't value their jobs and are much more prone to becoming corrupt officers.

Matilda told me about how in all the courses she teaches the police officers aren't supposed to enter the school with guns. However, in her one of her courses regarding stops and searches a civil police officer entered the school with a gun without bullets. She said that he did this in order to intimidate her. It is because of instances like these that she feels that her works isn't truly changing the attitudes of police officers. Additionally, the way community policing is viewed by the police as a whole makes it hard to see any changes from occurring from the inside.

As stated earlier, within the police community policing isn't viewed as real work. As a result many community police officers are discriminated against and are seen as conducting feminine work. They aren't fighting and shooting criminals like traditional police officers. For some police officers, working in a community base is seen as a speed bump in their career or is perceived to be a punishment. Many residents within the community also have negative views on the community police officers.

## Negative Perceptions

Many residents of Calabar hold negative views of community police officers and many times residents have a lack of respect for those officers for the same reasons why community policing is looked down upon within the military police. Some residents have the belief that community officers aren't real policemen and therefore don't deserve respect. One of the officers whom I spoke with said that many times people don't show him respect because they believe that the community police is just for integrating with society, but not actually doing any real police work. This he mentioned, is especially important when people have to undergo stops and searches because they feel they aren't necessary and that a community police officer has no right to do so.<sup>59</sup> A local resident, named Pedro, mentioned how women were especially aggressive towards the police especially when a boyfriend or brother is being stopped and searched by the police. When this happens, some women begin to insult the police officers and sometimes even start hitting them. Pedro said that this was because many women feel that they won't get hit because if they are it automatically becomes police brutality.<sup>60</sup> Not only do some residents disrespect the police, but they are also extremely distrustful.

Many residents have a deep seeded mistrust for the police which stems from a mistrust from the entire government itself. Some of the residents I spoke with are hesitant to speak to the police especially regarding the drug traffickers in the community because they are afraid that the base will only last until the World Cup and Olympics are over.<sup>61</sup> This is mistrust is in many ways rightfully placed. As mentioned earlier, the neighborhood of Calabar was largely abandoned by the government for decades. It was for this reason that the traffickers were able to take control of the neighborhood and that the community base was needed in the first place. Therefore, it isn't surprising that many residents think that the government could abandon their community once again which many residents said would

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59 Carlos, Luis. Personal Interview. November 21<sup>st</sup>, 2012. Calabar, Salvador, Bahia.

60 Paulo, Pedro. Personal Interview. November 19<sup>th</sup>, 2012. Calabar, Salvador, Bahia.

61 Jenifer, Madeira. Personal Interview. November 16<sup>th</sup>, 2012. Federacao, Salvador, Bahia.

be terrible because the traffickers would without a doubt retaliate against the population. A police officer mentioned that this was a major problem in terms of gaining the trust in the community, because they are afraid that the police are only temporary and therefore shouldn't tell them anything.<sup>62</sup>

The officer said that some people generally don't trust the government and therefore don't trust the base. One resident I spoke with told me that they should switch out the officers from the base more often in order to avoid corruption. When I asked her if she had heard of any proof of corruption she told me no, but that if the leaders of the country were corrupt it is bound to happen with the police officers who are at the bottom.<sup>63</sup> This level of mistrust comes from Calabar's history, a community that for years had to resolve its own problems and the only government assistance it received was minimal urbanization after intense political pressure. The officers have to not only deal with the stigma attached to the police, but also to the government itself. Although the relationship is improving it is hard for many residents considering the not too distant memories of executions carried out by the police.

The decrease in violence that has occurred with the arrival of the community base does not just mean a decrease in violence between traffickers, but also a decrease in murders carried out by the police. A conversation I had with Jenifer, a resident of Calabar whose son was murdered by the police, revealed to me the level of violence carried out by the police in the community. When I began talking to her she first told me that in Bahia, when a cop kills someone and they say it is a troca de tiro, meaning gun fight, it is usually a lie. It can occasionally be true, but in places like Calabar it is usually an execution. Jenifer told me that her son was murdered by the police in December of 2009, before the base arrived to Calabar. She described to me how she didn't just stay quiet about her sons murder and protested against the police. Soon after she received a threat from the police saying that they would kill her and that because she is a woman a lot worse things could happen to her. She told me that she is still

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62 Carlos, Luis. Personal Interview. November 21<sup>st</sup>, 2012. Calabar, Salvador, Bahia.

