CIVILIAN POLICING, SOCIALIST REVOLUTION, AND VIOLENT PLURALISM IN

VENEZUELA

by

REBECCA ANNICE HANSON

(Under the Direction of David Smilde)

ABSTRACT

In this dissertation I look at contemporary problems of policing in violent contexts and state actors attempts to resolve these through democratic means. I document the implementation of a democratic police reform in Caracas, Venezuela and analyze public support for militarized policing in poor urban areas and the corrosive impacts violence and inequality can have on human rights and citizen participation. Findings are based on three sources of data. I conducted two years of participant observation in Caracas with police officers; reformers working in state security institutions; residents of marginal sectors of the city, who bare the brunt of state and non-state violence; and citizens participating in police oversight committees. During this time I conducted 105 interviews with individuals from these populations. And, from 2013 to 2014 I added questions to four national surveys, which asked respondents about their opinions of crime and security. My findings show how social and economic marginalization, race and gender, increasing lateral violence, and political ideology shaped the ways in which poor people and police officers responded to reform. By analyzing reform as an interactive process that is shaped by the politics and economics of an urban environment I not only explain why key tenets of democratic police reform do not make sense to many on the ground, but also show that reform can entrench support for the beliefs and practices that reformers sets out to change.

INDEX WORDS: Venezuela; Police Reform; Democratic Policing; Violence; Socialism;

Political Sociology; Human Rights

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REBECCA ANNICE HANSON

B.A., University of Montevallo, 2006

M.A., University of Chicago, 2008

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REBECCA ANNICE HANSON

Major Professor: David Smilde

Committee: Patricia Richards

Pablo Lapegna

Alice Goffman

Electronic Version Approved:

Suzanne Barbour
Dean of the Graduate School
The University of Georgia
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This police reform, built on human rights and principles of social justice, was not allowed the time that it needed to take root and, as I have discussed throughout my dissertation, faced various challenges. I never worked with them personally. At most, I spent a few minutes or one or two meetings with some of them. Nevertheless, for me people like Soraya El Achkar, Pablo Fernández, Antonio González Plessmann, Ileana Ruiz, and Lucrecia Hernández will always represent hope for a better world.

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convinced that I do deserve it but I am incredibly grateful for it.

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IMPORTANT ACRONYMS, NAMES, AND PEOPLE

CCCP: Citizen Committees for Police Control (Comités Ciudadanos de Control Policial). These groups created by the reform as a form of external oversight of the police.

CGP: The General Police Council, (Consejo General de Policía) was created by the reform oversee and assess the implementation of police reform across police forces.

CICPC: The police force in charge of criminal investigations and forensic services.

MPPRIJP: Ministerio del Poder Popular para Relaciones Interiores, Justicia, y Paz or The Ministry of Popular Power for Interior Relations and Justice. This ministry is in charge of domestic security forces and matters related to domestic security. Throughout the manuscript I will refer to the director of this institution as the Minister of Justice or MIJ, for brevity purposes.

PNB: Acronym for the National Bolivarian Police, the police force created by the reform.

PSUV: Partido Socialista Unido de Venezuela or the United Socialist Party of Venezuela. This party was founded by Hugo Chávez and other state actors in 2008 to unite the different political parties that supported Chávez and Chavismo, the political movement and administrations associated with him.

UNES: The National Security University, created for the training and education of police officers throughout the country.

Barrio Adentro: A system of health centers that were created by the Chávez government to provide medical care in poor neighborhoods. All services provided at these centers are free.

Barrio: In most of Latin America barrio translates as *neighborhood*. However, in Venezuela barrio specifically refers to poor and working-class neighborhoods.

Communal Councils: The communal councils are neighborhood organizations that receive support from the government for local projects.

Communes: A grouping of communal councils in the same geographic area

Venezuela Full of Life Initiative: An umbrella organization for articulating the government's various efforts at citizen security reform into one integral plan. In Spanish: Gran Misión a Toda Vida Venezuela)

Hugo Chávez Frías: President of Venezuela from 1999-2013. Chávez developed a political project know as the Bolivarian Revolution, made up of policies and discourses that draw on 21st Century Socialist, anti-imperialism, and anti-neoliberalism

Nicolás Maduro: President of Venezuela (2013-present) who was elected after the death of Hugo Chávez. Maduro is a member of the Chavista political party and was a close ally of Hugo Chávez.

Soraya El Achkar: The face of the 2009 reform. El Achkar worked for decades as a human rights activist, focusing on the issue of police violence. For the first few years after the reform was implemented she was the head of both the UNES, the new police university, and the General Police Council (see Chapter 2 for information about these organizations).

Chapter 1: Introduction

Hugo Chávez's political project was defined by creation, change, and flux. His first presidential election confirmed the increasing irrelevance and impending doom of the country's pacted democracy.[1] The Venezuelan constitution was rewritten in 1999, right after Chávez won his first presidential election, transforming the structure of the entire government. In 2005 he announced that the country would begin transitioning from capitalism to socialism. And when he died in 2013 he left behind a legacy of revolution.

The police reform that began under his administration was a part of this legacy. It was intended to break with the violent and repressive past of policing and was revolutionary in its scope and aims. The first site of the National Experimental University of Security (Universidad Nacional Experimental de la Seguridad, UNES) – a national police academy and one of the new institutions erected by the expansive police reform I describe in this dissertation – was opened in 2009 in Catia, a poor and working-class neighborhood in the western section of Caracas. The university provides a stunning view of Catia, where millions of marginalized urban residents have made a virtue of necessity, expanding homes horizontally and vertically, building on any available surface. It is these sectors of town that police reformers had in mind as they developed the reform.

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[1] After the successful coup that overthrew a military dictatorship in 1958, the AD (Acción Democrática), COPEI (Comité de Organización Politica Electoral Independiente), and URD

A view of Catia from the UNES balcony © Rebecca Hanson 2012

In fact, the National Bolivarian Police, another institution created by the reform, was characterized by reformers as "an institution that attends to all people but in particular adopts positive measures to support vulnerable peoples or groups…in this sense it has a preference towards the sectors most socially fragile and traditionally excluded" (CGP 2011: 9). Though the university is in some ways set apart from the sector where it is located – there are security checkpoints at each entrance and a concrete wall surrounds the grounds – police reformers were adamant that this police, that this university, would be different from what had come before. Indeed, the location of the university was not a coincident, but was chosen to symbolize the transition from the repressive and violent national security of previous governments to the new human rights oriented policing model that reformers hoped would solidify under the Chávez government.

In my interview with Rosa, a former police officer and professor at the new police academy, she explained that the university was not just about reform, but was meant to remind people why reform was needed in the first place. "Why don't we want to continue like the police before? We have arrived at a point in history where we have developed other public policies of citizen security. No more! We are no longer the repressive ones. We break with militarization, because militarization worked when there were dictators, Gómez, Marcos Pérez Jiménez, even the Punto Fijo pact in a way…all of this we teach students through the curriculum. What is hegemony? What influence does the previously established order of the police have? What is public order, social control? Who does it control?...In class, we use a song by Alí Primera [a folk singer often referred to as the Venezuelan Bob Dylan] as a tool to have students reflect on the past of the police. The song is named Ruperto, and there is a sentence where Rupert, who moves from a farm to the city looking for work, who lives in a *rancho*…made out of tin cans, Ruperto says 'The police are always efficient when it comes to the poor,' and this line touches a lot of them…because they come from the poor…they know that, like Ruperto says, the police are always efficient with the poor."

Reminders of the transition that Rosa talked about in her interview are built into the aesthetics and location of the university itself. The site that was built in Catia was constructed on the ground where the Retén de Catia stood, a prison well known for the human rights abuses that went on within its walls, which had been demolished in 1997. The few walls left standing from the old structure are adorned with pictures of the jail's living quarters and declarations of "Retén de Catia ¡Nunca Más!" (Retén de Catia, Never Again!).

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The university was a thirty-minute walk from the apartment where I lived in Catia, where I rented a room from three families that lived there. One afternoon, after leaving a class on socialism and democracy (part of the introductory curriculum for new officers-in-training) at the university, I arrived back at the apartment to find Nely – a neighbor who lived up the street – had dropped by the house to catch up with Virginia, one of the family matriarchs. Virginia was in her 60s and had retired years before. She spent most of the day watching her grandchildren while her daughter, a single mother, worked. Nely was in her 50s and had also stopped working a few years before due to health problems. The women's schedules left them with enough time to visit with each other a few times a week, when they would catch up on neighborhood gossip and political matters. Both were ardent supporters of Hugo Chávez and the government's Bolivarian Revolution and liked to joke about the political opposition, usually how they blamed everything on Chávez. 'Oh, it's raining today, *culpa de Chávez*'[2] they would say. Some days they would

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[2]Meaning "Chávez's fault"

crack themselves up, joking that 'My arthritis is acting up today, *culpa de Chávez*' or 'My bus got stuck in horrible traffic this afternoon, *culpa de Chávez*.'

After Virginia had handed out tiny ceramic cups of *guayoyo* (watered down coffee) and homemade *tequeños* (white cheese fried in a flaky crust) the two discussed recent happenings in the neighborhood: who had asked for what from the defunct communal council, who was making noise at night, and who had been killed on the street a few nights before and why. Eventually Nely asked me how my work on the police was going. She started off by asking, as they sometimes liked to do, how many boyfriends I had collected so far. After nervously laughing off the question, I replied that it was getting difficult to endure the male officers' attention, but that at least all of the officers I had met so far had been surprisingly open and nice. She smiled and with a proud expression on her face told me that the new police force was different, not like the police force that existed before that roared into the barrios on their *motos* (motorcycles). Picking up an imaginary gun and resting its butt against her shoulder while taking aim at invisible targets on the floor, she told me that the previous police used to bust into people's homes and wave their guns around, looking down the barrel of her gun as she explained their tactics. She shook her head from side to side, almost as if she was ashamed to talk about them, and explained to me that these police liked to wear masks when they barged into people's homes, so that 'you couldn't see anything but their eyes.' Perhaps thinking that I had missed her dark insinuation she added, 'If someone is wearing a mask you know it is because they have something to hide…'

Virginia laughed and agreed that the previous police officers were *malandros* (criminals) but that these new police officers [the PNB], these *niñitos* (little children), were perhaps a bit too *suave* (gentle). Nely, with eyes wide and a disapproving tone in her voice, agreed and responded,

slowing down her voice so that every word made an impact: 'I have **even**…**seen**…**women** hitting these new officers,' making sure to emphasize the gender of the aggressors. Sighing she said, 'It is unfortunate how little people respect them.' The implication being that if women could beat up on a police officer, how were they to gain any respect?

Nely and Virginia's opinions on reform were not unique. In fact, the democratic police reform that I analyze in this dissertation failed to garner necessary public support, even in the poor areas of town that bare the brunt of police violence. Though a 2013 survey showed that a little over 50% of respondents supported reform, this support was the product of political affiliation and not support for reform's substance (Hanson and Smilde 2017). Why was there not more support for reform in poor areas of town, areas that police reformers had in mind when molding reform? Why did poor people reject this aspect of the Bolivarian Revolution that so many of them supported?

In this dissertation I attempt to explain why people like Nely and Virginia, as well as police officers who lived in poor barrios like theirs, did not support a reform and why this matters for understanding and analyzing police reform more broadly. By analyzing reform as an interactive process that is shaped by the politics and economics of an urban environment I explain why reform did not make sense to many on the ground and how democratic police reform can entrench support for the beliefs and practices that reformers sets out to change.

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Why do police reforms fail to democratize the police in Latin America? Why, decades after transitions to democratic governments, do the police continue to look like and operate as authoritarian institutions in many countries throughout the region?

These questions have been asked and answered by numerous scholars. Though governments have democratized, the police have remained authoritarian, repressive, and insular in many countries, delegitimizing governments and democracy. In this dissertation, I hope to provide new answers to these questions by analyzing reform as an interpretive and negotiated process that is shaped by the context in which it is embedded. I argue that this requires challenging certain assumptions underlying scholars' ideas about and expectations of the police, the state, and democracy, principally the relationship between democracy, rule of law, and the monopolization of violence.

Democratic police reform is considered to be one of the ways in which the rule of law – and, thus, democracy itself – can be strengthened in a country.[3] Throughout this dissertation I show how different people's actions contributed to unruling the law and argue that this unrule can be understood as constitutive of democracy, rights, and policing on the ground in certain contexts. I show that both state and non-state actors actively resisted aspects of reform that attempted to strengthen the rule of law, believing that equal treatment before the law weakened democracy and constrained citizens' rights. I argue that we must understand why and how people actively support the unrule of law to accurately explain 1). How people interpret and understand democratic police reform and 2). The outcomes of reform when it is translated from policy into practice.

