Bagunçaço cleans up the Bagunça of “Racial Democracy”; Afro-Brazilian Consciousness and Racial Identity in Alagados, Salvador, Bahia.

Monica Mugure

Spring Semester 2008

Project Advisor: Joselito Crispim S. de Assis, Founder Grupo Cultural Bagunçaço
Table of Contents

Definitions of Terms used---------------------------> Pages 4 - 5

Acknowledgements ________________________________> Page 6

Abstract ______________________________________-> Pages 7

Understanding the Social Context

• Location of Research ---------------------------> Pages 8 – 9
• History of Afro-Brazilian Identity Deconstruction-----------------> Pages 10 - 12
• Background on Bagunçaço ---------------------------> Pages 13 - 14

Statement of Social Relevance -------------------------> Page 15

Methodology _____________________________________> Pages 16 - 18

Introduction

• Personal Strife with Identity ---------------------------> Pages 19 - 20

Theoretical Framework

Understanding Present Day Afro-Brazilian Identity

• “Black is more than skin deep” ---------------------------> Pages 21- 22
• Introduction to the Enter Jovem Class ---------------------------> Pages 23
• Media’s role in deconstructing Afro-Brazilian Identity---------------> Pages 24 - 25
Bagunçaço’s approach

- Education -> Pages 26 - 28
- Media and Technology as tools for social change -> Page 29

Conclusion -> Pages 30-31

Footnotes -> Pages 32 - 33

Bibliography of Primary Sources -> Pages 34 - 35

Bibliography of Secondary Sources -> Page 36

Further Research -> Pages 37 - 38

Appendix -> Pages 39 - 43

Personal Thanks You’s -> Pages 44 - 46
Definitions of Terms Used

Banda da Lata ------------------------ Bagunçaço’s percussion group (ages 6-17)
Enter Jovem ------------------------ Bagunçaço’s job training class (ages 18-24)
TV Lata --------------------------- Bagunçaço’s television production team
Alagados ----------------------------- flooded
Bagunça ----------------------------- chaos, complete mess
Palafitas ---------------------------- houses built on stilts in slum communities
Favela ------------------------------ a slum community
Moreno ----------------------------- a person of black and white mixed heritage
Negro ------------------------------- a black person
Preto -------------------------------- the color black
Sarrara ----------------------------- a person of black and white mixed heritage with light
                                        skin and light hair
Cidade Baixa ----------------------- the lower city in Salvador
Cidade Alta ------------------------ the upper city in Salvador
Seda -------------------------------- silk
Cabelo force --------------------- hard hair

Vestibular ------------------------ an exam all Brazilians wishing to enter college must take

Quilombo communities ---------------- communities formed during slavery by run away slaves and their descendants

Acarajé -------------------------- a popular Candomble dish made out of fried dough with your choice of shrimp and smashed beans inside

Suco ----------------------------- juice

Maracuja ------------------------- passion fruit
Acknowledgements

I would first and foremost like to thank Oêlito Brandão, Shirley, Oliveira and Bill Calhoun for all the time and energy that went into this project before I even knew which course it would eventually take. Our Portuguese teacher Diana, thank you for providing us with the language skills that would later prove invaluable.

For everything that I have learned and will go on to teach because of your efforts, I want to extend my love and gratitude to all the staff and participants of Grupo Cultural Bagunçaço.

Joselito Crispim, you are to be revered, for welcoming me to your home, receiving me, understanding me, teaching me, and tapping into my soul, I am forever indebted.

Jasinan, thank you for your patience and for refusing to give in when I pleaded that your English needed more practice than my Portuguese. Elvis, for introducing me to high speed slang Portuguese and using up all the credits on my phone, Obridaga and I’m going to miss you. Freitas, you opened my eyes to a Salvador many never get to experience and asked for nothing in return, thank you and all the best in your Vestibular. Mauro keep practicing that English, Dona Celia, Sr. Paulo, Philipe and Ravanna thank you so much for your part in making my stay in Alagados unforgettable. To the lady at Vitoria Lunches where I bought suco de Maracuja every day, thank you and please believe me when I say that if it was possible to make the trip to Alagados from the United States everyday, I would make it just for a glass of your homemade passion juice.

To anyone else I might have forgotten because we all know my memory is not one to be relied on, thank you for your part whether big or otherwise in my enlightenment and may God bless.
Abstract

The 2001 Brazil census reports that of Brazil’s 150 million people, 53 percent of them are Afro-Brazilians and 47 percent are white. Of these, Afro-Brazilians hold a 28.5 percent illiteracy rate compared to the 11 percent held by whites. Income distribution indicates that the poorest 20 percent of the population owns only 2.6 percent of national wealth, while the wealthiest 10 percent command 48.1 percent. These facts are prime examples of the skewed distribution of wealth across Brazil and offer insight to the reality experienced by Afro-Brazilians who are most affected by this disparity. Together with the assumption commonly held by whites that racism does not exist in Brazil, the low status ascribed to Afro-Brazilians, their history of exploitation and abuse, and socio-cultural marginalization, Brazil’s black communities have become anxious and confused about their identities. There is perhaps no condition that serves to magnify this confusion as that of great poverty. One Non Governmental Organization based in a favela in Alagados, Salvador, Bahia that struggles to resurrect the self-esteem and consequently the identities of these impoverished Afro-Brazilian youths is Grupo Cultural Bagunçaço.

Central to the rhetoric of Grupo Cultural Bagunçaço is the idea of rescuing the self-esteem and identity of a marginalized people. But with the increasing roles that public education and the media are maintaining on the creation of identity and the affirmation of a people’s place in society, what can a community based organization like Bagunçaço offer to its Afro-Brazilian students on the foothills of an eroded identity? This question was the subject of my curiosity and efforts to find its resolution was the reason I set out for Alagados.

The two and a half weeks I spent in Alagados were marked by constant reminders of the force education coupled with cultural activities and cultural field trips can have in instilling the idea of “melhoridade” (em betterment). Through these classes and activities, Bagunçaço not only aided the youth of Alagados in the formation of their self-esteem and Afro-Brazilian identities, it also undertook the greater obligation of teaching the youth of Alagados to demand and work for a better society; “uma sociadade humana” (a human society).
Understanding the Social Context

Location of Research

1.1 Background information on Salvador and Alagados

“O Salvador é diferente” Salvador is in deed different.

According to the tourism website, Salvador is one of the most beautiful cities in the world, “the land of happiness” they call it. Its famous history and legacy left behind by “people from other continents” (mainly slaves) along with its vibrant nightlife and hospitable people make it a must-see city full of “natural and cultural richness.” But underneath all the beach front apartments, expensive restaurants and air conditioned public buses, there lays a large section of the population that has been so completely marginalized by the unequal distribution of wealth in Salvador that they are almost in a completely different city.