63 Mar, Nina. Personal Interview. November 13<sup>th</sup>, 2012. Calabar, Salvador, Bahia.

afraid that something might happen to her.<sup>64</sup>

Jenifer told me another story of a boy who was sleeping in bed with his mother and the police knocked down his door and dragged him out to the street. His mother ran out and begged for his life, but her son was executed anyway. A young man whom I spoke to told me the majority of murders committed in Calabar were carried out by the civil police, or extermination police as he referred to them.<sup>65</sup> Matilda, the community policing professor, told me that there is no accountability and cops are never arrested. She told me about how forty police officers were being investigated for murder and only eight were accused, but in the end none of them were arrested. She said that the police officers had said that they didn't regret anything they did, they were just killing criminals and vagabonds. Matilda told me that the slogan for an elite police force in Bahia is “Pai faz, mãe cria e Caatinga mata” which means “Father makes, mother raises, and Caatinga kills.”<sup>66</sup> She also told me that cops in Salvador don't get killed because they are always the first ones to shoot. It is important to realize that the community base in Calabar isn't just pacifying the drug traffickers, but also the police. Jenifer described the community police as evil, but a necessary evil.

Since the implementation of the community base the number of executions carried out by the police has decreased, but police aggression is still widely reported among the residents. Most residents I spoke with mentioned that it is a minority of the police that are truly aggressive, but it ruins the entire image of the police for the community.<sup>67</sup> One young man described to me how on one occasion there was a party in the community and the police had received noise complaints. When the officers arrived they immediately began shooting up into the air in order to intimidate people and when some of the residents stood up to the police they were immediately pepper sprayed.<sup>68</sup> Most of the complaints of

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64 Jenifer, Madeira. Personal Interview. November 16<sup>th</sup>, 2012. Federacao, Salvador, Bahia.

65 Jaime, Santos. Personal Interview. November 20<sup>th</sup>, 2012. Calabar, Salvador, Bahia.

66 Betania, Matilda. Personal Interview. November 14<sup>th</sup>, 2012. Federacao, Salvador, Bahia.

67 Discussion group with professors of Escola Aberta do Calabar. November 14, 2012. Calabar, Salvador, Bahia.

68 Jaime, Santos. Personal Interview. November 20<sup>th</sup>, 2012. Calabar, Salvador, Bahia.

police officers being overly aggressive usually involve the stops and searches that the officers conduct.

### **Abordagem**

One of the major points of conflict that I found between the community and the police officers was the stops and searches, *abordagem* in Portuguese, conducted by the police. When I interviewed one of the teachers at the community school she told me that many times the police immediately start hitting the residents when they stop people. She said that the police needs to be more passive and get to know the community in order to recognize the good citizens from the criminals.<sup>69</sup> However, as one officer explained, trafficking continues to be a big problem in Calabar and in order to not discriminate they have to stop everyone.<sup>70</sup> For members of the community who are hard workers and parents, this is an extreme insult and for the youth it has become a constant worry in their lives. One of the residents told me that at the first moment the police always think that everyone is a criminal, that they're guilty until proven innocent and it is a very dehumanizing process.<sup>71</sup> One young man told me how on one occasion he was stopped by the police in Calabar and it was a very humiliating experience. He then left the neighborhood and shortly after came back and was stopped again. As he tried to explain to the officer how he was just stopped the police officer twisted him into a more painful position. He told me how any time you try to explain yourself to the police they just react more violently.<sup>72</sup>

When I spoke to one of the officers and asked him to explain the many complaints that people made regarding the painful stops and searches he told me that these complaints are received because of the way they stop and search people. The officer at that point told me to get up and he showed me how a stop and search is conducted.<sup>73</sup>

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69 Mar, Nina. Personal Interview. November 13<sup>th</sup>, 2012. Calabar, Salvador, Bahia.