Though I analyze outcomes of police reform, I am not interested in evaluating whether or not reform failed or succeeded according to standards often used by police scholars. This is partially due to the fact that there is already a massive literature on the failures and successes of

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[3] The rule of law refers to a system of legally-based rule, where legal rules cannot be "justifiably" canceled or suspended on the "whim of a given actor" (O'Donnell 1999:317-318).

police reform. Indeed, policy evaluations have done a good job of laying out challenges that the history, culture, and organization of police institutions present to reform. However, I also avoid this type of analysis and evaluation because I believe that evaluations based on the dichotomy of failure or success overlook outcomes and consequences of reform that do not adhere to preexisting standards and evaluative measures. Often narrowly focused on the police and whether or not reform achieves certain outcomes, these evaluations rarely embed reform within the broader political and social changes that have swept across Latin America in the past thirty years and have significantly altered state capacity, political subjectivities, and security apparatuses (Arias and Goldstein 2010). This dissertation is an attempt to bridge the gap between evaluations of police reform and work on the broad transformations that have occurred in Latin America, particularly neoliberalization, the rise of the Left in response to it, and quantitative and qualitative changes in violence.

If we want to understand democratic reforms and citizen security more broadly "we need to examine how collective life is created and re-created through participation," both inside and outside of state institutions (Smilde 2011:2). I understand everyday actors as critical to processes of state formation and to the "unmaking" of the state (Nugent 2010: 684) through "endless everyday encounters with its institutions and personnel" (Nugent 2010:684; see also Schiller 2013; Ferguson and Gupta 2002). Actors' understandings of the political order and their relation to it – what Glaeser (2011) has referred to as political epistemics – are validated, corroborated, and challenged through everyday interactions between state and non-state actors (Glaeser 2011: 24). From this perspective power, authority, and legitimacy (all concepts traditionally associated with the police in sociological and police scholarship) are not fixed, but negotiated through interaction.

There are a few terms that are worth clarifying before moving any further, both because they have various definitions and also because they have become so commonly used and vague that it is hard to know what they mean. When I use the term **state** I am referring to a set of institutions established to govern and control the population within its territory (Anthias and Yuval-Davis 1989). The state is distinct from **government**, and refers to "those political officials that occupy the executive and legislative branches of government and are subject to renewal or replacement" (Petras and Leiva 1994:7). I refer to the **Chávez government** when discussing the administration over which Hugo Chávez himself presided (1999-2013) and **Chavista governments** to refer to the presidential administration that came after him, led by Nicolás Maduro (2013-present) as well as politicians at the local and state level affiliated with **Chavismo**, the political and social movement that was founded around the political project that Hugo Chávez and others have referred to as the Bolivarian Revolution.

I use the term **violence** frequently throughout the dissertation, a concept that is fraught with problems but nonetheless necessary. There are multiple forms that violence can take: symbolic, structural, interpersonal, and political, to name a few. All of these interrelated and interlocking forms of violence contribute to the current situation of insecurity in Venezuela. I use violence to refer to general acts of physical violence, those that can do harm to the physical body or put an end to life itself. While there are many shortcomings in focusing on such a specific form of violence, I do so for two reasons. One is that the main cause of concern in Venezuela regarding violence over the past twenty years has been the rapid increase in homicides and interpersonal lethal violence. The second reason is that this is the kind of violence that seemed most salient for my research participants (in comparison to other forms of violence, such as domestic, political, or state sponsored violence). I also distinguish between **state violence** that is

enacted by state forces (usually by using the term police violence) and violence that, although linked with the operation of the state, is enacted by non-state actors across relatively horizontal networks. This latter form of violence I refer to as **lateral violence**. I will use the term **barrio** throughout the dissertation. In most of Latin America barrio translates as *neighborhood*. However, in Venezuela barrio specifically refers to poor and working-class neighborhoods. The terms **ranchos** and **cerros** are also used to refer to these neighborhoods, usually to the ones that are built higher up on the mountains that surround the city.

PREVIOUS WORK ON REFORM

The democratization of police forces has long been considered an essential part of consolidating democracy after the third wave. The goal of this democratization was and is to move away from national security, which "emphasizes protection of the state and territorial integrity," towards public or citizen security, which "emphasizes protection of persons, property, and democratic political institutions from internal or external threats" (Bailey and Dammert 2006:1). In countries like Chile, Brazil, and Argentina the first round of police reforms were implemented as a part of the democratization process that began with the fall of military dictatorships in the 80s and 90s. More recently, countries like Venezuela, Honduras, and Mexico have experimented with reforms to deal with an astounding rise in homicide rates and high levels of corruption within police forces. Work on reforms implemented after the third wave of democracy has suggested a number of common factors that keep reforms from "sticking" (see, for example, Ungar 2002, 2011; Fruhling et al. 2003; Hinton and Newburn 2009; Bailey and Dammert 2006; Chevigny1995; Feth and Muller 2009). Scholars have criticized histories of militarization, police culture and isolation, and the unrule of law for standing in the way of reform. Like other scholarship on

democratic transitioning, police scholars tend to focus on political and state institutions, often only the police, to analyze and explain outcomes of reform.

At the same time that states are critiqued as too "weak" for reforms to consolidate, police scholarship tends to predicate reform upon conditions that hold where "strong" states exist. For example, the rule of law – both a defining characteristic and principle goal of democratic police reform – presupposes an "effective monopoly of the collective means of coercion in the hands of the state" (Koonings and Kruijt 2004: 5), despite the fact that in much of Latin America the state's previously tenuous control over coercion has weakened tremendously over the past few decades. As Denyer Willis (2015: 5) writes, scholars still assume that the police are the only people who can legitimately kill in the name of order *and* that they are obligated to regulate killing. Many assumptions about what the police should do and what role they ought to play in society are based on police functions and responsibilities that emerged in contexts where state formation coincided with and propelled a monopoly over violence, increasing organizational capacity, and a "disciplining" of populations (Tilly 2002; Elias 1939; Weber 1919/1965; Bourdieu 1994; Foucault 1977/1995).

However, many states in Latin America are better characterized as ruling through fractured sovereignty, with shared control over the right to kill and regulating terms of life and death. Democratic governments in Venezuela, Colombia, El Salvador, and other countries throughout the region have even granted non-state armed groups the right to utilize violence and coercion, effectively giving away what has long been the defining resource of statehood. Nevertheless, police scholars continue to base evaluations of reform on standards associated with sovereign states that have successfully monopolized violence. For example, in her study of police reform in Guatemala, Glebbeek (2004) draws explicitly on Tilly's conceptualization of the

state and implicitly on social contract theory, though Miguel Centeno (2002) has convincingly shown that these theories of the state and society are ill fit for the Latin American context. Glebbeek's (2004:45) adherence to normative assumptions about the state are evident when, while analyzing a country that recently emerged from civil war where the government and police engaged in killing or disappearing over 200,000 people, she writes: "Providing order and personal safety is one of the most basic expectations people have of governments, and the police are the most visible state agent to live up to these expectations." Though she recognizes that the state in Guatemala has not historically lived up to these expectations, she concludes that a decades-long process of democratization, pushed by "democratic and civil societies" (318), can evolve the state to this point.

I argue that many of the challenges identified by police reformers, while still pertinent, must be reconceptualized given distinct histories of state formation as well as recent transformations that have altered the state, society, and security. The overwhelming focus on the police as a state institution overlooks the discourses, identities, relationships, and strategies of action born out of transformations that have taken place throughout the region: principally neoliberalization, the pluralization of violence, and the "pink tide" or Left turn that occurred in some countries. Understanding how these changes have transformed identities and subjectivities as well as state institutions is essential to understand contemporary challenges to reform.

PLURALIZATION OF VIOLENCE AND VIOLENT ACTORS

Changes in both the quantity and quality of violence in parts of Latin America need to be taken into account. Homicide rates in countries like Venezuela, Brazil, Honduras, and El Salvador have skyrocketed, far surpassing the number of people killed under dictatorships in these

countries.[4] However, the quality of violence, i.e. the changes in the forms that violence takes and the actors wielding it, is just as important (if not most important in some ways) to take into account. In liberal democracies, the police are traditionally conceptualized as the state's principle mechanism for deploying non-negotiable coercive force in response to internal threats to social order (Bittner, 1970). Arias and Goldstein (2010:24), however, describe Latin America as "violently plural" where various violent actors seeking to "establish or contest regimes of citizenship, justice, rights, and democratic order." In many Latin American countries democratization has undermined the state's control over the police (Caldeira and Holston 1999; Call 1999; Davis 2006) and dislodged the state as the main coercive actor. Violent conflict consolidated the state and its coercive institutions in Western Europe (Tilly 2002; Cohen, Brown, and Organski, 1981; Jaggers, 1992), but in Latin America violent conflict has fractured state institutions (Centeno 2002; Mendez et al. 1999; López-Alves 2000, 2001). And within the past two decades civilian militias, criminal organizations, and paramilitary groups – non-state groups that are capable of employing non-negotiable force – have destabilized the relationship between security forces and the state throughout Latin America (Arias, 2006; Arias and Goldstein, 2010; Arjona, 2014; Civico 2012; Wood 2003). The diffusion of coercive power out of the state has radically altered state institutions' relationships to society and the subjectivities constructed through these relationships.

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[4] It is important to note that violence at the subnational level varies widely in these countries. It is not the case that entire countries are suffering from violence pandemics, but certain regions of each country.

NEOLIBERALISM

Neoliberalism can be defined as the "mobilization of state power in the contradictory extension and reproduction of market(-like) rule" (Tickell and Peck 2003:163). It is characterized by trade and financial market liberalization, the privatization of production, deregulation, eliminating barriers to foreign direct investment, secure property rights, unified exchange rates, diminished public spending, tax reform, selective transfers for the needy, and flexible labor markets (Tickell and Peck 2003). The first neoliberal experiment began in Latin America, under the Pinochet dictatorship in Chile. Neoliberal policies spread throughout the region in the 1980s. In 1989 neoliberal policies in Venezuela resulted in the *Caracazo*, massive urban riots and looting that exploded February of that year. The government of Carlos Andrés Pérez had accepted a structural adjustment loan from the World Bank with the provisions that social spending be slashed, gas prices raised, and national companies sold off to the private sector. When the government sent the police and National Guard into the barrios with orders to kill anyone found in the street, Catia bore a major brunt of this violence.[5]

Neoliberalization has not only produced state violence, but has also promoted the pluralization of violence through the "devolution of law enforcement to communities and private enterprises" (O'Neill and Thomas 2011:2). Urban residents are left to "cobble together their own security solutions," often doing so through "popular injustice" (Snodgrass Godoy 2006) or

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[5] The number of people killed by state forces is disputed and difficult to verify. While the government claimed that around 300 people had been killed, other sources put this number at 1000 (see Coronil and Skurski 2006; López Maya 2003).

groups that "use violence to bring about decentralized permutations of security in an effort to achieve order" (Denyer Willis 2015:7). Rather than understanding the modern state as enjoying an unprecedented capacity to organize, regulate and reproduce life as Scott (1998) and Foucault (1977/1995) theorize, it is perhaps more accurate to turn to what Denis Rodgers (2015:21) has called for a "thanatopolitical approach," one based on the politics of death "in order to get to grips" with the modern state and the "social 'order of things.'" Indeed, where the state has not only lost but has ceded its monopoly over coercion, it has also ceded its monopoly over the regulation of life. The state here is not intimately involved in "fostering life" but "disallows it to the point of death" (Ojakangas 2005:6).

By charging individuals, communities, and organizations with the responsibility of their own security, neoliberalization has contributed to the diffusion of coercive power out of the state. In deregulating, decentralizing, and individualizing security, the state frees itself from certain responsibilities but also allows individuals and groups to appropriate violence as a means of survival. In this way, violence acts as a "mechanism for keeping in place the very institutions and policies that neoliberal democracies have fashioned over the past several decades, as well as an instrument for coping with the myriad problems that neoliberal democracies have generated" (Arias and Goldstein 2010:5).

THE LEFT TURN IN LATIN AMERICA

Jorge Castañeda's declaration in 1993 that the United States and capitalism had "won" a spectacular victory against the Left in Latin America, solidifying free-markets and democracy, clearly missed the mark (as end of history prescience tends to do). Far from being "on the run" (Castañeda, 1993) the Latin American pink tide – characterized by a critique of neoliberalism (at

least in rhetoric), redistributive policies, and an emphasis on state sovereignty over U.S. demands – ushered in Leftist leaders in Venezuela, Argentina, Peru, Uruguay, Ecuador, Paraguay, Brazil, and Bolivia. The election of Hugo Chávez in 1998 set off this pink tide of Leftist governance (more on this below), which was followed by Néstor Kirchner in Argentina and Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva in Brazil (2003), Tabaré Vázquez in Uruguay (2004), Evo Morales in Bolivia (2005), Raphael Correa in Ecuador (2006), and Fernando Lugo in Paraguay (2008). While these governments might not represent the radical break with past neo-liberal economic policies that their rhetoric often suggests, their social policies and attention to popular demands indicate a shift from the ideologies and policies of previous administrations (Hanson and Lapegna 2017).