An escarpment divides Salvador into two main sections, Cidade Alta, the upper-city and Cidade Baixa, the lower-city. The geographical division between these two sections is so drastic as to warrant the presence of an elevator, the Elevador Lacerda, to connect the two areas. In the past, Cidade Alta was the administrative and religious area and also where the majority of the population was concentrated while Cidade Baixa was the financial center with a port and a market. Today, the upper city is still host to the administrative and religious sectors but the majority of the low-income communities have been pushed to Cidade Baixa. In fact the difference in access to services and education between the two regions is so great that Freitas, the Bagunçaço Enter Jovem class instructor opines it to be “two cities within a city, Cidade Alta for the rich whites and Cidade Baixa for the poor blacks.”

Grupo Cultural Bagunçaço is located in Alagados, an area that encompasses one of the poorest periphery communities in Cidade Baixa. Even within Cidade Baixa, the disparity in income distribution lends itself to further marginalizing an already marginalized people. Neighborhoods like Boa Viagem and Bonfim home to the famous Bonfim Church are only a 10 minute walk from
Alagados but the differences are stark. Boa Viagem boasts a public plaza with trees and benches compared to Alagados’ barren spaces, lights line the streets leading up to the beach in Boa Viagem, but in Alagados, the occasionally illuminated streets are only so due to the light spilling out of people’s homes. In the short distance between Boa Viagem and Bonfim, we passed two hospitals, one public and the other private. Freitas explained that the public hospital serviced the favela communities of Alagados, Uruguai, Jardim Cruzerio and massaranduba while the residents of Boa Viagem and Bonfim went to the private hospital close by. ¹

This is the reality of the people living in Alagados with poor schools, less than adequate hospitals, no jobs and a society that is constantly reminding them of their second class citizenship. And so when a post card purchased at Shopping Salvador (in Cidade Alta) reads “Diferente é ter dois andares. Ser “alta” e “baixa”, com um elevador no meio para ligar” (Different is to have two floors. Being "high" and "low", with an elevator in the middle to connect), I opine that the two realities like the floors are indeed different and the elevator in the middle by no means connects the two truths as the “land of happiness” is an actuality only for those living in Cidade Alta.


² http://www.emtursa.ba.gov.br/template.asp


⁴ Events, May 6, 2008, ISP Field Journal, pg 13

⁵ Observations, May 11, 2008, ISP Field Journal, pg 49
Understanding the Social Context

1.2 History of the Deconstruction of Afro-Brazilian Identity and Efforts to Resurrect it

Historically, Blacks all over the world have been the victims of the most grotesque violence, both abroad as slaves and in their home countries on the receiving end of colonialism. Brazil in South America was the first colony in the Americas to use black slave labor with Africans captured in the central African region during the early periods of slavery and West African region during the later. Through the 200 year period of slavery, violence, torture and murder was employed to ensure that the black majority remained the workers and at the bottom ranks of society while the dominant white minority reaped the benefits.

In the Northeastern region, Salvador emerged from slavery to form the Empire in 1889 without any large changes in its social and economic order; black labor was still fundamental to the economic support of the bourgeois elite. Blacks continued to occupy the lowest positions which mainly consisted of occupations largely dependent on strength rather than specialization as the now robust economy of Brazil coupled with government initiated incentives afforded job opportunities to white immigrants. This was not only detrimental to their self-esteem and identity but also to that of their children who grew up learning to associate low jobs with skin color and with the idea that regardless of how hard they worked, they would never get the “good” jobs because they were black. As observed by Jefferson Bacelar in Blacks in Salvador: Racial Paths, “nothing changed in relation to the racial question (after abolition); racist behavior became so internalized into the daily life and habits of whites and blacks throughout Salvador that racism became a ’natural’ component of society”. The “pact of silence”, serving to maintain the unequal treatments between blacks and whites emerged as a result of this “natural” component of society. In an attempt to maintain their identities, Afro-Brazilians preserved their heritage through Candomblé, carnival, religious festivals, cuisine and forms of entertainment such as samba and capoeira.
Bacelar continues to note that since the dominant sector was formed almost exclusively by whites, the rare person of mixed heritage i.e. black and white, who made it to the top almost immediately conformed to the established hierarchy by abandoning his/her Afro-Brazilian traditions, values, behaviors etc and adopting those of his newly acquired neighbors. This went so far as to the higher class mestizos buying and selling slaves even when they included their own relatives. Following in line with this, middle and lower class mestizos identified themselves with the ruling class in their manner of values held; behaviors adopted and even their choice of candidates during elections. Africans who chose to continue their traditions were forced to do so in secrecy and far worse than the risk of their master finding out, they also had to be weary of their fellow slave who might betray them in exchange for a less strenuous job. Given this, one can begin to understand the early roots of Afro-Brazilian identity erosion and why a movement to redeem their culture was necessary.

In the early 1930’s black movements emerged with the objective of denouncing and struggling against racism in its various forms. Movements such as the Frente Negra Brasileira, Teatro Experimental do Negro and Teatro do Povo were all aimed at organizing Afro-Brazilians in combating inequality, discrimination and challenging the position of blacks in the class structure. Though the movement Frente Negra Brasileira was crushed by the dictatorship of President Vargas (1930-1945) and the two Theatre spaces lessened their role in the black community from activism to solely holding meeting to discuss black realities, they never the less set the stage for the new wave of activism that was to take hold half less than half a century later.

Beginning in 1970, black organizations devoted to understanding Afro-Brazilian history and culture and promoting cultural events surfaced. Their objective was to combat the lack of identity and self-esteem in Afro-Brazilians as well as the denounce unemployment, favelization and the lack of leisure activities. To this end, community schools emphasizing African history and culture were erected in favela communities, as an alternative to the educational system that only provided elitist points of view and a stereotyped image of the black male and female.
And while an attempt has been made in affording educational and occupational opportunities to more of its black population, the Brazil of 2008 has still left the black population to fend for itself. Howard Winant in *Racial Democracy and Racial Identity: Comparing the United States and Brazil* notes that “Statistics of race show deep racial inequalities and therefore an existence of racism in a country that has always claimed that it did not exist” these inequalities have not disappeared simply because the state has finally acknowledge the presence of racism. They are very much a reality of Afro-Brazilian lives and are detrimental to not only their self-esteem and black identity but also to that that they pass on to their children.