70 Mar Nina. Personal Interview. November 16<sup>th</sup>, 2012. Calabar, Salvador, Bahia.

71 Mar, Nina. Personal Interview. November 21<sup>st</sup>, 2012. Calabar, Salvador, Bahia.

72 Jaime, Santos. Personal Interview. November 20<sup>th</sup>, 2012. Calabar, Salvador, Bahia.

73 Carlos, Luis. Personal Interview. November 21<sup>st</sup>, 2012. Calabar, Salvador, Bahia.



He first told me to place my hands on the back of my neck and interlock my fingers. He then grabbed my hand and squeezed it tight. It was actually a lot more painful than I thought it would be. He then told me to spread my legs. So I did, and he told me to spread them further. I thought I had already spread them far enough, but he used his foot to kick my feet even further.

At this point I was almost falling and he then told me to lean back. I was uncomfortably laughing at this painful and awkward position I was placed in, but I thought that in a different environment, out on the street with everybody watching, this wouldn't be funny at all. It was actually quite humiliating and painful. He then tightly held on to my hands and frisked me with his other free hand. He then switched hands and when I thought it was finally over he told me it wasn't. So by now he had searched my whole body and felt my waist and to end things he went down and raised his whole arm quickly up against my crotch. I couldn't tell if it was more painful than humiliating.

Once we were done he explained to me that this was the protocol search position taught at the military police academy. He explained to me that this is supposed to be done to any civilian who is stopped. He told me that obviously you have to take into account the context and the person you're searching, but that some police officers probably use this technique every time. It's what they're taught. He explained to me that this position is necessary because that way you ensure everyone's safety. The idea is to create an environment where no harm can be committed to anyone. This includes the police officer, the person searched and everyone around. This is because if the person being searched is able to reach for a gun he can try to shoot the police and might miss and shoot an innocent bystander.

He explained to me that at the end of the day he wants to take off his uniform and go to his family. He's a person too. While this whole thing is going on his partner is supposed to point his gun at the person searched. This is why people feel that the stops are too aggressive and violent.

He placed me into the position again and asked me to try to free myself. As I did he tightened my hands further which came to be extremely painful. I saw how important it is to keep people in that

position. He then showed me what would happen if he did a normal pat down and as soon as he started I saw that I could have easily elbowed him in the face and stolen his gun or even taken out a weapon of my own. This he explained, is why the uncomfortable and painful position is necessary.

He said that he admitted that there were probably some police officers that use the technique in situations where it isn't necessary, but that everybody's safety needs to be insured. He told me that these officers are usually the ones who didn't want to be part of the community police program and have more experience in combat situations and that is what they want, the violence and action. He explained to me how the selection process was for picking the community police officers.

He told to me that as a police officer you could be working in your unit normally and suddenly you get called by the captain one afternoon and are told to go to a certain building. You have no idea what's going on and then you learn that you are being put through a community policing course. He was suddenly changed to Calabar that way. He said that there is a one week course for preparation. Some cops who are fit for action are also chosen for community policing and they generally sit through class not paying attention, or fall asleep. It's the same as any class in school where you may not pay attention. He said that nobody ever asks the cop what they want to do which is why you have cases of overly aggressive police officers that are not fit for community policing stopping and searching people unnecessarily.<sup>74</sup>

### **Difficulties in Establishing Open Dialogues**

When I asked the officer if there were meetings to explain to people the way searches had to be done he said that they tried to set up meetings with the community in the beginning, but that nobody ever attended. He explained that people are trying to relax on their time off, watch some T.V., and they're not going to a meeting with the police officers. When I spoke to some residents I heard different stories.

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74 ibid

From one young man I heard that when the police initially arrived there were a lot of complaints regarding the stops and searches and a meeting was held with the commander and things improved. The young man mentioned that some officers were transferred out of the community because they weren't obeying orders and being overly aggressive.<sup>75</sup> However, when I spoke to one of the professors at the community school she told me that they had made complaints to the captain and that she only apologized and nothing ever happened. She said that the police decides when to have community meetings, but they rarely happen.<sup>76</sup>

The issue of making complaints is a very important one. When I spoke to Matilda, the community policing professor, she told me that that there exists a program called the ouvidoria to make complaints to the government, but in Calabar this became united with a project to create dialogue between the police and community. Therefore the complaints are now going directly to the police making it impossible to make sincere complaints. Today citizens have to speak with the police in respect of police aggressiveness and the cops sometimes intimidate residents.<sup>77</sup> It makes it difficult to make honest complaints for the residents and improve relations in the community. However, there have been many steps the police has taken to improve relationships with the community.