If the Chavista governments in Venezuela have presented themselves as the antithesis of neoliberalism, the pluralization of violence under their watch and the state's inability to protect life evidence some degree of overlap. Revolutionary Leftist ideology in Venezuela and the clash between the Left-wing government and the Right-wing opposition has motivated state actors to support non-state armed groups and the democratization of violence (see Chapter 4).

I attempt to incorporate these changes into my analysis of policing and reform, asking how they have impacted the roles, functions, activities, and expectations of policing, how officers respond to changes going on around them, and how citizen security plans and strategies have be reconfigured by these changes. Instead of understanding the police as "at the core of changes in society and the state" (Marenin 1996:3), I take the police to be subjects of social change and order rather than drivers of change and order.

I do not mean to suggest here that Venezuela or other parts of Latin America are indocile or "uncivilized" in Elias' understanding of the term. Venezuela is not an unregulated "Wild West;" there are social orders and regulations in place, but in many cases these are not produced

or maintained by the state. To this degree, Elias' (1939/1978) understanding of "decivilizing processes" is useful, even if poorly named. Decivilizing processes begin when states lose their monopoly over violence, which for Elias has a ripple effect throughout society, changing interpersonal ties and relationships, the division of labor, social practices, and state capacity. These ripple effects must be taken into account when we think about how life might be better protected and death better regulated in the Venezuelan context.

THE VENEZUELAN CONTEXT

Venezuela has often been held up as the exemplar of democracy in the region. While the second wave of democracy in many countries collapsed in the 60s and 70s, Venezuela's democracy remained stable after transitioning from the military dictatorship of Marcos Pérez Jiménez to a democracy in 1958. Nevertheless, police violence was key in solidifying the democratic regime against threats posed by competing parties, Leftist organizations, or those that might sympathize with opposing groups (Ciccariello Maher 2013; Velasco 2015; Coronil and Skurski 2006; Hernández 1991). Similar to neighboring authoritarian regimes, the stabilization of Venezuela's democracy rested upon generating fear of internal enemies and their elimination by the police and military. According to Coronil and Skurski, "In an effort to buttress its legitimacy and to strengthen its control of dissent, the democratic regime has kept alive the image of threats that reside concealed within the polity and at its borders, seeking the chance to return" (2006:86). Events like the Yumare killings in 1986, the El Amparo Massacre in 1988, and the *Caracazo* in 1989 evidenced that long after its transition Venezuelan democracy depended upon force rather than the rule of law to remain stable.[6] Though the police are perhaps the institution most

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[6] The El Amparo massacre refers to the murder of fourteen unarmed fisherman by the

emblematic of states' relationships to illiberal violence in Latin America, this violence was integral to the consolidation of liberal democracy in Venezuela.

Beginning in the 1990s, however, lateral violence – or violence enacted by non-state actors – started developing into the main driver of insecurity in the country. The homicide rate in Venezuela rose from 15/100,000 residents in the 1990s to almost 60/100,000 in 2010. In urban areas, homicidal violence is concentrated in impoverished and overpopulated marginal districts. Eighty-four percent of homicide victims in Caracas are from the lowest socio-economic groups (D and E) (INS 2010:70), and the large majority are poor young men of color (see Chapter 3).

This violence continued to increase during a time period when the Left wing socialist government successfully reduced social inequality and poverty.[7] In fact, the spectacular increase in violence in certain parts of the country has largely occurred under the Left wing government led by President Hugo Chávez (1999-2013). Violence began increasing in the 1990s, but has skyrocketed under Chavismo. Venezuela stands out in that, since the early 2000s, the state has

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Venezuelan army near the border with Colombia. The bodies were disguised as ELN guerillas and justified as actions protecting the country from external threats. The Yumare incident was one of many in which the DISIP (the political police) used infiltrators inside political groups that were suspected of subversion to round up, torture, and kill members. The Caracazo is the name used for massive urban riots and looting that exploded February 1989 in response to austerity measures, which conclude with the National Guard and the Metropolitan Police killing either hundreds or thousands depending on the report (Coronil 1997: 377-378).

[7] United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean. 2013. Social Panorama of Latin America report. http://www.cepal.org/en/publications/social-panorama-latin-america-2013

invested a massive amount of resources to social services and welfare programs and, arguably, has increased the political and social rights of vulnerable populations (Ellner 2008, 2011). Indeed, Venezuela presents somewhat of a paradox (Smilde 2012) in that poverty and inequality dropped rapidly as violent crime rose. From 2003 to 2011, the Gini index fell from 0.48 to 0.30, translating into one-fifth of a reduction in poverty (Tremaria 2016:68); during this same time period homicide rates increased from around 39/100,000 residents to around 53/100,000.

The Chávez government was different from previous neoliberal governments, creating and funding numerous social and welfare services. Nevertheless the socialist government failed to provide the main service associated with the modern state: physical protection. Redistributive policies successfully reduced poverty and inequality and participatory policies included previously excluded peoples in the body politic. However, at the same time that economic and social democracy were extended and deepened (Roberts 1998), violence also "democratized."

It is essential to take recent changes in the Venezuelan political context into account to understand social dynamics in the country. Thus, here I provide a brief summary of these changes. In 1998, Hugo Chávez came onto the Venezuelan political scene, capturing the presidential elections by promising to open up the political system to civil society participation and address the overwhelming social and economic inequality that stratified the nation (for a detailed description of Venezuelan economic and social polarization since the 1980s see Roberts, 2004). His criticisms of both an ossified and exclusionary state and its neoliberal policies that ignored the poor – the overwhelming majority of the population – resonated with both middle and lower-class voters.

Though the first election of Hugo Chávez took many by surprise, this was not because his platform was a particularly radical one. Rather, as Smilde (León and Smilde 2009) has noted,

his initial message throughout the 1998 campaign was a multivalent one, the main thrust of which was a call for participatory democracy and a new constitution. According to Smilde (2009), Chávez was able to harness support in both the lower and middle classes by promising both social and economic transformation and an incorporation of civil society into the system of governance. It was the cross-class salience of his message that gave Chávez a victory against his opponent, Salas Romer, with 56% of the vote. The poor population that did turn out to vote in December 1998 did so largely in favor of Chávez. However, as Wilpert (2007:18) points out, it was the middle class – exasperated by policies that they believed were exacerbating their slide into poverty – that gave Chávez his first presidential win.

After his election, the Chávez administration made good on a previous promise to convoke a constitutional assembly and rewrite the constitution. On December 15, 1999 the constitution was approved by 72% of voters. The constitution contained the first mention of the National Bolivarian Police and recognized a number of political, social, and economic rights; these include the right to work, the protection of culture and traditions, and rights to housing and land use.

The Chávez administration did not begin as a revolutionary government, but clashes between the government, civil society, and business associations pushed the government further and further to the Left. By the early 2000s it had become clear that the political project that the Chávez had in mind, a political structure based on participation incorporated into a strong economic-interventionist state, was not acceptable to the middle and upper-class political opposition. Civil society's largely class-based nature began to clash with the government's priorities, as these groups' middle and upper-middle class interests were unsympathetic to the administration's populist distributive policies and plans for structural reform (León and Smilde

2009). The administration's increased focus on social inequalities produced exactly the type of social climate Roberts' (1998) model of Latin American politics would predict: increasing social polarization and potent right-wing mobilization.

This increasing political and class conflict led to a series of violent conflicts between the state and civil society (specifically FEDECAMARAS, Venezuela's main business association, the Worker's Confederation of Venezuela, and previously existing political parties): an attempted coup that removed Chávez from office for 47 hours, an oil strike which paralyzed the country's economy, and a recall referendum seeking to remove Chávez through electoral means. The referendum was the opposition's last major significant attempt to remove Chávez. The president again emerged victorious from this challenge, with 59% of voters choosing to keep him in office.

In all instances, lower-class support for Chávez was a pivotal factor in his ability to remain in office. The social and economic reforms that had been put into place at this point were relatively mild, seeking to address the needs of the popular sectors did see a return: healthcare, education, and basic foodstuffs became accessible to many living at or below the poverty line. It is within this period of seemingly unwavering support and consistent success that Chávez announced in 2005 – at the World Social Forum in Porto Alegre, Brazil – that the government would begin constructing 21st Century Socialism (see Dieterich 2006 on this concept).

Between 2005 and 2014 Chávez and the Socialist Party of Venezuela (PSUV) that had been founded around him consistently won municipal, gubernatorial, National Assembly, and presidential elections. Despite downturns in the economy, frustrations with the increasingly internal selection and Hugo Chávez's being diagnosed with cancer – the extent and type of which was not shared publicly – he still won the presidential election in 2012 with a 10% lead

over Henrique Capriles, the political opposition's candidate. Not even a year into his first term, after being transferred back to Venezuela from Cuba where he was being treated, Chávez died. After his death, new presidential elections were held, which were won by Chavista candidate Nicolás Maduro.

After Chávez's death politics and the economy deteriorated rapidly. The political opposition organized two periods of sustained protest demanding *La Salida* [The Exit] of Nicolás Maduro, the first in 2014 and the second in 2017. The political opposition won their first significant electoral victory in 2015, taking a majority of the seats in the National Assembly. Due to a number of economic factors, but largely the government's control over exchange rates, the country has spiraled into a deep economic depression. In 2016 Venezuela had the highest level of inflation in the world, around 800%. Of course, violence had spiraled out of control long before this economic and political crisis.

Why has violence in Venezuela increased so dramatically since the 1990s? To answer this question would require writing a second dissertation. Here, I will only suggest a few of the key factors that have contributed to rates of violence in the country. One important factor is the political polarization that has occurred in the country. Polarization has not contributed to violence in the way one might assume; most violence is not politically motivated (even though some scholars have incorrectly identified political polarization as the main driving force behind violence). For example, Chu and Tusalem (2013:257) claim that Chavista politics has caused "citizens not to respect life." Instead, the inability of Chavista and opposition politicians to work together to address insecurity has paralyzed state action.

Additionally, Chávez's first term as president was largely taken up by the constitutional referendum and clashes with the opposition. Indeed, for its first few years the Chávez

government was heavily focused on holding together state institutions that were sabotaged or paralyzed by the political opposition.

Somewhat related to these issues is a second key factor to understanding increasing rates of violence: the lack of attention paid to criminal justice institutions during the first six years of Hugo Chávez's presidency. Heavily focused on social and economic policies to address poverty and inequality early on, the government paid little to no attention to Venezuela's troubled police forces and rising crime rates, partially due to the assumption that social and economic policies could address these problems.[8] This comes from a classic interpretation of Marxism that Andrés Antillano has referred to as "functionalism of the Left" (Bujanda 2015). In this view the roots of crime and violence are poverty, inequality, and limited life opportunities, and the police represent repressive forces that are only necessary because of the existence of social problems.[9]

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[8] Humphrey and Valverde (2013) have referred to this as the Bolivarian urban security model.

[9] Research on the relationship between poverty, inequality, and crime is inconclusive. Quantitative research has found that both poverty and income inequality are associated with violence and crime (Hsieh and Pugh 1993; Chinchilla 2003; UNPD 2011; Blau and Blau 1982); that relative poverty is not strongly associated with crime, but absolute poverty is (depending on the type of crime considered) (Patterson 1991); and that when poverty is controlled for inequality is not related to violence and crime (Pare and Felson 2014). Other research has argued that the ways in which other factors intersect with poverty impacts crime. For example, structural disadvantage has been shown to explain different rates of violence and crime between black and white communities (Wilson 1987; Krivo and Peterson 1996). Sampson, Raudenbush, and Earls (1997) find that collective efficacy is an important mediating variable between disadvantage and crime. Qualitative work has shown that violence and crime are high in poor neighborhoods due

By the time the government turned its attention to institutions of law and order in 2006, backing the police reform that I analyze here (see Chapter 2 for an overview of the reform), police violence and homicide rates had already made Venezuela one of the top three most dangerous countries in the region.