Grupo Cultural Bagunçaço, Olodum and Ilê-Ayê among others have taken it upon themselves the responsibility of instilling knowledge and pride in Afro-Brazilian youths. Grupo Cultural Bagunçaço, the location of my research, aims to rescue the self-esteem and identity of its participants as well as contribute to their social, human and professional development, because they too like Jefferson Bacelar believe that “there is significance in being able to say that one is black whether in a beach front casa, a high rise apartment building or a favela”
Understanding the Social Context

1.3 Background on Bagunçaço

Founded in Alagados, a region that includes the poor communities of uruguai, Jardim Cruzerio and massaranduba areas and one that was well known for its houses formerly built on stilts over the ocean, (part of the ocean has presently been filled with soil as part of a government funded effort to build new homes for the people of Alagados) Grupo Cultural Bagunçaço has in the past suffered the same rejection and marginalization as the poor families it serves.

Grupo Cultural Bagunçaço was founded in 1991 by Joselito Crispim after he was called by the neighbors to quiet a group of kids who having no other resources available to them, literally drummed on old pieces of metal cans as homemade instruments. Sr. Crispim realized the usefulness of this type of activity in not only keeping teenagers off the streets but also as a tool to instill Afro-Brazilian cultural identity and began working with the teens to organize a band; Banda de Lata.

Today, the group has 6 spaces with activities ranging from music in the Bagun’Orin space, Video production in the Bagun’Cinema, acting in the Bagun’Teatro, reading and writing in the Bagun’Literatura, art using recycled materials in the Bagun’Artes and the Percussão space that specializes in highlighting the participants’ musical talents as well as their educators’ knowledge.

They also have other community oriented spaces such as the Bagun’Biblioteca, a library that was opened in 2001 and has about 10 computers and a variety of books in Portuguese ranging in topics from theatre, to human rights and religion and sexuality. The younger children are allowed to use the computers only after garnering a certain amount of points which they can earn through reading books. Bagun’multimedia where members of the community can learn basic windows, Word, Excel, PowerPoint, web design and robotics is also a recent addition to Bagunçaço. Bagun’Comunidade is an event supposed to be held every Saturday from 8-12pm to show case poetry, writings, dances and music by the participants of Grupo Cultural Bagunçaço but due to lack of funding it is usually never held. One poem found on the Bagunçaço website and written by 13 year old Joseval Do Espirito S. 
Silva Junior of the music composition workshop of 2001 speaks of a fisherman who every morning pulls his boat towards the middle of the sea and fishes all day. He knows he is going to get tired but still he continues and at the end of the day, when his face is tired and his skin is burnt, he realizes he has a friend, his boat, “a grain of sand in the middle of the beach.” The fisherman bears eerie resemblance to Grupo Cultural Bagunçaço in that, though each knows the work ahead will be long and tiresome, they begin every morning purposeful and determined “a grain of sand in the middle of the beach.”

---

6Events, April 19, 2008, ISP Field Journal, pg 4

7WWW.Baguncaco.com.br
Statement of Social Relevance

The direct purpose of my research is to understand the process of re-Africanizing Afro-Brazilian children and youths growing up impoverished and marginalized. Specifically, I want to look at the challenges they face in constructing their identity given that most of them come from broken down family structures and are often times breadwinners thus having little or no time to explore the question of who they are and where they’re from. Related to this topic, I also hope to gain insight on the motives and intricacies of Grupo Cultural Bagunçaço and how it can be modeled, reproduced and sustained outside of Salvador, Brazil. The latter is of great importance to me as I feel as though a the dwellers of the Kibera slum in Kenya where I spent most of my childhood are experiencing the same domination and marginalization as the residents of Alagados and as such the youth has abandoned that which has previously worked well for us in terms of happiness in favor of development and capitalism.

I strongly believe that the presence of a project like Grupo Cultural Bagunçaço would have a great impact in the preservation of our Kenyan culture by our youths and consequently rescue our identity and self-esteem that is like that of Afro-Brazilians, on the foothills of erosion.
Methodology

The methodologies used for my research were mainly cultural emersion, the reading of secondary resources, observations made in the classes, participation inside and outside the classes, and interviews with the Enter Jovems as well as others involved in the management of Bagunçaço. I realize that the framing and environment of some of the questions posed might have led the participants to give environmentally desirable answers. And I also acknowledge that my role as a black woman engaged in conversations that at times called into question the “blackness” of some of the participants may have directed the responses into a particular direction.

Secondary Resources

Prior to my departure to Salvador, I did some background reading in search of possible answers as to why Afro-Brazilian identity is in such great need of community run projects like Bagunçaço. I have included some of my research in this monograph as I imagine it would be of great help to you as it was to me in understanding the history and source of Afro-Brazilian identity woes.

Class attendance

Although Freitas instructed two Enter Jovem classes, one in the morning 8AM-12PM and another in the afternoon 2PM-6PM, I elected to attend the afternoon class so as to forge a relationship with the students and fully immerse myself into their reality.

I also attended two Saturday morning Human Rights, Anti-Racism and Gender Issues classes held between 9AM and 12PM with both the sections of the Enter Jovem class. The Saturday class was voluntary and so I gathered the students who attended were ones really interested in learning about their society and ways to improve it. Although I also understand family and financial strains may have hindered efforts made by others to attend the class.

Observations
As noted in other sections of this monograph, my observations of Bagunçaço and the community of Alagados as a whole were made as I lived my life in Alagados. I did not always carry my journal around or record every incident that took place; I just simply immersed myself into the community and allowed the Alagados wind to blow me whichever way it may. And as such I understand that my data might lack clarity or be less than satisfying in some of its explanations, and for that, I offer my apologies in advance.

**Interviews**

My plan was to conduct the interviews in a very direct and structured manner, but after meeting the participants, I realized that it would be a lot more helpful for me to get to know them and their community first before I started asking questions that had a tendency to get personal. During the first two interviews, I focused on answering my problem statement and did not leave much room for digression, but towards the end, it became apparent that if I wanted to know why the participants responded in a certain way to certain questions, I would first have to understand their psyche. This was especially true for my interview with Joselito Crispim during which I decided to chatter into the waters of his hopes, dreams and aspirations outside of Bagunçaço.

**Cultural Immersion**

Perhaps the most important and useful methodology I employed during my two and a half week stay at Alagados was immersion. I chose to reside with my advisor, Joselito Crispim because part of my living in Alagados and letting the wind carry me involved being there even after the gates of Bagunçaço closed (which they never did but metaphorically speaking) and there was nothing left for me to do but sit in my room and contemplate the day’s events.

Joselito’s life at home and his relationship with the community outside of Bagunçaço painted a clearer picture of what self-sacrifice in favor of the next generation really entails.