### **Changing Perceptions**

There are some residents whom I spoke with that have been very receptive of the police. One man, whose home is right next to where the police usually stands to patrol, told me that he feels privileged to have the police around. He told me how he feels safe to walk around his neighborhood and he has developed a good relationship with the police, he even offers them coffee and water in the morning. He told me that before the base arrived he viewed the police as dictatorial and abusive

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75 Jaime, Santos. Personal Interview. November 20<sup>th</sup>, 2012. Calabar, Salvador, Bahia.

76 Mar, Nina. Personal Interview. November 21<sup>st</sup>, 2012. Calabar, Salvador, Bahia.

77 Betania, Matilda. Personal Interview. November 14<sup>th</sup>, 2012. Federacao, Salvador, Bahia.

authority figures, but now he realizes that each officer is a person too.<sup>78</sup> However, many people in the community don't share the same opinion and the police has been working to establish new healthy relationships and challenge people's preconceptions.

As a way to get to know the community better and earn the people's trust, the police have been conducting visits to everybody's home. An officer explained to me that the community visits involve going from house to house, with questionnaires in hand and seeing where people live and chatting in order to get to know what work people do and learn more about their families.<sup>79</sup> He told me that the police has started to get to know the neighborhood a lot better and residents have told them about important landmarks so that when they get a call they know where to go and how to get around. Additionally the population tells them what parts of the neighborhood are more dangerous than others. However, as one officer explained, many people are still skeptical of the police and she understands because she lives in a similar community, but there are many signs of improvement.<sup>80</sup>

Due to the nature of community policing, the police is working in close proximity with the residents on a daily basis and both the police and residents are beginning to recognize the humanity in one another and developing a sense of trust. The police officer, Luis, told me that the relationship has been dramatically changing. He told me how in the beginning there were a lot of moments of tension and conflict because they were changing people's routines with their stops and searches and also they arrested some people and sent them to prison. However, many people are beginning to trust them now. Luis told me that people are starting to call to report crimes a lot more often and some people are even calling officers on their personal cellphones, because some people trust the individual police officer more than the whole station. He told me that some police officers are even going to be god fathers in the community.<sup>81</sup> Additionally, together with a pastor in the community, the police has been helping

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78 Lima, Eduardo. Personal Interview. November 21<sup>st</sup>, 2012. Calabar, Salvador, Bahia.

79 Carlos, Luis. Personal Interview. November 21<sup>st</sup>, 2012. Calabar, Salvador, Bahia.

80 Lourdes, Brena. Personal Interview. November 17<sup>th</sup>, 2012. Calabar, Salvador, Bahia.

81 Carlos, Luis. Personal Interview. November 21<sup>st</sup>, 2012. Calabar, Salvador, Bahia.

resolve domestic problems and in doing so have further broken down preconceptions.

I had the chance to speak to the pastor who is working with the police and he explained to me how the visits to people's homes are helping to challenge the belief that the police only serve to repress people. The pastor told me that the program is called solidarity visits and together with police officers they go to people's homes where there have been reports of domestic violence. He mentioned that the visits have helped people view the police as more than just a repressive intimidating force.<sup>82</sup> The program, in many ways began for that reason, as a way for the police to build a closer relationship with residents. The pastor explained to me how he is part of an evangelist group and when he came to Calabar he presented himself to the base in order to lend his services and the commander at the time mentioned that that was exactly what they were looking for, a way to enter the community and gain people's trust. However, the solidarity visits have been more than just about gaining people's trusts, but have also proven to be effective in reducing domestic violence disputes.

The solidarity visits that are conducted together with the pastor, show how, as mentioned earlier, the role of the community police involves much more than the use of violence. The pastor explained to me that many of the domestic disputes in Calabar are too complicated to simply be resolved by placing someone in jail. He mentioned how in some homes the father may spend a lot of time and money drinking and can ultimately lose his job. Therefore, the son of the family, who may be participating in drug trafficking, becomes the one bringing in the money for the family and consequently the authority roles in the family are switched. There have been cases such as this one that have lead to many domestic violence disputes and the problems are too complicated and emotional for the police to simply arrest someone.<sup>83</sup> Therefore, together with the pastor, the police works to resolve these issues and this shows how the police's work is getting them intimately connected with families because of the new nature of their work. Although some police officers still continue to see themselves as caught in a

82 Lindalva, Ronaldo. November 24<sup>th</sup> 2012. Calabar, Salvador, Bahia.

83 *ibid*

war against the community, many are beginning to re-conceive themselves as more social workers and practicing preventative approaches rather than placing people in jail. Despite the new ways in which the police have been operating, there are still many residents who only equate police officers with violence.