METHODS, POWER, AND EMBODIMENT

Miguel was a state police officer who had taken time off from the force to work for the CGP, organizing and heading up citizen police oversight committees in a number of states in Venezuela. Though he maintained the closely cropped haircut associated with officers, his soft demeanor made it difficult for me to imagine him in uniform. Miguel was in his late thirties and was a passionate supporter of police reform; his time on the force had given him plenty of concrete examples of why reform was so sorely needed. I met Miguel through other committee "promoters" (the word used for state representatives that oversee committees) and began working with him shortly after. With some of the promoters, getting information about

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to the political contexts in which they are embedded (Auyero and Berti 2015; Benton et al. 2008). Rios (2011), Contreras (2013) and Goffman (2014) have argued that the way in which the criminal justice system operates in and targets poor communities force community residents – particularly young men of color – to turn to illegal activities for economic and identity resources that are in short supply in these areas. Others have pointed to the type of poverty that neoliberalism creates to explain violence in poor neighborhoods (Benson, Fischer, Thomas 2008).

committee meetings and activities was like pulling teeth. In comparison, Miguel kept me up to date on activities of all the committees he was working with, eagerly put me in contact with other promoters, and often invited me to accompany him around Caracas or out of town, both for committee and non-committee business. His passion for reform and my interest in studying it provided common ground and, I believe, was part of why Miguel was so helpful during my time in the field. However, there were other reasons, which became clear a few months after we started working together.

On our way back to Caracas after spending a few days together to visit police oversight committees throughout the western part of Venezuela, Miguel and I had lunch in a food plaza in a large mall. Before we parted ways, Miguel insisted on buying me something from one of the stores at the mall. We walked around the store for what felt like an eternity – probably closer to 20 minutes – as I looked over items asking myself what it would mean to him if I bought a shirt, some jewelry…definitely not perfume. I felt painfully awkward picking out a clothing item with him there. What was I suppose to do? Spend hours looking through the racks of clothes? Try things on and make him wait outside of the fitting room like a boyfriend? I finally settled on an inexpensive looking scarf. Though annoyed, I also felt inexplicably guilty, thinking to myself that he was obviously trying to do something nice for me and all I could do was react with discomfort and unease.

Less than ten minutes after getting on the bus to head back to Caracas, I received the text message I was unfortunately anticipating.

Miguel told me that he was hoping at some point we could have something more than a work relationship. He clarified that he hoped that he wasn't 'making me uncomfortable but these feelings are real and I cannot hold them back.' Eventually I would become somewhat

accustomed to Miguel's extremely polite advances. Until the end of our relationship he was always respectful and courteous when pressuring me to give him a chance for 'more.' His polite manner was probably one of the reasons we were able to work together for so long before he became demanding.

At the time, however, I did not know this about Miguel's character and my immediate response to the initial text message was to panic. 'How can I respond without pushing him away?' I wondered. I had already lost so many contacts for this reason and Miguel was a key contact for my work with the CCCPs. 'Why do I need all of these men to be in my corner? Fuck researcher power,' I thought. 'Why does this keep happening? I'm not exceptionally attractive. I never dress provocatively. Hell, I barely dress femininely. I have no idea how to flirt or be sexy, even in my own language and culture.' It occurred to me that even if I did know what was generating all of this interest, I couldn't really put a stop to it. It had created a great deal of access for me, even if most of that access was short lived. As it had done in the past, this reflection made me feel unprofessional and incapable of carrying out my work without relying on some sort of deceit, even a deceit that I very poorly managed.

I ended up responding to him that I liked him very much as well but that 'unfortunately' I had a boyfriend for 'right now.' I used these kinds of qualifiers to try and soften rejection, and I hated them whenever I deployed them. But, I felt trapped in a situation where I could not risk taking away incentives from someone when I need them to *want* to work with me. 'Access is not a luxury that I enjoy at this point,' I thought.

After two years of working together, multiple text messages about his feelings for me, and carefully planning the amount of time we spent together, how many invitations of his I accepted, how many texts I responded to Miguel texted me one day and told me that our

relationship would have to end if he could not 'have me.' Thankfully, at this point, I had already

lost enough research contacts and was close enough to ending my dissertation research that his

message did not bring me to the edge of a panic attack. I was able to tell him, in a more

respectful, kind, and restrained fashion than I would have in a similar situation outside of the

field, that I would not date him and that I wished him all the best.

<p style="text-align: center;">***</p>

I include this vignette and the following reflections in the introduction to my methods

section in an attempt to foreground the impact my body and others' perceptions of it had on my

project, information that is often left out of researchers' tales of the field. Throughout the

dissertation I have attempted to not only write myself into my data, but also write data as

embodied. Though standards in sociological ethnography encourage researchers to adhere to a

homogenized narrative – one structured by androcentric norms and a disembodied presentation

of the research process and data – (see Hanson and Richards 2017) I have tried to integrate not

only my class, race, gender, etc. into my ethnography, but also my body – how others interpreted

it and responded to it, as well as how my bodily experiences shaped my research and findings. In

other words, I have attempted to integrate data that could have been considered "awkward

surplus" (Hanson and Richards 2017) into both my analysis and my presentation of data.

I entered the field with an intense awareness of the power I held over my research

participants: my education, my nationality, my race, and my class. Most of my research

participants, even police officers, were part of economically and socially marginalized

populations, which present numerous ethical issues for researchers. My position as an educated,

white woman from the United States undoubtedly afforded me various privileges in the field.

Being a woman living in violent neighborhoods, I believe, was also an advantage. For example,

one day towards the end of my research while talking with Alexis, a National Police officer and professor at the UNES who was one of my key informants, I mentioned how relieved I was to have made it through my project without having been involved in some sort of violent encounter. Alexis replied that I had been lucky, but that my gender had most likely protected me. Barrios, he said, were much more dangerous for men than for women. According to responses I received, my gender, age, and appearance all made me seem nonthreatening, friendly, and approachable. My blue eyes and white skin both made me stand out in the neighborhoods where I worked and drew people's attention (mostly men's) to me, which created access. My skin and eye color and nationality (*gringa*, or from the U.S.) made me an appealing "conquest" (a word I often heard in the field from men) for many of the men I met. My short hair seemed to be the only aspect of my appearance that was not appealing. Usually, after a few minutes of flirtatious conversation, men who approached me would ask me why I didn't let my hair grow out. I would be so much more beautiful, I found out, if I did. Others' perceptions and characterizations of my appearance stood in stark contrast to my own, often making me wonder what all the "fuss" was about. As a sociologist, I can explain the "fuss" to myself: Attraction and standards of beauty are structured by racist and classist histories and institutions, which have elevated certain physical characteristics over others. Despite my sociological insight, I was consistently astounded and confused as to why I attracted so much male attention throughout my time in the field.

I also had the power "to make myself present, design the research, and ask the questions," but respondents had the "power to determine the extent to which they would respond and the content they would reveal" (Richards 2004:20). Furthermore, the intersection of my gender, age, and my status as a graduate student put me at a disadvantage in certain ways. I was in my late 20s when I conducted most of my fieldwork, but was consistently taken for 21 or 22, an age

where people (especially women) are still considered quite innocent and naïve. In fact, my research decisions, like living in lower-class sectors of town, were sometimes chalked up to naiveté by police officers, despite the fact that I explained to them that I had spent years working in these sectors. As a graduate student with a fixed set of time and resources with which to conduct research (that would not only allow me to graduate but also secure a job) I needed the access to spaces, activities, and people that research participants had. My nationality, while useful in attracting attention, also created numerous obstacles to access. For example, I eventually found out that one of the reasons I was denied approval to research community police officers was because I was from the United States, a country that Hugo Chávez repeatedly criticized (with good reason) for its intervention in the region (amongst other things).

The access I gained due to my appearance often felt like a double-edged sword. While my physical characteristics created access, that access meant submitting to unwanted attention and advances, that I alter my self-presentation to fit with what men expected of me, and that I hold my tongue in situations I normally would never stand for. These also put a timeline on many of the relationships and access my appearance created. While conducting research I learned early on that power is not static, but is shifting, situational, and structured by intersecting forms of domination. As a young female, men benefitted from their position within the patriarchal hierarchy. Though most of the men I spent time with while conducting research had less symbolic, cultural, and economic capital, I was consistently "put in my place" by men who infantilized and objectified me. My education did benefit me in certain interactions, but most often my education and my intellect were trivialized and brushed off. My gender and age (and that most people took me to be significantly younger than I was) most likely contributed to how the majority of my research participants understood what I was doing (despite the different ways

in which I explained my dissertation): gathering information to for a paper that I would be turning in for a college class.

Experiences like the ones I had with Miguel, and how I navigated them, were key to my research, but also to how I constructed my identity as a researcher. My ability to feel competent as a sociologist was often dependent upon my ability to please men and adhere to the assumptions they had about who I was, assumptions that formed my identity in the field. I was never able to make my own understandings of myself commiserate with what my body represented and signified to many of the men I worked with, resulting in a split in the field that often made research a debilitating and disempowering process (see Hanson and Richards 2017). In any other area of my life, I would have resisted, critiqued, and avoided what that I put up with (with a smile, I might add) in the field.

My drive for intimacy with my participants resulted in situations where I was disappointed, even repulsed by, those involved in my research. It made me question my capabilities as a researcher and even, over time, destabilized my identity as a strong, capable, independent, smart woman. I did and still do question whether or not I am a "good researcher" because the large majority of my interactions and relationships were men became sexual tinged. Certainly, I tell myself, someone could have handled these situations better than I did. But as I consider these relationships and how I might of "done things better" I come up pretty empty handed.

I have come to believe that most of my power as a researcher emerged after I left the field. Not only during the process of writing my dissertation, but writing for public and policy venues as well as doing interviews with journalists who were writing on current events in Venezuela. During the writing and the reporting process one can control representations, mold

data, and tell the stories most interesting and important, from their perspective. Particularly in regards to press interviews I worry that my "having been there" will validate any report of life in a barrio, thus producing a generalized characterization of the diverse lives that make up any community or urban zone. In effect, I worry that my account might cull illegitimate authority from its first-hand "evidence." I have come to discover that these anxieties only increase with the challenges of coding ethnographic and interview data and presenting an account in article form. Both of these issues relate to the problematic nature of representation and the ethnographic assertion that "being there" provides unmediated access to the other's reality. As Britzman (1995) has noted, ethnographic fieldwork bestows a legitimizing power, as the act of "being there" promises to make outsiders vicarious insiders through empathetic portrayals.

One of the ways researchers have suggested creating checks and balances on researcher power of representation is by going back to research sites and sharing your findings and writings with participants. I began my research project with this in mind, committing to return and present my findings (in public presentations and publications) with UNES and General Police Council employees. However, the eventual restructuring of both institutions and the "freezing out" that I experienced – in some ways due to my nationality – made this impossible. Tensions between the U.S. and Venezuela worsened as I conducted my fieldwork, and the increasing fragility of reform made openly working with a *gringa* a liability that higher-ranking state representatives were, understandably, not willing to take on. Though I still have connections to people in these institutions, these are private and, for the protection of those working in these institutions, must remain as such. As an alternative, I have shared chapters with people attune to issues of the researcher's power in writing and representation, especially in regards to marginalized

populations. And, I will share findings with some individuals in Caracas on a personal and private basis.

My findings are based on three sources of data. I conducted two years of participant observation in Caracas with rank and file police officers; reformers working in state security institutions; residents of marginal sectors of the city, who bare the brunt of state and non-state violence; and citizens participating in police oversight committees. During this time I conducted 105 interviews with individuals from these populations. From 2013 to 2014 David Smilde and I also added questions to four national surveys, which asked respondents about their opinions of crime and security. I analyzed my qualitative data using ATLAS.ti and my quantitative data in SPSS. (For an in-depth discussion of my methods and data, see the methodology appendix).

All names have been changed to pseudonyms, except in the cases of Ileana Ruíz and Luis Izquiel, both of who are public figures and allowed me to use their names. Because there were very few members of the citizen police oversight committees in Caracas and few officers in the community police services in Catia, La Vega, and Antímano, naming the neighborhoods they represented or worked in would make individuals easily identifiable. Thus, when referring to members of citizen police oversight committees or officers from community police services, I change the names of the neighborhoods where they were from or were working or obscure this information completely to increase confidentiality.

Throughout the dissertation I will use double quotation marks to indicate speech that was recorded on a recording device during an interview and single quotation marks to indicate speech that was taken from my fieldnotes. Long ethnographic vignettes are book ended by three asterisks.

RESEARCH SITES

Most of my research was conducted in Venezuela's capital city of Caracas, though I also conducted research in the states of Sucre, Táchira, Portuguesa and Barinas. To a large degree, much of my research was people rather than place based. While I spent much of my time in the same living rooms, meeting spaces, and streets my research sites varied as I followed people to different neighborhoods, cities and states. Below, I provide descriptions of both the research sites and participants that were key to conducting my research.

Poor neighborhoods in Catia, La Vega, and Antímano

All of my fieldwork with barrio residents and police officers (apart from time I spent traveling with them) was conducted in the western area of Caracas, in neighborhoods located in Catia, La Vega, and Antímano. East Caracas is associated with the light-skinned, affluent Venezuelans, whereas west Caracas is associated with the darker skinned poor and working-class populations that live in the barrios that take up most of that side of the city.