All the secondary sources, class attendances, observations and interviews could never have captured the reality of being a roommate to Joselito, his two sons Elvis and Josinan as well as the community
of Alagados (which I literally felt like lived in Joselito’s house as there was always someone from the neighborhood spending the night). The short time I spent with them took me out of the “fringes of humanity” and into the lives of those most affected by the crimes of racism and inequality.
Introduction

My Personal strife with Identity

The day after we received our American Visas, I spent hours in the bathroom scrubbing my body with the roughest lufa I could find, when my mother asked me what I was doing in the bathroom for so long, I said I had been trying to wash off some of my darkness so that when I got to America, the white people would like me. The year before that, I had spent a whole day walking up and down downtown Nairobi trying to find a pharmacy store that would sell bleaching cream to a 12 year old. That same year, my cousin and I had been subject so a severe whooping after my mother caught us attempting to apply her hair straightening crème. And although they say a burnt child dreads fire, this was not the case with Shiro (my cousin) and I, as we were on the receiving end of a cane two more times before we finally settled on blow drying our hair.

For me, the battle with my dark skin did not begin with the coming of menstruation or the growing of breasts, no; it had grown wisdom teeth by then. My insecurities began with the light hearted comments from family members about how beautiful my younger brother and sister’s skin was coupled with the occasional instances when I would overhear local neighborhood women ask my mother “why is she so black”? By the time I entered middle school, I had been called “blackie, charcoal, skillet, darkness and mid night” too many times to know how to act like those words didn’t bother me. Worse yet were my mother’s explanations of how dark skin was beautiful all the while using “dawa”; a skin rash treatment more commonly used as a lightening crème.

This is how I came to being; with this unequivocal desire to be light and have straight hair and much later, lighter eyes.

The night before our flight to La Guardia from Jommo Kenyatta International Airport, I looked at my burning skin on our cracked mirror with great disappointment; my efforts to scrub off some of my blackness had been fruitless, America would have to deal with “Njeri makaa” (charcoal Njeri).
It should be a funny thing that it was the United States of America, in a state called Texas and a small northeastern town named Lewisville that I came to take pride in my dark skin. In this country where people had for centuries been persecuted for the color of their skin, I came to love the color of mine. Through teachers, friends, television, books, movies and personal experience, I gained an appreciation for black skin and everything that it represented. The pain of torture and bondage it had endured and somehow managed to be overcome, each time thicker than the last, each time wiser than the last, each time more determined than the last, and each time closer to mental liberation was an inspiration to my distorted sense of self.

It should then follow that it is in Salvador, Bahia, Brazil that I have come to understand my skin. For you see, it is not enough to love, no, that while that being a task all on its own, is too simple; it is required that we perceive and recognize the meaning of this dark skin. It is necessary that we as a black people use our history, intuition and reason to arrive at a conclusion as to what we want this black skin to speak of us.

In the following manuscript, I have attempted to capture this black consciousness I speak of from an Afro-Brazilian stand point. And while words being as such can never fully capture the range and depth of human emotions, it would be a grave injustice to those involved in my edification if I failed to attempt to tell of their ongoing struggle with identity here in Alagados, Salvador, Bahia, Brazil.
“Black is more than skin deep”

Prior to my departure to Salvador, I was in many occasions on the receiving end of advice as to what my life in Salvador was going to be like. It ranged from watching out for the “sweet tongued men”, to the “free” gifts I should never accept and even which hair styles to avoid as they immediately marked one as a tourist. But the one thing that my many advisors never failed to mention was the color of Salvador, “everyone in Salvador is black” they remarked.

Much to their credit, Salvador was just like they had described. Everyone was black; dark skinned, light skinned, some with Afros, some with braids, others with dread locks and even more with straight hair. I met blacks who looked like whites, blacks who looked like Native Americans and blacks who looked like Asians; it was like nothing I had ever witnessed before. And unlike the sore thumb I had been in Fortaleza, I blended right in and counted my blessings for landing in the meca of Afro-Brazilian identity.

But before I could go into the business of finding instances of Afro-Brazilian identity deconstruction and why there was a need for organizations like Grupo Cultural Bagunçaço, I first had to understand what being black meant to an Afro-Brazilian.

From my talks with other blacks in the program, we had all come to a consensus that it was more than just the dark skin, we opined it was something internal that arose from the appreciation of the history and culture of the dark skin we wore everyday. Would the Afro-Brazilians of Alagados be of the same mind or did they opine different? This was the task I dedicated my first week in Alagados to resolving.

I looked for hints as to how the average Afro-Brazilian selecting fruits at the local Feira or standing at the door of a clothing store waiting for customer, or the black transsexual man/woman selling Acarajé, the lovely dark haired woman at Vitoria Lanches where I bought a glass of suco de Maracuja everyday, or even the woman currently exiting Mercadinho Santana would define themselves, but
nothing. Nothing I observed in their behavior, or interactions with other blacks provided any insight into how they viewed the question of Afro-Brazilian identity. So I decided to take my dilemma up with the Afro-Brazilian participants of Bagunçaço’s Banda da Lata as well as the Enter Jovem class.

Within the younger Banda da Lata participants, I observed three re-occurring themes in their definition of what it means to be an Afro-Brazilian. One’s blackness is first tied to the identity of their parents and family members, then to their skin color, and finally to the texture of their hair. Josinan for example, cited his Quilombo ancestry as his reason for identifying with the black race\(^8\) while Ravanna commented that she was “negra” because her father was “negro”\(^9\). While they understood that being a person of mixed black and white heritage meant that your skin was lighter and your hair finer, they all never the less agreed that a moreno or sarrara identity is black identity and in instances that it isn’t it is because of the person’s lack of a cultural background.

From the older generation I came to understand that blackness is not only the color of one’s skin, or the texture of their hair, or even the race one’s parents identify with. Blackness is the heart, soul and mind set one forms after learning about the history of his people both in the present country and abroad and the struggles they overcame so someone somewhere would one day be proud to say they were black. Blackness unlike whiteness is inclusive, it accepts anyone who appreciates it and respects it for all that it has endured for being black. To this end, the preservation of Afro-Brazilian culture is important as it is the base for the formation of Afro-Brazilian identity.

As I ventured further into other questions relevant to my studies, I realized that I would have to focus shift my focus from the Banda da Lata kids to the Enter Jovem students as they were the only participants who came to Bagunçaço on a daily basis.