### **Abuse of Authority and Racism**

Reconstructing a new relationship between the police and residents is a long process and cases of police officers who abuse their power only hampers that progress. As mentioned earlier, many of the police officers that are identified as aggressive are police officers that are more fit for action, but aggression doesn't just include verbal and physical violence. A local barber, whom I spoke with told me that the same way traffickers used to ask the men who drove the beer trucks into the community for a free drink, the community police officers will ask people who own restaurants for free meals.<sup>84</sup> This shows an abuse of authority that comes with the guns and power that the police hold which they use to intimidate people. The barber told me that for him the traffickers and police are the same, they're just someone with a gun who claims to have the main authority. He told me that the biggest difference between the police and the traffickers is that the police are much more organized. Additionally, the abuse and aggression exhibited by the police usually targets a certain population, the Afro-Brazilian population.

Many of the residents I spoke with mentioned that racism is very pervasive among the community police officers, but I learned that as much as it is an institutional problem it is also a general societal problem of Brazil. When I spoke to Matilda, the community policing professor, she mentioned how the police discriminate against Afro-Brazilians, but that it isn't only the police, it is the general society.<sup>85</sup> Although, as mentioned earlier, the police institution originated with slave hunters that

<sup>84</sup> Lima, Eduardo. Personal Interview. November 21<sup>st</sup>, 2012. Calabar, Salvador, Bahia.

<sup>85</sup> Betania, Matilda. Personal Interview. November 14<sup>th</sup>, 2012. Federacao, Salvador, Bahia.

targeted quilombos and racism has since then been institutionalized in the police academy, police officers aren't just products of their training, but also of their society. Even though Brazilians pride themselves in their diversity there is still an intense amount of racism in the society that creates economic and societal barriers for the Afro-Brazilian community. One of the young men from Calabar that I spoke to told me that having dark skin automatically turns him into a suspect. Despite the fact that a majority of the community officers are Afro-Brazilian there still exists a lot of racism. That same young man mentioned to me that in many situations it is the black officers who are the most racist. He explained to me that this was because the black officers think that they they're better than everyone else because they were able to become police officers and in order to prove their strength they intimidate and abuse people.<sup>86</sup> In order to change the racist dynamics that exist within the police there needs to be a change not just within the police force, but in society as a whole. However, despite the racist and abusive obstacles, there has been a significant improvement with the relationship between residents and the police.

### **Integrating into Society and Recognizing Each Others Humanity**

Although the police is still working on building closer ties with the community, many individual officers have already developed friendships with residents and many people are becoming more comfortable with having the police around. Part of the reason why a higher level of comfort has developed between the police and community is because the police is stationed in what used to be the residence association building. As described earlier, because the residence association allowed the police to occupy its building, many social programs were brought to the community and those programs are being conducted in the police station. Therefore, there is a constant interaction between the police and residents, but not just in the context of patrolling the streets, but also in the context of

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<sup>86</sup> Jaime, Santos. Personal Interview. November 20<sup>th</sup>, 2012. Calabar, Salvador, Bahia.

classes. This creates a space for residents to develop relationships with the police in a building that is familiar to them and also in a situation where they are not perceived as possible criminals. Additionally, residents come in and out of the police station to go to classes in a relaxed manner. This has the effect of breaking down the initial barrier of intimidation in approaching the police and opens up new chances for dialogue.

During my time in Calabar, I observed people walk in and out of the police station with no hesitation whatsoever. On my first visit to the community I saw a small group of kids run into the police station as if they were going to their school or their home to drop off their capoeira gear.<sup>87</sup> Although it may seem like a simple action, it represents a new opportunity to live in proximity and recognize each others humanity.