As the country transitioned from an agricultural to an oil-based economy, Venezuela's rural population migrated en masse to urban centres. In 1950 53% of the population lived in urban areas; by the 1980s this figure had surpassed 85% (Haggerty 1993). Greater Caracas was the primary destination of urban migration and foreign immigration (INS 2014). The poor neighborhoods where I conducted my research, swelled quickly over a short period of time as they absorbed waves of poor migrants who expanded houses, roads and infrastructure with little to no support or planning by the state.

Most residents make a living by working in the informal sector. Despite the state's efforts at control and supervision, the main avenues leading down to the subway, remain clogged with buhoneros (street vendors) selling spices, fruits, vegetables, butter, arepas (corn cakes), chicha (a sweet milky beverage), and other various food items; pirated DVDs and CDs can be purchased when the police are not around. Some residents sell soda, beer, cakes, and candy out of their homes to bring in some extra income. Most of the neighborhoods were self-constructed and basic services like water and garbage collection are still inconsistent at best for many residents. Streets are lit by light bulbs shielded by empty plastic butter containers that residents string up. Though a few high-rise apartment buildings dot the landscape, these neighborhoods are overwhelmingly composed of 2-3 room apartments, built out of thin bricks, which sit side by side and are stacked on top of each other.

The majority of my research in poor neighborhoods took place in Catia. Over the course of two years I lived in two different neighborhoods in Catia and traveled to La Vega and Antímano to conduct observations and interviews. During this time period I lived in Catia in the Libertador municipality, which has one of the highest homicide rates in Caracas. In 2011 Catia's homicide rate was 93/100,000. 59 homicides had already occurred in the first four months of my fieldwork in 2012. Catia is also the zone where the National Bolivarian Police and the UNES – both created by the 2009 reform – were first based before being deployed nationally. (I refer to the reform using the year 2009 because, though the reform had begun years before with the CONAREPOL, reform legislation was not ratified until 2009.) Lastly, multiple armed citizen groups operate in Catia, which is home to the oldest of these groups (La Piedrita, Los Tupamaros, and Alexis Vive), names that are recognized throughout the country. Living in this sector allowed me to collect ethnographic data on everyday occurrences of violent crime and

citizens' reaction to it; observe the new National Bolivarian Police and their interactions with citizens; and listen to residents' discussions about police violence and State attempts to curb it in their neighborhoods.

My on-the-ground data collection over a 2-year period resulted in hundreds of hours of participant observation and over 1100 pages of ethnographic fieldnotes. During this time period I attended communal council and municipal meetings as well as birthday parties; I taught English and yoga classes at local elementary schools as well as through different government educational programs; I went grocery shopping with them, which sometimes entailed standing in line for hours at the subsidized food market where they waited to buy price controlled harina pan, oil, and meat; I woke up at 3 in the morning when water arrived through the hose in the bathroom to fill up plastic barrels, and helped with the cleaning and cooking when there was little to no water.

CCCP activities

I engaged in many activities with citizen police oversight committees (CCCP) members as I got to know them through meetings I attended. Most of my time was spent with the CCCP that was responsible for the PNB in Caracas, but I also traveled to the states of Sucre, Táchira, Portuguesa and Barinas to observe CCCP meetings and conduct interviews with them. I lived with one CCCP member for six months and others I saw at CCCP meetings or met with to accompany them throughout their daily activities.

Police Reformers

I observed both CGP promoters of the CCCPs as well as UNES faculty. Much of the time I spent with CGP promoters was on buses as we traveled to other states to check on CCCP groups. I

spent time with CGP promoters, both inside and outside of Caracas, watching them organize CCCP elections, hold meetings, and train CCCP members. I spent time with UNES faculty in classes at the university, during down time between classes, and outside of the university.

National Bolivarian Police

Much research on policing and security in the U.S. and Latin America has been conducted through survey research. Few long-term ethnographic studies have been conducted on police reform and security. The qualitative research on policing that does exist has been conducted with police on the job (for Latin America see Glebbeek, 2003; Denyer Willis, 2015; Chevigny 1995; for work outside of Latin America see Glaeser, 1999; Westley 1953; Bittner 1970; Van Maanen 1972; Manning 1977; Hunt 1985, 1990; Marks 2005) or with citizens who are the subjects of policing (Fassin 2013; Goffman 2014; Rios 2011; Contreras 2013). Little ethnographic research has looked at how officers' daily lives outside of the station inform justifications for violence. Thus, I focused on spending time with officers outside of their work – visiting with their families, running daily errands, and sharing meals after their shifts and on their days off. Furthermore, I attended classes and activities at the National Police University twice a week for a three-month period in 2014. These activities allowed me to observe officers-in-training, officers, professors, and police reformers interacting.

SUMMARIES OF CHAPTERS

In Chapters 3 and 4 I show that the assumption that the police are an insulated body, uniquely protected by their relationship to the state and steeped in a particular police culture no longer applies to some police, given that 1). The unique tether that has tied the police to the state has

been severed and 2). Most police officers live in the same violent barrios that they police, and, therefore, are subject the similar vulnerabilities as others living at the urban margins. One of the reasons often cited for failed reform, and linked to the weakness of democracy, is the power that the police are assumed to wield in societies, particularly in Latin America. Though patterns of violence have changed dramatically throughout much of the region, much research has continued to assume that the police are extremely powerful actors. Ungar (2002:67) argues that democratic regimes must "wrest police power out of the police's hands," implying that the police have an extremely strong grip on their power and, this, social control. This perspective assumes a degree of power and control that neither the state nor the police hold. Indeed, if the understandings that people have of their relationship to the state and governance depend upon a process of validation (Glaeser 2011), my research shows that officers' daily experiences, encounters, and interactions with other state and non-state actors invalidate understandings of themselves as empowered and privileged state actors; instead, these experiences validate officers' understandings that the government has abandoned and is actively delegitimizing – and thus disempowering – the police.

Rather than look to past histories of military rule or civil war, which has been the focus of much work on police reform in the region, in Chapter 6 I look at how the more recent pluralization of violent actors can lead to broad support for authoritarian responses to crime within a democratic setting and question the assumption that violence and democracy are antithetical. Though participatory security models offer the possibility of strengthening democracy and state capacity by implementing accountability mechanisms and changing the way that policing is done, it is in the locations where participatory security is most needed that participation is likely to support undemocratic militarized policing, reactionary discourse, and the violation of human rights – the exact problems that community participation is meant to

address and ameliorate. For example, as I demonstrate in Chapter 6, the ways in which violence has changed in both quantity and quality in Caracas has heavily impacted how people participate and what claims they make on the state regarding security. In the case of the police oversight committees, many members demanded the deregulation of police use of force and suggested a heavy arming of the police, believing that levels of violence in their communities was such that militarized policing complemented by non-repressive policing was the only kind of security that could keep both police officers and citizens safe. And, in Chapter 5 I show how socialist ideology shaped the implementation and interpretations of police reform. Similar to the GDR's response to the country's inability to compete with capitalist production, when structural changes failed to reduce crime and violence the role attributed to consciousness as instrumental in socialist politics increased and politics of education moved to the foreground. Due to the lackluster results of strategies to attack crime through poverty reduction, the government increasingly turned to the issue of "values" of society as a principle cause of crime (see Antillano 2012).

In the conclusion, I summarize a principal contention of this dissertation: Police reform failed to consolidate because key tenets of reform did not make sense to people on the ground, specifically poor urban residents and police officers, due to the ways in which their relationships to state and non-state actors have been altered. Though it might seem self-evident to scholars, tenets of reform (like the universal respect for human rights and progressive use of force) are not taken as unequivocally good for democracy or security; indeed, the police themselves might not be as important in people's understandings and evaluations of democracy and security as has been thought. I close by offering some practical and theoretical implications of this research.

CONTRIBUTIONS

By bringing together research on police reform, violent democracies, neoliberalization, and the Left in Latin America this dissertation makes a number of contributions. First, I show how the plurally violent contexts in which officers grow up and live contribute to the reproduction of violence and corruption. By moving outside of the police department and following officers in their everyday lives, I show that violence and corruption are not only "learned" through training and police culture; if police culture is not the only source of violence and corruption, then the ability of reform to control these is perhaps more limited than previously thought.

Second, this dissertation provides a bottom-up account of concepts championed by the literature on reform, such as human rights, regulated force, accountability. As work by Denyer Willis (2016) has shown, police resistance to human rights must be understood alongside contextual factors. Justice and rights, he argues, are "heavily influenced by the challenges that individual police face" (81).

In this dissertation, I show how and why certain tenants of police reform were accepted and rejected by not only police officers, but also poor barrio residents. Each chapter of my dissertation looks at a different aspect of reform – human rights training, regulating police use of force, citizen participation, and community policing – and how people in marginal urban environments interpreted these. The challenges that officers and poor barrio residents face largely determine how they interpret concepts assumed to democratize the police, and whether or not they support these. Following police reform over a two-year period allowed me to see how reform was interpreted and broken apart and why certain tenants were accepted and rejected.

By paying attention to the everyday lives of "citizens of fear," (Rotker and Goldman 2002) I show how certain aspects of a reform that are intended to destabilize mano dura security and militarized policing can actually complement these on the ground. Rather than explaining support for repression and mano dura policies by characterizing citizens as hysterical or panicked (Ungar 2011: 21), I demonstrate how these make sense within an environment where multiple and conflicting centers of social order exist.

Finally, by using Caracas, Venezuela as my case study, this dissertation provides one of the first looks at security and police reform implemented by a Leftist government in Latin America. While much work has analyzed the political, economic, and social aspects of these governments, very little work has asked how security and policing might look different in what some have labeled a "post-neoliberal" context. The 2009 police reform provides insight into one of the key characteristics (and shortcomings) of the Chavista governments: A revolutionary discourse and plan was applied to long standing institutions, long before any work was done to reform, transform, or replace these institutions. The government announced and backed a "new" way of policing, but did not lay the institutional groundwork to actually change policing. The major shift in discourse without addressing reality and past history is emblematic of Chávez government.

Chapter 2:

Venezuela's Police Reform

Democratic policing has emerged as a "universal prescription for pursuing police reforms in transnational and developing countries around the world" (Blaustein 2015:5). In this chapter, I provide a brief overview of tenets of democratic policing, the police in Venezuela pre-reform, and how democratic policing was implemented through the 2009 reform.

WHAT IS DEMOCRATIC POLICING?

Democratic policing can be broadly defined as policing that is responsive to the demands of citizens. There are a number of characteristics that scholars have identified as part of making the police responsive to citizens: Rule of law, depoliticization, demilitarization, community policing, citizen participation, and accountability and transparency (Glebbeek 2004 chp.2; Ungar 2011; Fruhling et al. 2003).

Rule of law

Méndez, O'Donnell, and Pinheiro (1999) write that Latin America is characterized by the "unrule of law," where citizens' rights are routinely abused. Rule of law refers to the consistent and impartial application of the law. Ungar (2002:1-2) specifies the rule of law as an "accountable law abiding state whose agencies cooperate with judicial procedures, carry out court rulings, and follow constitutional norms in good faith." The rule of law requires that the

criminal justice system operate without undue interference by state actors or private interests. Criminal justice systems in Latin America are often criticized for biased, inconsistent, and extralegal actions. According to Pinheiro (1999:1):

> Since the return of democratic rule to many countries in Latin America, relations between governments and society, particularly the poor and marginalized members of society, have been characterized by the illegal and arbitrary use of power. The great hope during the democratic transitions in Latin America is the 1980s was that the end of dictatorships would mean consolidating the rule of law…Nonetheless…there is a significant gap between the letter of the bills of rights, present in many constitutions, and law enforcement application and practice.

Others have written that due to authoritarian histories, Latin American democratization has focused on particular rights, such as the right to life and freedom from torture, instead of protecting general political and social rights (Carothers 2001). This has meant that governments have focused on stopping "specific, immediate wrongs" rather than promoting the rule of law (Carothers, 2001:5).

Depoliticization

A primary impediment to reforming police in Latin America has been the politicization of police forces, which have remained closely aligned with the government sectors that provide them with funds (Frühling et al. 2003; Hinton 2006). According to Davis (2010), in the PRI's Mexico the police were often pitted against revolutionaries, mayors, and even the military, "depending on

which coercive force was most loyally attached to which faction or level of government. In this environment, mistrust and violence became the modus operandi of political rule, and the institutions of policing became the battleground for power" (43). Hinton (2005, 2006) argues that the police in Brazil are often used as instruments of political parties to discredit those in office, paid to either ignore or promote violence close to election times. Related to this point are the personalistic hiring and promotion practices that characterize the police. In Venezuela, a virtual lack of hiring standards led to promotions based on cronyism and little hope for most officers to move up through the ranks (CONAREPOL 2007). Lastly, progressive reforms implemented by police chiefs tend to be derailed by a revolving door of personnel as well as vacillating concerns over reform that tend to be addressed only when security issues threaten politicians' careers.