\(^8\)Interview with Josinan, May 7, 2008, ISP Field Journal, pg 58 \(^9\)Interview with Ravanna, May 5, 2008, ISP Field Journal, pg 52
The Enter Jovem Class

Enter Jovem is a class that incorporates the technology of basic windows, word, excel, powerpoint and web design with Afro-Brazilian history and culture, African history, Human Rights, gender, tolerance and many other courses in an effort to prepare Afro-Brazilian youths ages 17-24 for employment. As noted by Mauro a former Enter Jovem participant, “most young adults don’t have the job skills they need to enter the world market and are therefore at a disadvantage of getting employed. Enter Jovem helps them with their communication and language skills all of which are important when trying to get into the job market.”

Participants of the Enter Jovem course are required to be members of the Alagados community and have either completed high school or be currently enrolled. The three month course itself costs nothing but there is a 120 hours of attendance requirement the students are obligated to fulfill before they can receive their certification.

Most of the students come from low income single parent families and are often times single parents themselves. Due to the discrimination they face for being young, black and from poor neighborhoods, they develop a very low self-esteem and end up either staying in their homes (females) or joining neighborhood gangs. Many have grown up with the failure mentality reinforced by their status in the community that they are unaware of their possibilities and the impact they can have on their community. Frequently, one finds that these young Afro-Brazilians know a skill passed down from parents or relatives but due to their underdeveloped confidence and poor communication skills, the talents are never utilized.

For the Enter Jovem instructors, their goals are simple; they wish for the participants to graduate with a better understanding of the world they live in and their own potential to improve it. They hope that they can show them that the road to a higher education is not closed off to them if they are willing to work hard. But most of all, they desire to instill humanity into the next generation of Afro-Brazilians leaders.
The Media’s role in the deconstruction of Afro-Brazilian identity

The most destructive force in the struggle for identity is the media. Because of the way the dominant white culture has managed to manifest itself into so many aspects of young Afro-Brazilian life such as the magazine one reads, the music played on radio stations, popular television shows, the latest fashion, etc., many blacks are abandoning their values in favor of white morals. Capitalism and the poor state of many Afro-Brazilians have made it easier to buy hair crème to straighten one’s hair that to find a hair salon that caters to natural black hair. And while some young adults are still attempting to preserve their black heritage through arts like Afro dancing, drumming, capoeira, the religion of Candomblé among others, it is becoming increasingly difficult when everything around them continues to insist that white culture is better.

For the three months that I haven’t spent in Brazil watching novellas, the evening news and occasionally catching a movie on television, I can honestly say I have observed less than five blacks portrayed in a position other than one of great misery. In fact, as noted in one of the Saturday class discussion on the projection of blacks on media, the typical role played by an Afro-Brazilian is usually that of a favella dweller, a poor beggar or homeless man, and in most occasions, housemaid or nanny. In instances where an Afro-Brazilian is not in a position of difficulty, he is either a soccer player or a model, the latter usually of light skin, straight hair and colored eyes. These are the images replayed over and over in novellas and other popular television shows, printed in magazines and marketed to the young Afro-Brazilian population. Images that say all that is white is beautiful and black culture is either to be appreciated as folklore or exploited through tourism to service financial ends.

The Brazilian media has taken to practicing what is now within the Afro-Brazilian racial consciousness circle being termed “assimilation colonization”. This is where the young impressionable minds of Afro-Brazilian teenagers are constantly being bombarded with images of what’s new, what’s stylish and what everyone is doing which all coincidentally happens to be part of white culture.
As an example to the racist nature of the media, when asked to name some of the more famous newspaper journalists, the class of about 30 Enter Jovem students could only name 2, one of whom was dead; they managed to name 6 blacks in the media currently serving as positive role models named no black journalist who featured on magazines on a daily basis. For further evidence can be observed in the world of advertisement, a prime example has to do with companies that manufacture products for both white and black populations. The manufacturers of Vaseline Intensive Care Lotion advertise most of the skin lotions available for light skin but fail to mention Pele Morena e Negra (for black and mixed skin). Seda, a hair product company has a hair crème specifically designed for “cabelos force” yet the bottle features an Afro-Brazilian woman with straight hair. There are no commercials on television or in the magazines advertising hair care products that help maintain your natural black hair. Instead of the Negro wearing dreadlocks being seen as a black man or woman proud of his “African kinks”, he is held up and used for the folklorization of black culture.

This “Americanization” of the Brazilian youth no matter how subtle or harmless it may appear is destructive to the Afro-Brazilian culture and identity. And if permitted to continue, then all the sacrifices and strides made in the last 40 years both in South and North America will have been in vain.

10 Interview with Mauro, May 9, 2008, ISP Field Journal, pg 62

11 Events, May 10, 2008, ISP Field Journal, pg 17

12 Events, May 10, 2008, ISP Field Journal, pg 15
Bagunçaço’s Approach to Instilling self-esteem and Afro-Brazilian identity

**Education**

For those of us who happen to hold education in such high regards as to opine it not only the key to economical but also social and cultural change, Bagunçaço has done us proud.

The reality for most Afro-Brazilians is that the education they receive in public schools is so disconnected from their own truths that rather than aid them in realizing their potential, it has served to distance them. One of Bagunçaço’s principal aims is to complement this formal education with cultural instruction in areas that are a reality to many Afro-Brazilians.

With days designated to the discussion of the Steve Biko Institute, an educational center based in Salvador that helps young Afro-Brazilians prepare for the vestibular exams, the Enter Jovem course strives to inspire within its participants the possibility of achieving a higher education.

Debates geared towards promoting the idea of tolerance of other’s race, creed, nationality and religious affiliations are also central to the rhetoric of providing a realistic education. In one of the classes where Freitas, the course instructor, introduced the topic of homosexuality, he observed that because of recent incidents of violence against gays, it was important for the class to hold this discussion in an effort to “understand ideas and ways of living that might be contrary to (their) own”¹³.

Another idea most Enter Jovem participants confessed to giving little thought before attending the course is the notion of marginalization. All the students understood that racism was still alive in Salvador and that the resources available to their white counterparts was not always readily available to them what they failed to realize however, was devastation this had on their self-esteem and relations with others. Because society has taught them that blacks living on the periphery is “normal” they never think to question it; Freitas is entrusted with the task of teaching them not only the racist oppression this kind of thought perpetrates but also that it is a violation of their human rights.
Another way that Bagunçaço is aiding its youth in the process of self-identity is through the awareness of Afro-Brazilian as well as Afro history and culture. On May 12th, the day before the commemoration of the abolition of slavery in Brazil, the students were asked to present their research on Afro-Brazilians important to the history of Brazil. Along with this, the students also had to create a poster with pictures of blacks from all over the world that was later displayed on Bagunçaço’s front entrance.