On another occasion I went into the police station looking for the captain and was warmly greeted by the police officers present and told to wait. While I waited I felt comfortable and struck up conversations with the officers and began joking around with them and we started getting to know each other. As I sat there waiting for the captain I could hear the music coming from a percussion class and was allowed to go upstairs and saw kids running around, laughing, playing and smiling.<sup>88</sup> In my life I had never seen such close proximity between the police and residents especially in a place that at times looked more like a community center rather than police station.

That same day, while I waited in the reception area a young man who was probably in his late 20s walked in just to say hi to the officers. He slapped hands with everybody and was making jokes and at one point was hugging one of the female police officers the same way he would hug any other friend. This revealed to me the extent to which the community base is not just helping the police officers recognize the humanity in the people they are paid to protect, but also helping the people recognize that the officers are in many ways just like them.

87 Personal Observation. November 1<sup>st</sup> 2012. Calabar, Salvador, Bahia.

88 Personal Observation. November 19<sup>th</sup>, 2012. Calabar, Salvador, Bahia.



Through my conversations with residents and my observations I have been able to notice the change within some of the residents themselves about how they feel about the police and an acknowledgment that they're people too. In a conversation I had with one of the residents he told me how we used to think that all cops were just violent and aggressive, but now he realizes they are people too.<sup>89</sup> He mentioned how he would even see police officers at events and parties chatting with residents.

A deeper look into the lives of the officers reveals that they are in many ways in the same situation as the residents. Many of the police officers come from very similar neighborhoods and most of the officers told me that they joined the police force for economic reasons. Therefore, many officers took up their jobs because of the difficult economic situations that many people in Calabar also face.

Additionally, the police officers in the community base are also lacking resources. Many lack the education and training required for the job and for the 107 officers at the base there are only three police cars and two motorcycles.<sup>90</sup> It is important to note that the police officers aren't arriving to a community fully prepared with state of the art equipment. In many ways the community base suffers a lack of government investment the way the neighborhood of Calabar does. However, it is important to recognize that the new friendships that are being formed between the residents and the police can lead to a lack of professionalism and problematic situations.

### **Getting too Close**

The new found friendships that have developed between the police and residents have in some situations led to problems. When speaking to one of the police officers, he told me that the friendships developed can lead to situations in which residents fail to understand that they are still police officers and have to report illegal activities. The officer described to be a how many times officers have to arrest friends who have committed crimes and it makes the situation more personal and thus more

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<sup>89</sup> Anderson. Personal Interview. November 21<sup>st</sup>, 2012. Calabar, Salvador, Bahia.

<sup>90</sup> Discussion group. November 1<sup>st</sup>. Calabar, Salvador, Bahia.

difficult. Additionally, he said, some residents try to take advantage of the new friendships and have police officers help resolve their conflicts with other residents in their favor.<sup>91</sup> Thus the officers must constantly remind the residents that they are still police officers and that they don't write the laws, but have to carry them out. However, this new dynamic does not just affect the behavior of residents, but also the behavior of the police.

The most extreme breakdown of professionalism that I heard was the existence of amorous relationships between the male officers and women of Calabar. Although I didn't manage to speak to any women who were involved in a relationship with a police officer, through my conversations with residents I learned that they are quite common. These relationships are very problematic for a variety of reasons. For one, the power unbalance in such relationships is so skewed that it places women in very vulnerable situations. In one extreme case, a police officer asked one of the women from the community out for a beer and during the date when the women refused to perform oral sex for the officer he beat her and forced her. However the police officer was never reprimanded because the woman was too afraid to denounce him.<sup>92</sup>

When I asked one of the police officers about cases of officers dating women in the community he mentioned to me that when you have people working in close proximity with a community things like that naturally happened, but that he personally never dates anyone because he doesn't want to involve his personal life with his work. He told me that at the end of the day he wants to take off his uniform and go home. He said that it can also be dangerous because there have been cases of traffickers in the community having women they know seduce the officers in order to help them lay an ambush for the police officer.<sup>93</sup> One of the residents I spoke to told me that relationships between the police and women are very common and that this is because women see the police as an economic opportunity

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91 Carlos, Luis. Personal Interview. November 21<sup>st</sup>, 2012. Calabar, Salvador, Bahia.