Since police departments depend on parties and leaders for material resources and high-ranking officers depend on politicians to keep them in their positions, police prioritize the interests of parties and leaders and keeping them in office. Politicization, then, impedes the democratization of the police by aligning the interests of the police with those of political actors and parties. "[A] key determinant of whether a police force is democratically responsive involves…whether its governance and activities are primarily responsive to the interests of the demos" (Blaustein 2015:9-10), not political actors. Thus, a fundamental aspect of successful police reform is breaking the close ties between the state and the police in order to make the police accountable to citizens and society, rather than subservient to state actors.

Demilitarization

Demilitarization refers to the transfer of control and power over the police from the military to civilians as well as changes in training and regulations on weapons and force that clearly separate the police from the military. Demilitarization is considered key for a number of reasons.

Much research in Latin America has focused on the military's current and historical involvement in the police "because soldiers take orders from above rather than responding to the appeals of individual citizens; their force is much less restrained, and secrecy is a more engrained mindset" (Bayley, 2001:38-9; also see Glebbeek 2001; Hinton 2006; Hernandez, 1986; Kruijt and Koonings 1999). Pereira and Ungar (2004) argue that authoritarian regimes have left their mark on states, resulting in sustained mano dura policies and perhaps even an uptake in police violence since democratization.

Police under the control of military regimes in countries like Argentina (1976-1983), Chile (1973-1990), and Brazil (1964-1985) were often trained in torture and coercion methods and utilized by the military to monitor, detain, and "disappear" internal dissidents. Pereira and Ungar (2004) argue that these authoritarian regimes have left their mark on states, resulting in sustained mano dura policies and an uptake in police violence since democratization. Even in the current context of "Democracy's Third Wave" the military have continued to either train police or provide their main source of oversight and supervision.

In Chile the Carabineros, the national police, are part of the armed forces and report to the Ministry of Defense. Throughout the 1990s the military in Mexico took control of police in various states, and militarization has been the government's definitive response to the expansion

of nacro-trafficking in the country. Glebbeek (2001) notes that while Guatemala initiated a civilian police force in 1996, the government has also continued to rely upon joint military and police patrols. Research suggests that this close military-police relationship has produced a police perspective that encourages repressive policing practices by defining citizens as enemies to be subdued, controlled, and contained (Hinton 2006; Hernandez 1986). In the case of Venezuela, state police were formed as civil forces but copied the militarized model and followed in the footsteps of the National Guard and, since the 60s, have been under military command. According to the CONAREPOL (2007:94):

> The dynamic of the construction of the national state, the result of a process of imposition more than consensus, the dormant and open conflicts between the State and various displaced social groups, such as authoritarian ideologies and anti-popular ideologies of dominant elites, allowed space for a strongly militarized police, conceived as a bellicose force directed to control, contain, and neutralize internal enemies (the poor, dissident political groups).

Community policing

Community policing has been defined by three key components: community partnerships, organizational transformation, and problem solving (Skogan and Roth 2004; COPS 2014). According to Greene (2000:31), community policing calls for modifying police structures so they are more environmentally responsive, broadening the police role to focus on problem solving and improving the community's quality of life, flattening police organizations, increasing decisional latitude among police officers, and reducing organizational complexity. Thus, it is both a philosophy of policing as well as form of organizing the police.

Community policing is a preventative approach to security that defines police relationships with citizens as one of the main lines of defense against insecurity.[10] This model attempts to promote citizen empowerment and collective efficacy (Sampson et al. 1997);[11] improve police-community partnerships; decentralize operations by pushing "decision-making power down the [officer] hierarchy" (Herbert 2006: 4); and improve the use of crime statistics to prevent crime's occurrence (for comprehensive overviews of community policing see Arias and Ungar 2009; Herbert 2006; Skogan and Roth 2004). Community policing has become popular in contexts where the police have historically been trained by and under the control of the military, because the philosophy of this model is capable of shaping "the habitus of…officers in a way that renders them less aggressive and more responsive to the needs of citizens" (Blaustein 2015:205).

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[10] Skogan and Roth (2004) suggest four characteristics of community policing that have the potential to restructure community-police relations: community outreach, community crime prevention, problem-oriented policing, and fear reduction. A fifth characteristic of community policing that I would suggest that is integral to the Latin American context is the *reduced reliance on coercion* by police officers.

[11] Sampson et al. (1997:111) define collective efficacy as the ability of community residents to "regulate its members according to desired principles – to realize collective, as opposed to forced, goals." It is one of many intervening community-level dynamics that criminologists have suggested impact the prevalence of crime, especially in lower-class communities.

Citizen participation, Accountability, and Transparency

No broad consensus exists on how police reform might attempt to overcome these historical, organizational, and institutional challenges. Citizen participation, however, has emerged as a popular mechanism by which to address them. Increasing interactions between police and citizens is thought to reduce the police's militarized mentality towards the latter. Citizen participation is tightly linked to community policing, both because citizen participation is important in communicating needs to the police and because networks between the two are intended to promote preventative and geographically specified approaches to crime rather than after-the-fact scattered responses.

Scholars have argued that creating horizontal accountability mechanisms are fundamental to dealing with the socialization problems produced by isolation, insulation, and other characteristics of police culture. Accountability is a principle tenet of democracy. Ungar (2002:76) has written that accountability has two general dimensions: 1). Explanation, transparency, and answerability – the power to know what is happening and why and 2) judgment and sanction – the ability to punish those who violate laws. Hinton (2005), Arias and Ungar (2009), Silva Forné and Solares (2012), and Chevigny (2003) all point to the persistent lack of internal and external accountability mechanisms to audit and oversee police conduct, use of resources, and attention to community concerns. The lack of accountability mechanisms (Silva Forné and Solares 2012; Chevigny 2003) and quality control in the selection and training of officers (Ungar 2011) has allowed corruption and human rights abuses to continue.

The police are frequently characterized as one of the most insulated state institutions, resistant to democratization and reform and protected by state actors who simultaneously depend upon and distance themselves from the police (Fabián Sain 2010). Both citizen participation and community policing are thought to address police isolation and insulation from society.

Police Culture

Related to the issue of insulation, police culture has received much attention since it is assumed that police officers are largely shaped by this culture due to their separation from civilian life. This concept draws attention to the fact that courts and laws are limited in their ability to shape the behavior and decisions of the police. Though various definitions of police culture have been given (Chan 1999; Holdaway 1989; Della Porta 1995; Crank 1998) scholars agree that changing characteristics such as machismo, isolation from society, and a suspicion of civilians and outsiders (Reiner 2010) must be changed in police reform is going to have a long-term impact on policing practices. Similarly, in the case of Mexico, Sabet (2012:29) has argued that "despite the good intentions of this proposal, the findings presented in this book suggest that restructuring the police will amount to yet another change in the formal rules that falls victim to persistent informal practices of patronage, corruption, tolerance, and constant policy and personnel change."

THE POLICE IN VENEZUELA

In 1775, the "Alcaldes Celadores de Barrios" in Caracas created a community police service, the first police to exist in the country. In 1778 (Ungar 2003) this police service was formalized and divided into four police districts in the city: Altagracia, San Pablo, Candelaria y Santa Rosalía

(Gómez 2013). Under the President Cipriano Castro (1899-1908), Venezuela entered a significant period of transformation. Castro created the first permanent military, charging them with eliminating private armies that still operated in the country (Núñez 2006). In 1915, the military dictator and President Juan Vicente Gómez created the first secret police (La Sagrada), which allowed for "more extensive control by detecting and repressing political enemies…La Sagrada played an important role in [national security], through their repressive tactics and investigation, guaranteeing the information necessary to prevent political actions that could make the stability of the regime vulnerable. A climate of terror, prohibition, harsh punishment, and omnipresent bodies of repression was put in place" (Gómez 2013:9).

In 1937 the first investigative police was created. Under the dictatorship of Pérez Jiménez (1948-1958) the investigative police were given the authority to direct judicial investigations. In 1945, a civilian-military coup ushered in three years of a democratic government, first under Rómulo Betancourt and then under Rómulo Gallegos. During the brief period of democracy, between 1945 and 1948, the government attempted to implement reforms to expedite the judicial process, such as requiring the police to turn evidence over to judges within 30 days (Ungar 2003). However, as Ungar (2003:207) notes, "in practice the judicial police continued following the orders of the Armed Forces and the Ministry of the Interior." Gallegos' government was overthrown by Marcos Pérez Jiménez's military coup in 1948, returning full control of the police and domestic security to the military.

In 1958 Pérez Jiménez was overthrown by a civilian-led coup, ushering in Venezuela's second democratic period. The Metropolitan Police was created in 1969 under the government of Rafael Caldera to police Caracas, despite the fact that municipal police forces already covered the municipalities that make up the capital. The Cuerpo Técnico de Policía Judicial, or PTJ, was

created in 1958 and placed in charge of criminal investigations and forensic services. The PTJ was renamed the Cuerpo de Investigaciones Científicas, Penales y Criminalísticas (CICPC) in 2001.

Under President Rómulo Bentacourt, the first president elected after the overthrow of Pérez Jiménez, the police were used to control both crime and leftist insurgency. Concern over guerillas resulted in increasing police power and limited due process. The focus on the war against guerillas continued under Rafael Caldera (1969-1974), whose government supported strategies like the "Operacion Vanguardia," making arrests for minor infractions, including disrespecting authority, common in the urban barrios. "Despite democracy, torture, disappearances, and violent tactics against protestors continued. In fact, under Caldera torture was common and more students were killed by police than under other government since the fall of Gómez's dictatorship" (Ungar 2003:209).

Similar to other parts of Latin America, the police and judiciary have played a fundamentally different role in the procedural process in Venezuela, with the police acting as the prosecutor – presenting evidence to the judge – and the judge considering this evidence as both judge and jury. The lack of defendant rights and the "inquisitorial" procedural process (Duce and Pérez Perdomo 2003:71) continues to contribute to the slowness of court processing and the high numbers of suspects incarcerated as they await trial. The police also had a large degree of power in the streets. The Law on Loitering and Miscreants allowed for "preventative" detention of people who had not committed a crime but were considered a threat to society.

The law was declared unconstitutional in 1997 and in 1998 a new criminal procedure code was passed to further limit police power by requiring that the police obtain an arrest warrant or that a person be caught while committing a crime if they are to be arrested (Inter-American

Development Bank 2002). The new code also banned pre-trial detention unless a judicial order was given (Birkbeck 2003). Furthermore, the code replaced written, inquisitorial criminal procedure typical of civil law systems with the oral, accusatorial procedure typical of common law systems (Langer 2007; Birkbeck 2003). Nevertheless, the police continue to exercise ample power. For example, according to Ungar (2003:211) CICPC police agents "do not share information with judges and prosecutors, they use false testimony, they destroy and create evidence, they come up with charges against innocent people, they protect abusive officials, and sometimes they blame suspects so they do not have to conduct an investigation."

Before the 2009 reform created the National Police there were three levels of national security forces in Venezuela: The investigative police (CICPC), the DISIP (now known as the SEBIN, a political and investigative police), and the National Guard, which was created in 1937. Reform legislation transferred certain responsibilities from the National Guard, such as the policing of "sensitive areas" like airports, highways and prisons, to the PNB, but this transition never occurred. Though the PNB do police airports and highways, they do so alongside the National Guard.

There were also police forces at the state level, the metropolitan level (in the case of Caracas), and the municipal level. The expansion of police forces continued in 1989 with the law of decentralization, which gave governors and mayors the power to create their own police forces. Between 1990 to 2006 102 new police forces were created (a 364% increase in police forces). In the case of Caracas alone, there were 10 police forces before the 2009 reform, not including the National Guard or the CICPC that also police the city.

By the time the CONAREPOL was published, there were 123 state and municipal police forces and 5 national security forces: the National Guard (part of the armed forces), the CICPC

(under the MIJ), the Cuerpo Técnico de Vigilantes de Tránsito Terrestre (under the Ministerio de Infraestructura, the DISIP (under the MIJ), and the Policía Marítima (CONAREPOL 2007: 81). As the number of police forces rose and the number of arrests and imprisonment increased, so did crime and violence (Ungar 2003).