During the same week, they watched three films all depicting the plight of blacks all over the world. The first one was a short documentary depicting scenes from the carnival in Salvador the previous year. The purpose of this documentary was to bring to their attention to the fact that although slavery in Brazil was abolished some 100 plus years ago, that did not mark the end of institutionalized racism. The second film “Vista Minha Pele” switched the realities of blacks and whites in present day Brazilian society. This was part of an effort to expose the absurdity of racism and marginalization. Hotel Rwanda, the last and arguably most emotional of the three movies depicted scenes from the 1994 genocide that took place in Rwanda as the whole world watched. With this film, Freitas wanted his students “to see the realities of other blacks” he wanted them to “understand that racism was not only constructed in the Brazilian mind”, it exists all around the world and just because it does, it should not be allowed to continue.

Other classes to spread the awareness of the destructive effects of popular society include the Saturday Human Rights, Gender and Anti-Racism class which on the two times I frequented, focused their discussion on institutionalized racism in the Brazilian media.

Perhaps one of the more important potions of the Enter Jovem course is the encompassing of all their learning into one employment preparation class. During this class, the students are advised on ways to make themselves more marketable in the white dominated job market. The advice ranges from learning other languages and improving their communication skills, to making informed decisions, understanding and accepting the ideas of others and most of all persistence in overcoming marginalization.
Finally, through the action of allowing students like Jade and I to come into their community and become apart of their reality, the Enter Jovem participants in turn get to experience and learn about a culture different from their own. In fact it is through this cultural exchange that students like Mauro have realized their potential to change their futures and abandoned the environmentally dictated “dreams” in favor of their own dreams.
**Technology**

In the recent wave of technology that has made its access imperative in almost all aspects of our lives and with the many instances, where it is serving to isolate and limit our human interactions, Bagunçaço has found a new way to use it in the securing of young Afro-Brazilian futures.

TV Lata, Bagunçaço’s experimental television is turning the media’s disastrous effects on the fragile identity of young Afro-Brazilians into an object of social change.

Since television is among the most effective mode of communication for both the white and black populations, TV Lata has taken upon itself the responsibility of spreading cultural awareness within the Alagados community. It is fully ran and managed by the participants of Banda da Lata and Enter Jovem and airs three times a week as a local channel within the immediate surroundings of Bagunçaço. In fact the TV Lata project has been so successful that it has garnered support from international supporters in Spain, Belgium and France and is currently airing in 190 different countries.

With TV Lata, Joselito hopes to use technology to “bring us together” to the humanity and community that technology has often times served to destroy. He hopes that by airing cultural events and messages of cultural preservation, we can all remember “to be more human, to value our humanity, and to value one another”17.

17 Interview with Joselito Crispim, May 20, 2008, ISP Field Manual, pg 79
Conclusion

To get an idea of exactly how Bagunçaço has impacted the lives of those involved, I posed the following

Question: How has the presence of Bagunçaço changed your life?

Here are some of the responses.

Ravanna, 11 years old

- She now believes in the possibility of becoming a singer and helping her family out of poverty

Josinan, 15 years old

- Bagunçaço is his life, and within it he has found his identity and self-esteem
- He aspires to be achieve success in percussion so he can come back and help his community just like his father, Joselito

Mauro, 18 years old

- He always wanted to be a doctor because that is what society told him he should be, but with Bagunçaço he found his passion for drama and different cultures
- He now plans to study English so he can go to the United States and major in International Relations

Afternoon Enter Jovem class

- One student says she has been exposed to a lot of different things which have enhanced her knowledge of the world
- Another one says, she has made herself more marketable and her knowledge and potential have significantly increased
- Last one says her self-esteem and knowledge of the job market have improved\(^{21}\)

**Lesson Learned**

While far from achieving the goal of raising the self-esteem and Afro-Brazilian identity of all the residents of Alagados, Bagunçaço has achieved its aim of showing them the possibility of a better tomorrow. Through the integration of courses in history, culture, human rights, tolerance and technology into their formal education, Bagunçaço is preparing future generations of Afro-Brazilians for relations not only in the job market but in human interactions as well. As observed in many of my interviews with the students and staff at Grupo Cultural Bagunçaço, a lot of time we allow material things to dictate our happiness, we forget about human connections and it is sad that it at times requires instances of great catastrophes to bring us back to our “human nature”.

And so even though it is of great significance to create doctors and lawyers and engineers, it is more important for Bagunçaço to create good people because with good people comes good understanding and good understanding allows room for the formation of self-esteem and identities all of which lend a hand in the advancement of humanity, because as I learned from Joselito, humanity in the very end is what we are all obligated to pass down to our children, it is not wealth or even a powerful name, it is teaching them to live without attaching great importance to color or social standing, to simply marvel in the beauty of being a human being and engaging in human interactions.

---

18 Interview with Ravanna, May 5, 2008, ISP Field Journal, pg 54  
19 Interview with Josinan, May 7, 2008, ISP Field Journal, pg 59  
21 Interview with Mauro, May 9, 2008, ISP Field Journal, pg 63  
21 Interview with Enter Jovem participants, May 9, 2008, ISP Field Journal, pg 65
Footnotes


2 http://www.emtursa.ba.gov.br/template.asp


4 Events, May 6, 2008, ISP Field Journal, pg 13

5 Observations, May 11, 2008, ISP Field Journal, pg 44

6 Events, April 19, 2008, ISP Field Journal, pg 4

7 WWW.Baguncaco.com.br

8 Interview with Josinan, May 7, 2008, ISP Field Journal, pg 58

9 Interview with Ravanna, May 5, 2008, ISP Field Journal, pg 52

10 Interview with Mauro, May 9, 2008, ISP Field Journal, pg 62

11 Events, May 10, 2008, ISP Field Journal, pg 17

12 Events, May 10, 2008, ISP Field Journal, pg 18

13 Event, April 30, 2008, ISP Field Journal, pg 6

14 Interview with Freitas, May 17, 2008, ISP Field Journal, pg 73

15 Interview with Freitas, May 17, 2008, ISP Field Journal, pg 74

16 Event, May 10, 2008, ISP Field Journal, pg 17

17 Interview with Joselito Crispim, May 20, 2008, ISP Field Manual, pg 79

18 Interview with Ravanna, May 5, 2008, ISP Field Journal, pg 54
19 Interview with Josinan, May 7, 2008, ISP Field Journal, pg 59

21 Interview with Mauro, May 9, 2008, ISP Field Journal, pg 63

21 Interview with Enter Jovem participants, May 9, 2008, ISP Field Journal, pg 65
Bibliography of all Primary Sources


Indications for Further Research

While the research that has been done here in the community of Alagados by students such as Sylvia Johnson has been incredible, there remains an extensive amount of information especially pertaining to the Afro-Brazilian reality and its integration into the formal educational system to be studied. I like Freitas, the Enter Jovem class instructor, believe in the power of education both as a force of evil in its perpetration of the oppression of the black masses as well as a tool for social and economical change within the Afro-Brazilian communities. The integration of Afro-Brazilian as well as African history and culture into the public schools will help Afro-Brazilians better understand themselves and their society while at the same time giving context to their realities.