92 Jenifer, Madeira. Personal Interview. November 16<sup>th</sup>, 2012. Federacao, Salvador, Bahia.

93 Carlos, Luis. Personal Interview. November 21<sup>st</sup>, 2012. Calabar, Salvador, Bahia.

and source of power. In some cases this has led to problems with other men in the community becoming jealous. This situation exemplifies the complexities of the new relationships between the police and the residents with the arrival of the community base.

### **Conclusion**

In order to understand the new dynamics and relationships that have evolved as a result from the community base, it is important to analyze the historical factors that come into play. Calabar is a community that has historically been abandoned by the government and has had to resolve its own problems. The arrival of the community base is only the arrival of security and a government owes its citizens much more than that. The new social programs that have been implemented have not been enough and there is still a severe lack of investment to counteract the problems of unemployment and trafficking. The military police has also proven to suffer from a lack of investment, but for the military police it is an investment in change not resources.

Since its origins, the police has been an institution of repression and violence rather than protection of citizenry. The military dictatorship further consolidated the belief that the police is waging a war against the people. Consequently, violence has been prioritized as the main tool for policing while preventative and social approaches have been devalued. The new community base represents a new change and attempt to break down the warrior ethos of officers and start a new relationship with citizens based on respect and dignity, but most importantly, the base is helping to pacify the police and end extrajudicial murders. However, community police officers are going up against an institution that gives them no space to breath and that belittles their work. It is through the daily interactions between residents and police officers that change is happening, not through institutional reforms.

The new space that the community base of Calabar has created has opened up a chance to challenge preconceptions and create new paradigms. This space however, was not just created by the

government, but also by the residents of Calabar by opening their residence association building to the police. It is this collaborative effort that has begun to break down the walls of intimidation that previously prevented any open dialogue from occurring. During the three weeks I spent researching in Calabar, I got to know police officers and began feeling more and more comfortable in the community and around them. Although there are still huge racial and historical obstacles to cross, changes are occurring and it is through human to human interactions that old beliefs are being challenged. The government only made the first move and now it is up to the police officers, who are underpaid and underprepared, to recreate their roles in society and begin to win back the trust of a population that has historically been marginalized and abused.

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## Appendix

I could have probably done a similar project in the USA. I'm sure there are similar community police practices being implemented in some cities, but there are some aspects that were unique to Brazil. For example, Brazil has a stronger cultural mistrust of the police. Additionally, Brazil has undergone a military dictatorship that institutionally changed the police which is a phenomenon not present in the United States. Furthermore, the fact that the police station was the building used by the residence association created a completely unique dynamic that is incredibly unlikely to see anywhere else. Most importantly however, is the fact that the Brazilian state completely abandoned the neighborhood of Calabar and other favelas so they were essentially ruled by drug traffickers which certainly does not exist in the United States.

I may have been able to do a similar study in an African-American or Latino community in a city in the United States because those communities have similar relationships of mistrust and violence with the police. For example, the current program by Mayor Bloomberg in New York City of stop and frisk is greatly harassing African-American and Latino communities and creating many of the same problems seen here in Calabar regarding the relationship between the police and people.

However in the United States the government is generally not believed to be as corrupt as the Brazilian government, so the essential relationship between citizens and the state is very different than that of Brazil. There would probably be more examples of American organizations working through the government to resolve their problems while in Brazil there would probably be more NGOs working on those same problems, but coming up with their own solutions.

My learning style was changed by the ISP process and I found myself relying more on people to obtain information rather than books and websites. I have learned to value more the information

obtained from a person living the experience rather than an academic speaking about the same issue with a more analytical perspective, but still from a distance and not speaking from real life experiences.

Most of the monograph is primary data. I used secondary sources mainly when describing the history of Calabar. I used a book written by a community organizer of Calabar that described the beginning of the youth group that won many political battles. I also included some information that I had researched before the ISP and was part of my literature review.

Most of the data I used for my monograph came from informal interviews. I decided which interviews to use more by how invested the person interviewed was in getting their view across. Many people gave me the answers I wanted, but I used more the interviews in which the person was speaking more from personal experience and really wanted to convey his/her message. However I made sure to include most of my data and not just use the data that fit my paper the best, except for when it came to reading the book regarding the community organizer from Calabar, but that was because it was an entire book in Portuguese and I had to use my time wisely.