The problems associated with quickly proliferating police forces were compounded by the fact that no standards existed for training, education, organization, pay, or resources. For example, there were 21 state laws and 77 municipal decrees and ordinances (CONAREPOL 2007:82). Each police force was organized differently, with different hierarchies (at least 16 different ones) and procedures for entrance, training, promotion, and retirement (ibid). The type and duration of training varied from force to force. Some forces gave temporary courses depending on the budget from enrolled students, while some officers received no formal training at all (CONAREPOL 2007:126). Despite the various forces, the commission found that on average on 52% of police officers were actively engaged in citizen security at any given time, with others either on vacation, leave, out sick, or protecting buildings and people or transportation work and logistics (CONAREPOL 2007:90).
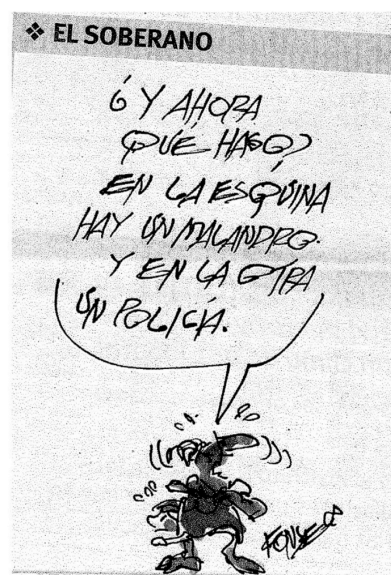
Comic printed in the newspaper Ultimas Noticias, May 15, 2013

THE 2009 POLICE REFORM

The Chavista government implemented numerous security plans during its administration (See Table 1 in Appendix I). However, most of these security plans continued with the militarized approach that previous governments had relied upon to fight crime and did nothing to improve training or professionalize the police. In 2005, however, a number of scandals occurred within a six-month period that highlighted the participation of police officers in serious crimes, such as kidnapping, extortion, and murder (Gabaldón 2013:669). These back-to-back cases provided the "moral detonator" that catalyzed the government's move to reform police in the country.

On April 6, 2006 the Commission on Police Reform was created, which brought together politicians, NGO actors, academics, human rights activists, and representatives of the criminal justice system. Over a period of nine months the commission compiled financial, organizational, and human resources information about police in the country through interviews, surveys, and national hotlines. In the first phase of the investigation, 57,240 people participated. The Committee also completed eight reports, three thematic forums, 12 workshops with different labor sectors, and focus groups. In this phase, 5,425 people participated. Police officers were also consulted, including officers from 24 state police forces and 99 municipal police forces.

The commission identified numerous problems with the organization, institutionalization, training, and culture of police in the country. These included politicization (91); militarization (94-96); a lack of accountability mechanisms (100-101); excessive use of physical force (105-110) (see Table 1); a lack of resources ranging from space and infrastructure, internet and

computers, weapons, and vehicles (112-119); poor pay; and lax educational standards (for example, only 4% had a college degree, while 71% had only completed secondary school).

Based on their consultation, the Commission made the following recommendations (345-346; 389-390):

- Create a system of formation that would set national parameters and requirements for professionalization

- Unity curricular criteria

- The formation of professors and directors of police academies

- The development of educational materials

- Academies should require that cadets enter with a high school degree

- The creation of an "interministerial" body to coordinate standards of police formation

- Affirmative action policies and programs to incentivize women to enroll in police academies

- A standardization of ranks and police accreditation

- Centers of formation, investigation, and community outreach

- Regular retraining

The laws that emerged from the CONAREPOL report, the Organic Law on Police Service and the National Police (Ley Orgánica del Servicio de Policía y del Cuerpo de Policía Nacional, henceforth LOSPCPNB) and the Standing Law of Police Functions (Ley del Estatuto de la Función Policial), were passed in 2009 and set national standards for police training, hierarchy, and weapons for all police forces; set the parameters and attributes of the new National Bolivarian Police (PNB); and created institutions such as the General Police Council to oversee

the implementation of police reform and the Integrated Police System to coordinate between police bodies. The LOSPCPNB took away governors' and mayors' ability to create police forces, stating that only the Executive Branch had to oversee this process (check this). Section 10, Article 83 disbanded the Metropolitan Police, which was replaced by the PNB. The reform also standardized police hierarchies (replacing the military rankings that had been used by many forces), creating the following rankings:

- Oficial

- Oficial Agregado

- Oficial Jefe

- Supervisor

- Supervisor Agregado

- Supervisor Jefe

- Comisionado

- Comisionado Agregado

- Comisionado Jefe

While the law incorporated many of the commission's recommendations, it did not incorporate all of them. The General Police Council was created, but was made into an advisory panel with little real power. The UNES, a national academy with different locations throughout the country, was created to take over the training of all police officers; however, labor rights were eliminated as was the special ombudsmen for police officers.

One of the most promising elements of these initiatives was that some of the main actors in the police reform were human rights activists who had spent decades fighting against police

abuse. Soraya El Achkar was named the Executive Secretary of the transition and would eventually become both the Executive Secretary of the CGP and the Rector of the UNES. The same human rights group that Soraya El Achkar and Ileana Ruiz were a part of, the Red de Apoyo para la Justicia y la Paz, developed and implemented human rights education at the UNES. Ileana Ruiz described the beginning of the reform this way:

> I have been a human rights activist since '85 with La Red de Apoyo por la Justicia y la Paz. In '98 this organization decided to create a human rights formation program for police officers and with Soraya, who is now the Executive Secretary of the CGP, between us we created a formation program…In 2008 I decided to leave the human rights activist world and move away from Caracas, I went to [the state of] Falcón, and my dream was to start working with the rights of children and adolescents and to write…[Laughs]…but then they approved this law, in the same year, 2008. In December 2008 the law was approved and the CGP was created…and in 2009…Professor Soraya called me and said "Look, after all this time working for this and now it is possible to do it, you are going to remain at the margins?! No! Come back!" And, so, I gave up my work there and came back here [to Caracas].

Soraya El Achkar was undeniably the face of the reform. A news article published in El Universal, one of the most widely read newspapers in Venezuela, (derisively) referred to the police university created by the reform as "the university of Soraya El Achkar" (Rodríguez de Mayo 2013).

THE NEW MODEL OF POLICING IN VENEZUELA

Here, I briefly summarize how different aspects of the 2009 reform were originally defined and implemented. The implementation and framing of reform ended up being heavily shaped by socialist discourse, an issue that I discuss in detail in Chapter 5.

Use of Force

Until the 2009 Venezuelan reform, many police forces (including the Metropolitan Police) were directed and trained by the National Guard, resulting in a mentality of "*disparar primero y averiguar despues*" [shoot first, ask questions later]. Reformers hoped to reduce the number of policing killings and incidences of excessive use of force. The 2009 reform regulated the types of weapons that officers could carry, banning officers from carrying military-grade weapons and altered guns, limiting them to 9mm pistols. Officers were no longer allowed to walk around with their guns in hand or unclipped from their belts. New offices were created where citizens could denounce officers for using unnecessary force. Human rights became part of the core curriculum for police training and retraining, and model of progressive and differential use of force (*uso progresivo y diferenciado de la fuerza policial*; henceforth the UPDFP) was adopted by the UNES (see Figure 1).

The UPDFP basically means that a police officer's use of force depends on the amount of force being used a citizen and situational factors that might increase the risk of harm. The MPPRIJ (2010) defines this as a shared norm and principle for "applying police force when necessary in a progressive and differential manner, in all cases with the goal of affirming life as

the supreme constitutional and legal good, only utilizing the level of resistance and opposition that is used by a person intending to stop, obstruct, or weaken police intervention, using the minimum force necessary for effective containment, and decreasing the probability of damage or harm whether that be physical or moral."

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UPDFP

PIRÁMIDE RESISTENCIA - CONTROL

NIVELES DE RESISTENCIA | NIVELES DE CONTROL

VIOLENCIA MORTAL | POTENCIALMENTE MORTAL
AGRESIONES ACTIVAS | ARMAS INTERMEDIAS
RESISTENCIA DEFENSIVA | TECNICAS DURAS DE CONTROL FISICO
RESISTENCIA PASIVA | TECNICAS SUAVES DE CONTROL FISICO
AGRESIONES VERBALES | DIALOGO
INDECISO | DESPLIEGUE TACTICO
INTIMIDACION PSICOLOGICA | PRESENCIA

VERBALIZACION

CIUDADANO | **OFICIAL**

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Figure 1

Illustration of the UPDFP

According to the UPDFP, the appropriate use of force in response to a citizen's actions is as follows:

Citizen Level of Resistance	Police officer Level of Control
Psychological Intimidation	Police Presence
Undecided	Strategic Positioning
Verbal Aggression	Dialogue
Passive Resistance	Techniques for Minor Physical Control
Defensive Resistance	Techniques for Maximum Physical Control
Active Aggressions	Nonlethal Use of Weapons
Lethal Violence	Potential Lethal Violence

Community Policing

The community policing component in Venezuela's reform attempted to improve relations with citizens and promote prevention over after-the-fact response (Fermin, 2011). According to the LOSPCPN, the community police are "professional, predominately preventative, proactive, permanent, defined by proximity, and dedicated to respecting the values, identity, and culture of each particular community" (Article 47). Previous police reforms had largely targeted middle-to-upper-class areas (Birkbeck and Gabaldón, 2009). In contrast, the National Bolivarian Police and its community policing service were originally implemented in the "prioritized," lower-class areas of Caracas. In fact, Catia, the largest collection of lower-class barrios in Caracas, was the original laboratory where the PNB and the community police were deployed. Community police officers are expected to perform daily foot patrols in geographically defined areas, hold workshops and activities in schools and community organizations, attend community meetings

and events, and "promote citizen participation" in general. Public information is not consistently available for the number of community police officers working in Caracas. I was able to obtain the following information from supervisors of community police units in the areas where I conducted research, which show the lack of personnel the service worked with. As a point of comparison, the international standard for police-to-citizen ratio (which refers to all police officers, not just community police) is 3-4 officers per 1,000 inhabitants.

- In 2009 there were 40 officers working in 6 sectors of Catia

- In 2012 thirty-one community police officers were working in San Juan de Catia, the sector of Catia where I lived

- In 2011, around 350 community police officers were assigned to the Sucre parish, but by 2012 this had been scaled back to 220 as officers have been sent to other services or other states. These officers covered the areas of San Juan and four other sectors of Catia.

- By 2014 there were 311 community police officers working in three parishes: Antímano, La Vega, and Sucre, which have a combined estimated population of 650,000 people.

Human Rights

As mentioned above, many of the protagonists of reform and the original heads of new security institutions had worked in human rights NGOs for decades. Soraya El Achkar (first director of the UNES and the CGP), Pablo Fernández (head of the Presidential Disarmament Commission, the Venezuela Full of Life initiative, and the General Police Council at different times), Antonio González Plessmann (head of the social outreach division of the UNES), Ileana Ruiz (Coordinator of Citizen Participation in the CGP) and others had spent years combatting police

violence. The human rights component of reform was, unsurprisingly, emphasized in both legislation and training manuals.

Article 12 of the LOSPCPN states: Police forces will act according to and in respect of the human rights consecrated in the Constitution of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela (note that human rights here are protected by the constitution, not the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights). According to Article 65: Respecting and protecting human dignity and defending and promoting human rights of all people, with discrimination based in ethnic origin, sex, religion, nationality, language, political opinion, economic position, or discrimination of any other type.

All officers-in-training are required to take human rights courses at the UNES. Officers that transferred from other police forces to the PNB were required to take a three-month reeducation course, much of which focused on human rights. Current police are supposed to undergo retraining every two years, which includes a human rights component, though police officers and UNES faculty report that these requirements have not been met.

Citizen Participation, Accountability, and Oversight

One of the CONAREPOL's criticisms of the old police system was the lack of internal and external accountability mechanisms. The CONAREPOL reported that 42% of police forces in the country did not have an internal inspector or an internal accountability office.

The 2009 police laws created new forms of internal and external supervision of the police. While institutions like the "Office of the Ombudsman" (Defensoria del Pueblo) previously existed, the law created internal supervision bodies, such as the office of "Supervision of Police Conduct" (Oficinas de Control de Actuación Policial) and "Response to Police

Misconduct" (Respuesta a las Desviaciones Policiales), which receive denunciations and implement strategies to prevent police misconduct. Police forces are now also required by law to give a public accounting (rendicion de cuentas) to communities within the first 60 days of each year and the PNB's community police services are required to hold public accounting meetings at least three times a year. Communal councils and other community organizations are recognized in the laws as sources of external accountability and can request accountability meetings with police apart from those required by law.

The CGP and the UNES organized community workshops and printed *baquias* (small booklets) to hand out at community meetings, which explained the reform and different roles citizens could play in supporting it. In the introduction to the *baquia* El Achkar (2010:9) wrote:

> What is not known cannot be controlled. For this reason, we invite the national community to know the norms that should regulate police forces and exercise the citizen oversight necessary so that cultural changes are firmly put into place that push change and so that never again will we have to stand the old police model that put human dignity at risk. The police will change when the entire country decides and actively and protagonistically promote change.

Adding to the external control bodies that existed before citizen police control committees were created to improve police oversight. The Citizen Committees for Police Control (Comités Ciudadanos de Control Policial [CCCPs]) were one of the new instantiations of external oversight and accountability created by the police reform. According to the General Police Council (CGP 2012), the body charged with carrying out the police reform at the national level, the CCCPs

constitute an instance of external oversight over the police forces…The committee is responsible for monitoring police duties in their corresponding jurisdiction regarding administration, functioning, conforming to rules, manuals, protocols, instructions, and current procedures, with the goal of contributing to the thorough and trustworthy functioning of the police.