In the two and a half weeks that I spent in this community, I have observed numerous indications of further research. One such indication would be research in the divisions of race into categories such as branco, moreno, perdo, sarrara, preto etc these categories not only serve to create an identity crisis for those involved but also divide the “different” minorities into sections that makes it difficult for them to effectively and jointly mobilize in demand of social justice.

The role of media in the creation of Afro-Brazilian identity is an area I find to be most interesting. Given more time, I would have like to explore the image of blacks that the media projects and how this helps or destroys the identity of young Afro-Brazilians, the sector of the black population that is most vulnerable. On the flip side, it would also be interesting to understand how organizations such as Bagunçaço are using the media to portray positive images of blacks to the community and how this is received by both the black and white populations.

Another sector that would be most interesting to investigate deals with the commercialization of Afro-Brazilian culture. Throughout my stay in Salvador, I observed many instances where black culture especially Candomblé was being used to advance financial ends. In Pelourinho (the historical district of Salvador and a local tourist hub) there were cut outs as well as live Candomblé women impersonators dressed in religious attire for tourists to take pictures. Even the commercials on TV
advertising the city of Salvador and the post cards sold in many stores around Pelorinho feature Candomblé women standing beside historical buildings or next to the Elevador Lacerda. The folklorization of Afro-Brazilian culture is also another theme I found most prevalent within the black communities.

It is of great importance to note that my study of Afro-Brazilian identity in the “barro” (neighborhood) of Alagados was conducted over a period of two and a half weeks and as such is lacking a great deal of information that would help explain some of the phenomenons observed. Perhaps the most important indication for future research I can imagine would deal with the study the same topic; Afro-Brazilian racial consciousness and Identity in Alagados over a longer period and at a different point in time following the community of Alagados in its struggle to create a black identity in an environment that despite all efforts is bent on destroying it.
Appendix

1. My research involved investigating the question of how Grupo Cultural Bagunçaço aids in the resurrecting and maintaining of Afro-Brazilian identity within the poor community of Alagados that it is located in. I could not have done this project in the USA. A great portion of my research included observations and listening in as young Afro-Brazilians narrated their personal struggles with identity in the poor community of Alagados.

2. Although there are sections of my research that could have been done in the United States, say the background information on the source of Afro-Brazilian identity loss, I believe the bulk of it required first hand experience of the realities we so often hear about or watch on TV but are seldom moved to action. Had I elected to conduct my research in the United States, maybe I would have ended up with the same conclusions as a result of reading other people’s ideas, but the conclusions I have reached due to my presence in the field are my own conclusions whether right or otherwise and this is much more important to me. A personal connection I had with the Afro-Brazilian youth came from the fact that we are all facing the same identity crisis and don’t know how to approach it, through these courses offered by Bagunçaço I also came to realize my identity.

3. The process of doing my ISP did not modify my learning style. Spacial reasoning has never been my strong suit, I was always that child in math class who the teacher literary had to take one pencil and add a second to show me that one plus one equals two. I could not have imagined a more perfect way of learning that actually being out in the field and seeing everything that I was going to write about.

4. Most of my ISP comes from primary data. I wanted to tell the struggles of the people I had met at Bagunçaço, I wanted to show the real reality of Alagados and this could only be achieved through primary sources.

5. To evaluate the data for inclusion in my final monograph, I chose the events, ideas, word, and phrases that had penetrated my soul and kept me awake at odd hours of the night wondering how this could be okay in a human society. And maybe because all that is
subjective, this manual will not move you, but at the very least I can say I was moved to action.

6. For me, the “drop-off” was a terrifying experience. I could barely speak three words of Portuguese and here I was expected to understand a conversation concerning the solidarity of economics, this is a daunting task in English let alone Portuguese. This experience however, served as a reference point, on days when I would be conducting an interview with a member of Bagunçaço and found myself barely understanding anything, I would always remember Banco Palmares and how far I have come so if three or four words of Portuguese escape me its okay, tomorrow is another day. My community project with Dona Cecilia also helped me better understand the realities of running a Non Governmental Organization and the sometimes lack of “organization” as we define it.

7. The part of FSS that most significantly influenced my ISP process maybe had nothing to do with the FSS itself but were the comments Bill and Oelito would occasionally make during the field trips. For example, Bill’s observation of the realities of the people of Brazil and our role in perpetuating the system of oppression had a significant impression in my psyche. Also important were his advice that we should not let the process of writing the ISP dictate our experience there, we should live the experience. I used this as a guide through out my stay in Alagados as there are days when I would purposely leave my notebook at home and just engage in the activity of living the Alagados reality without having to worry about noting every little detail that was going on. Surprisingly enough, when I would go home and try to write from memory, I remembered a lot because I was actively being in Alagados as opposed to just having a physical presence. Oelito was an inspiration and I always kept the words “Monique this is a great gift use it” in mind. So as far as FSS goes, Bill and Oelito were my FSS guides to living and experiencing life in Alagados.

8. The principal problems I encountered during my ISP were mostly those having to do with drawing the line between what was ISP related and what was my personal life. In the end I
decided that if I wanted to tell the realities of the people of Alagados, then my ISP would have no off button everything was a part of the Afro-Brazilian reality and identity and thus a part of my ISP.

9. Yes I experienced time constraints. I felt as though the first week was for me to get situated, familiar with my surroundings and also for my Portuguese to come back as it had “escaped” during the one week stay in the apartment. The second week was for the people of Alagados to size me up, decide if they would like me or not and try to understand what my motives were in coming to their community. It wasn’t until the third week that we had all decided to work together and had gotten comfortable enough to be ourselves but by this time, the ISP period was winding down. Yes there were time constraints.

10. Although my problem statement would at times be pulled in different directions as more information became available, I never the less felt that it stayed the same through out the research period. The resources available modified my topic in that they offered more context to my problem statement

11. The information I used for contextualizing my research topic was obtained primarily through interviews, although I did employ history books and internet sites to better understand my topic prior to my arrival in Alagados.

12. The only method I used was living. I did not try to take note of everything or try to remember everything, I simply lived.