The drop-offs that were part of my SIT learning experience were excellent in fostering a sense of comfort and confidence to just go up to random people and start talking to them. This was especially important for my ISP because I wasn't really working with a specific organization. I was trying to get the views of everybody in the community including the police officers so I had to go out and search for people and not have my interviews set up for me by my adviser. However, I can't stress enough how helpful my host mom was in putting me into contact with the right people.

My principal problem I encountered was scheduling an interview with the captain of the community base, but I understand that was because she was very busy. Things probably would have run smoother if the community base had been contacted before my arrival and had known of my research. The reason why this didn't happen was because I was the first one doing an ISP on the topic



so the contact wasn't there, but also because my adviser felt that I should focus primarily on the point of view of the residents, but that was not what I wanted for my ISP. I wanted to get the view of both the police and residents.

My biggest time constraint probably involved the final write up, but that could have easily been resolved with me beginning to write earlier and managing my time better.

My original topic never really changed substantially, but it definitely changed in many ways. As I conducted my research I found that what I had previously thought about the greater introduction of the state was wrong, and so I focused more on the more human relationship between the police and residents. Furthermore, as I discovered more about the relationship I learned of new factors that I needed to study and helped me create new questions for my interviews. My research definitely guided me and I didn't guide my research.

My host mom helped me a lot in putting me in contact with different people. However many of my interviewees were obtained by my merely introducing myself to the police station and meeting people out in the community. I also obtained the book regarding the community organizer in Calabar through a friend of my host mom. I was very proactive about finding sources for my research.

I decided to write down notes during my interviews and not audio-record them because of the sensitivity of my topic and many people probably would have felt uncomfortable talking if I had been recording.

I only spoke with my advisor once and it wasn't for a very long time. I admit that I didn't make enough of an effort to meet with him. I called him a few times and he didn't pick up, but I probably should have just gone to his office. However I didn't really need his help, I already had a pretty good idea of how to conduct my research and I didn't reach any huge obstacles.

Before conducting my ISP I had read about how the pacification police units in Rio were in many ways extending the capitalist market to favelas and I didn't really find that to be true in my research, but I hadn't placed much importance on that idea to begin with. What was pretty big was how the community already had many services and I found that the police weren't exactly the bridge between the government/urban services and the community that I thought they would be. However I quickly found myself more interested in the personal relationships between the police and residents and focused my research on that. I didn't go in with any strict framework, but I did have a generally idea of what I wanted/ was going to find so I was able to effectively guide my interview towards my problem statement and didn't have much useless data.

I gained a closer look into how the police are in many ways like the residents and just victims of the institutions and systems they are part of. I was able to find the humanity and humbleness in both the residents and police which I wouldn't have found had I not done field research.

Since my ISP was in a different city (Salvador) I was able to learn about a different type of Brazilian culture which I thought was extremely important considering the vast cultural differences between all the different states of Brazil. I also got to live in a favela which was great because I saw the real life situation of the lower class of Brazil which I hadn't seen with my previous host family.

The main lesson I learned from my ISP is that to obtain great field research you have to be proactive and take risks and just ask people if you could talk to them. Additionally, language skills are extremely important. I also learned that you should have some personal investment in your research. In my case I am researching different police programs in relation to drug trafficking because of the terrible drug war that is going on in Mexico currently. I am in some ways looking for an answer and response to the problem of violent drug trafficking and terrible relationships between the police and people. My personal investment helped me speak to people and explain to them that I wasn't just doing

this research because I thought it was interesting or I wanted to be published in some academic journal, this made people take me more seriously.

My recommendation for any future student who wants to do the same project is that he/she should really try to explore the whole picture and not just focus on the residents or police. In order to analyze a relationship you need to understand both actors. Also you shouldn't automatically label someone a victim or perpetrator. Some cops are aggressive and some are nice, some residents are disrespectful and some have genuinely suffered police brutality. I would say that you need to keep an open mind and don't be afraid to speak to anyone. I am considering applying for a Fullbright and continuing my research.

Special thanks to Rosangela, my host mother in Salvador, for opening her home to me and putting me in contact with so many people that proved crucial to my research. Also, to Samuel Vida for being my advisor and providing valuable insight.