13. My relationship with my advisor was strange in the beginning. I did not feel as though he was fulfilling his “advisorly” role by providing explanations to events or offering his take on popular issues but towards the end of my time in Alagados, I realized that this was good for me because he gave me room to interpret things my own way and thus arrive at my own conclusion. Thanks Joselito for understanding that I didn’t understand and creating room for me to understand.
14. There is not a bone in my body that will allow me to say that I researched any dead ends or had any hypothesis which turned out to not be useful or even any interviews that had no application. In my opinion, every dead end had a reason for being a dead end which lent itself to being a reason to be researched. Any hypothesis I had that did not materialize ended up teaching me a lot about myself, my pre-conceived notions and my culture which in the end was helpful in my understanding of the people, their pre-conceived notions and their culture within the community I was living in.

15. The insights I gained from doing ISP that I would have otherwise not gained include the flexibility of what we think are concretes within our lives. By this I mean that most of us are comfortable with our allocated lot in life, we never strive for anything more because we think this is what we are this is who we are this is what we are meant to be, but in actuality who and what we are are fluid. They can take any shape or form that we decide to through at them and I have decided to through the best shape and form of humanity at my self even if I fail, I will be able to sleep knowing that I made all efforts possible.

16. Yes the ISP process assisted with my adjustment to the culture. Nothing compares to waking up to Elvis, Joselito’s oldest son, callings to a friend down the street or the high speed Portuguese stories during breakfast.

17. In respects to culture, I learned that we are what we are as a result of forces beyond our control and so as easy as it was for you to be born in America or Africa or Asia it would have been just as easy for you to be born in Brazil as an Afro-American. Our races and origins and faces and languages are all a matter chance and as such can be easily overcome only if we allow ourselves to be bare, to be humans, to feel with our hearts rather than our minds, to live sem (without) man-created importances.

18. If I met a future student who wanted to do this same project, I would tell them to first and foremost let their hearts decide what they want to study because if you decide something with your heart, all decisions that come thereafter are made from the heart which in the
end leads to an ISP with some humanity in it. Another thing I learned in Alagados, the importance of humanity in everything we set out to do.

19. Given what I know, I plan to stop living “on the fringes of humanity” (one of Bill’s comment about our lives in the United States) and create a relationship with the human family, bring myself closer to that ideal form of humanity that if I could imagine a God, I would imagine He has for us all as His children.
My Thank You’s

To my Family

Mum, you are my heart, literary; the things you have done for me are beyond words, my children should be so lucky if I turn out to be half the mother you are to us. Daniel I knew you were going to complain I thanked Yvonne first so I switched it up today, I know your jokes are far too advanced for us to understand but we try any way, Ndindi I love you so much and believe you will one day get to touch somebody’s brain like you have always wanted to (just not mine or ma’s or Yvonne’s or Alex’s). Yvonne, wow yes I can finally admit you are the smartest one of the family, we were always jealous of you and tried to compensate by making fun of your Clinton accent. I love you and look up to you sometimes lil sis. Maganga, you are to us much more than our Tanzanian friend, you are family. Your kikuyu still needs work but at least it is better than Yvonne’s. We love you. Alex, you have put up with a lot through the past 3 months, I love you for your patience. I love you for all that you are.

Most of all I want to thank you for the love and support during the past 3 months. I know sometimes I called about stupid things but I just wanted to hear you guys say “Monique that’s dumb”. What you are to me no one can ever be. I thank you and love you from the places in my soul only God knows about.

To my Fortaleza Family

Oelito, the first time I saw at the airport I was confused as to how you knew our names and home stay phone numbers, but after spending the past 3 month with you, I realize I shouldn’t have been, it is in your nature to love people before you know them. WE LOVE YOU. We can probably never express how much we appreciated you through out this semester but basically you were our rock in sometimes turbulent waters. I wish you and your family the best that this world has to offer and concerning your daughter, I hope you have another one because you have too many blessing to let them get concentrated in one hand.
Bill, we have come along way, from the compound days when I could not understand a word of Portuguese and you said we’ll get there. To the “who ate all the ham” day to “I want some chicken” day and many in between, thank you so much. More than we can ever express, you have been an inspiration. You are a gift; more than a Program Director, you are our friend and mentor, oh and also our favorite fried chicken lover.

For receiving me and opening their home to me, I would like to thank my home stay mother and father Dona Cecelia and Julio Holanda. For taking me to my first Brazilian Reggae concert, thank you to my host sister Ana Holanda. For brightening my mood with your hilarious life stories, Monica Holanda you are just too much. For your advice on the best places to get my hair braided in Salvador, muito Obrigada Juliana Holanda. To first trip to the mall in Brazil, cheers to Sergio Juliana Holanda’s husband. Keila for that night we stayed up till 4 am talking about the many wrong boys have done us (well mostly me), I love you. Amanda for easing my comfort at the airport and being our mother away from mother in Salvador, I love you too much. Jade, we always seemed to end up together in most of our projects I think this is a sign and we need to keep it up after this program, I love you too and many Beijus. Jackie, “you are a mess” and I love you for it. Pascale our Ariel, I promise I will tell you some more of my boot camp stories when we get back to the States, you are a clown really, and this world would come to halt if you were to cease existing. Jess, you are brilliant in the way you think, Henry, keep scratching your chin before you answer a question it makes it look like you are about to blow the world away with your response and you usually do. Mimi, that dance you do and the way your face looks is priceless we love it. Payson we will always be “drop-off” buddies and your dances are ones for the books. Steph you are so randomly funny it’s hilarious, really. Paige week-one roomies for life need I say more? Manu, I seriously envy while at the same time feel sad for your dogs, all those stories maaan, poor pooch. Mia, I know I almost ruined you surprise party next time I’ll just stay away from you. Kim I am happy for the “discovery” you made in Brazil. Ana you are my link to President Obama, finally I knew I had one, Emily I still think you look like a Stephanie, Amaris our Laranja, let no one lie, we were all jealous of you, seriously. Leslie, cheers to that night in...
MST when you were about to wake up at 4 in the morning to break a rooster’s neck, I will always love you for that comment.

**To my Salvador Family**

It is impossible to repay you for the lessons you have taught me; I will spend the rest of my life thanking you.

**To everyone above**

You were my family away from home and that means a lot coming from me as I avoid to form too close of bonds. To the times we laughed, the times we cried, the times we acted like fools (ahem… you know which ones these were) and most of all to the times we were there for each other, here is a toast to the time of our lives.

***None of the words I have used above can capture my admiration and love for everyone that I met during this program. I love you all and wish you more blessings than you know what to do with.***