The first committees were formed in 2011. By 2015 79 CCCPs had been organized in the country, overseeing national, state, and municipal police. According to one committee supervisor, the General Police Council's goal is for the committees to spread "like the community councils." A committee can be organized for municipal and state forces and the PNB. Committees that oversee the PNB do so at the level of the parish the PNB works in. Creating a committee for Caracas presented some difficulties for the CGP, given its size and unique classification of a capital district. In the case of Caracas, there is a CCCP with members that represents three parishes – Sucre, Antímano, and La Vega – level, as well as CCCPs that oversee the PNB within each parish at a smaller geographical scale. My main fieldwork was conducted with the CCCP that was intended to coordinate between the three parishes.

Differing from other state-sponsored community organizations in Venezuela, these committees are closely accompanied by state representatives and have relatively stringent requirements for members. Committee members cannot have a criminal record, cannot be active or retired police officers or member of the Armed Forces, and must be a high school graduate (Resolution 158, Art. 9). Each CCCP is accompanied by a promoter and supervisor from the General Police Council through a 9-step process. The final step in this process is the "formation" of the committee, which refers to an educational phase wherein committee members undergo

training over their functions, rights, and responsibilities as well as how the police *ought* to operate. This formation process takes around a year to complete, though committees take on projects throughout their formation. Once the formation process has ended the committee begins to meet every 15 days with the police body to which they correspond and every 15 days with the communities they represent.

General Police Council

The General Police Council, or Consejo General de Policía (CGP), was envisioned as an institution that would oversee and assess the implementation of police reform across police bodies. The CONAREPOL suggested that the CGP should have the power to sanction police forces that did not adapt to new regulations, but the legislation that was passed to create the CGP made the institution a strictly advisory body. The CGP also oversaw the CCCPs and published new policing manuals, "baquias" or small booklets with information about the new police model, and CCCP materials.

   According to Article 23 of the law, the General Police Council is "an organization of participation and assessment that contributes to the defining, planning, and coordination of public policy in the area of police service, such as the professionalization of the police." It is comprised of representatives from state and municipal governments, the Public Ministry and Defense of the People, as well as anyone considered "pertinent" by the head of the CGP. The CGP is charged with: Proposing public policies and plans in the area of policing at the national level; proposing the adoption of standards of service; regulations of functions; procedural manuals; shared organization for all police forces; police formation courses and control and supervison mechanisms; with the purpose of standardization and facilitating police performance"

(Article 25).

The Integrated Police System

The Integrated Police System (abbreviated VISIPOL in Spanish) was created to coordinate between police forces and streamline the sharing of information and police actions. According to Article 21 of the law, the VISIPOL includes the "articulation of bodies and entities that engage in police services and provide support…through the development of a structure that assures the administration and efficiency of police forces." The VISIPOL includes the Ministry of Popular Power and Citizen Security, the PNB, state and municipal police forces, the UNES, the National Intergovernmental Police Service Fund, any other body that exercises police functions, and any body or entity "determined by the National Executive."

The National Bolivarian Police

The government was given the power to organize the National Bolivarian Police (Policía Nacional Bolivariana, PNB) in the 1999 constitution, passed shortly after Hugo Chávez was first elected president, but was not created until the passage of the LOSPCPNB in 2009. It was the first national police force that existed in the country, with the explicit purpose of "filling in" areas that had historically been neglected by the police. According to the CGP, the PNB was founded in order to "reverse the old and traditional police model, characterized essentially by high levels of corruption, negligence, poor professionalization, distant from the people and their interests, tied to illegal networks, violator of human rights, classist, racist, misogynist, homophobic, xenophobic, primarily servicing economically solvent groups and repressive in its essence" (CGP 2011:3). The PNB was first deployed in Caracas, in Catia specifically, and

eventually took over the territory that had been policed by the Metropolitan Police since 1969.

The Metropolitan Police was dissolved completely in 2010.

In the front of each guide and training manual published by the General Police Council is a description of the police under the new model. According to the Council, the police in this new model "is an armed institution whose arms are not used against the people but for their protection…[the police] do not criminalize the poor or take actions that re-victimize them. On the contrary they are partial to popular sectors as they are the most affected by the phenomenon of violence…they promote the protagonist participation of the people and generate mechanisms that contribute to the auto-regulation of the community… Its officers only use their guns in extreme circumstances, as a reaction to the use of lethal force…before an illegitimate aggression." According to legislation, the PNB are supposed to prioritize and privilege "dialogue as the principal tool to approach and resolve conflict" (CGP 2011:12).

According to the LOSPCPNB the PNB director must be a civilian, though it has been under the direction of a former military general since 2014.

The UNES

Before the passage of the LOSPCPNB police training was left in the hands of the National Guard, which resulted in little differentiation between tactics utilized by the military and the police. Police officers trained according to a military model of security have tended to view civilians (especially young males from the lower classes) as a suspicious enemy to be subdued, a mentality that has led to thousands of civilian deaths at the hands of the police each year.

An important move away from this militarized approach to policing was included in the 2009 reform, which placed training in civilian hands through the National Experimental

University of Security. The UNES was Venezuela's first experience with a civilian-run policing university. Organized at the national level, the university now has 16 training centers throughout the country. Originally the UNES focused on retraining police officers that were transitioning from the Metropolitan police into the PNB and training new PNB officers. Eventually, the UNES took over training of municipal and state police forces as well as firefighters and civil protection officers but has had to outsource these responsibilities due to limited resources and space.

Like the PNB, the UNES is supposed to be under the direction of a civilian but since 2013 has been under the direction of former military officers. Despite these changes, my research participants in the UNES reported that since El Achkar's replacement no major changes have been made to police education or training. In fact, the first military general to take over as the university Rector was "barely ever on campus" according to faculty members. UNES faculty felt that the university was not something that he was concerned with and that most likely he had replaced El Achkar to lend credibility to the police.

Chapter 3:

Masculinities, Marginality, and Reducing Use of Force

I met Ramón the first time that I visited the central police station in the Sucre parish. He was a shy community police officer in his late 20s who had previously worked with a municipal police force before joining the PNB in hopes of better pay but also benefits, especially healthcare since one of his children suffered from acute asthma and required expensive medication. He stuck out among his fellow officers due to his light skin as well as his large brown eyes. As I was leaving the police station that day a female officer who I met at the same time as Ramón ran up to me giggling and asked if I was married. I told her no and asked why. After another burst of laughter she answered, 'Ramón wanted to know' then turned and briskly walked away.

After our first meeting Ramón and I spent most of our time together at the police station, chatting as I waited to speak to various supervisors about approving my project. Though the approval never came, the visits gave me time to get to know Ramón and, after texting back and forth for a few weeks, we agreed to meet up one afternoon while he was off duty. We had made multiple plans to meet up before, but Ramón always had to cancel last minute, either because he was called into work or because he had picked up a moving job. When off duty, Ramón spent much of his time moving pieces of furniture or appliances to supplement his income. His busy schedule (and initially shy demeanor) ended up working to my advantage. Since we only hung out at his work for the first few months and he had very little spare time flirtation was kept to a

minimum and I did not have to consistently turn down offers to go dancing or drinking as I did with many officers, which usually resulted in the end of our relationship.

The afternoon that he finally became available, he picked me up at an intersection on Sucre Avenue in his moving truck. After I climbed into his truck Ramón told me that he had just gotten back from helping a family move to Barquisimeto, about four hours away from Caracas, and had a few hours left before his shift started. Exhaustion seemed to be weighing down his face and his body, speaking to the long night he had had, but his face lit up when I got into the truck. 'At least,' I thought, 'spending his few free hours with me doesn't seem to strike him as a burden.' I then wondered what this time together did mean to him.

While I had anticipated that we might grab some coffee or go to the park, Ramón told me that we were going to visit the barrio where he had grown up, since he had recently moved a refrigerator for a family that lived there and wanted to collect his payment. Though excited that I was going to get a chance to see Ramón's childhood neighborhood I wondered if he was taking the chance to show me where he had come from to foster a sense of closeness that could lay the groundwork for a future courtship; or perhaps he was simply taking me with him because he knew that I wanted to understand more about his life. Maybe it was a little of both. After about 10 minutes of traveling down the interstate we took an exit onto one of the main avenues at the far east end of Caracas. Ramón veered off the main avenue after only a few minutes and we began to ascend up a steep hillside. As we ascended Ramón turned to me with an inquisitive look on his face and asked if I had seen the PNB officers down on the main avenue. I said yes—the Intelligent Patrol [*Patrullaje Inteligente*] program had recently been inaugurated, after which I

had noticed more PNB vehicles parked on busy corners.[12] He laughed and said that the PNB didn't ever go up as far as we were or dare enter the neighborhood. He said growing up in a barrio like this, 'One learns who are the good ones, who are the bad ones, who are the drug users. No one tells you how to do this. But you learn, the university doesn't teach it to you.'

Climbing higher into the barrio, Ramón thanked god that drugs had never interested him. 'They have taken the lives of most of my friends from here. They died, they were 18 or 20…Young guys [*Chamos*] in these barrios have a distinct decision to make. We can become criminals [*malandros*] or choose to do something with our lives.' He said, "I was born in a barrio, I grew up in a barrio, I live in a barrio. When I became a cop I was looking for a way out, a way out of the barrio." In a firm voice he told me that his decision to become an officer was the right choice, but that he could have just as easily been a *malandro*.

Ramón was not the only young man to explain his choice to become a police officer as a means of escaping the life of a *malandro*, nor were officers the only people to describe joining the police in this way. For example one weekend I went out of town with Alexis – a former Metropolitan Police officer, a current PNB officer, and was a professor and the head of community policing curriculum at the UNES – to visit his family. I met Alexis through other contacts at the university and after one meeting he decided that he would help me set up interviews with police officers and would give me access to UNES classes. When I asked him months later why he had been so helpful he told me that he was impressed by a white *gringa* who was living in the barrios and also liked seeing my smile.

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[12] The Intelligent Patrol initiative is similar to Hot Spot policing, in that patrol units were meant to focus on small geographic units where crime is concentrated.

One afternoon over the weekend Alexis' sister and I were hanging out on the concrete patio of her home in a small pueblo a few hours outside Caracas. She was keeping an eye on a washing machine on the patio, which had a tendency to shut itself off mid-cycle. She asked if I had noticed the woman that had been playing bolas criollas (a game similar to bocce ball) the night before with Alexis and a group of his friends. It had been hard not to notice her; she was the only woman playing with a group of men, shirtless and in shorts, while she still had on the uniform of a state police officer. She was gregarious, laughing and trading insults with the men as they played rounds. Alexis' sister said that she was the only one out of her entire family who had 'escaped.' Speaking in a voice of extreme respect, she said that all of the woman's brothers had become *malandros* but she had made it out and joined the police instead.

Of course, these narratives of marginalized young men and women escaping the hooks of crime, drugs, and violence – i.e. the "life of a criminal" – by entering the police seem almost ludicrous given the active participation of the police in crime and violence in Venezuela, and in much of Latin America. For example, in 2009 the then head of The MPPRIJ, Tareck El Aissami, stated that officers perpetuate 20% of crimes the country, and there is good reason to believe this number is much higher (Suggett 2009). Officers' participation in crime is widely recognized. According to Briceño-León (2007), 93% of people in Venezuela reported that they believed police officers engaged in criminal acts. Indeed, one of the main catalysts of the police reform was news coverage of a number of high profile crimes – including kidnapping, extortion, and murder – which occurred within a six-month period and were all organized by active and retired police officers (Gabaldón 2013: 669). If anything, entering the police force seems to be just another route to becoming a criminal.

Nevertheless, stories and reflections I heard from Ramón and other officers communicated the desire poor young men of color had to become "legit" (Bourgois 2003) by joining the PNB. Despite the fact that the police represent corruption and crime for many in the country – earning officers the nickname *malandros uniformados* [criminals in uniform] – I argue in this chapter that joining the force is an attempt by many young men of color to become "decent" (Anderson 2000). The consistent paycheck, the *promise* of benefits such as healthcare and a pension, a free education and perhaps even eventual promotion seemed to offer the chance of social mobility for those who have few avenues to reach it. Nevertheless, while many young men might join the force to escape the *malandro* life, they face similar constraints, pressures, and expectations as those who choose it and, as I show in this chapter, turn to similar solutions to cope.

In this chapter I show that we must look outside of the police department if we are to fully account for police misconduct. Much previous research has focused on the police as an organization – their selection process, training, and culture – to explain police misconduct and resistance to reform. Throughout the chapter I will use police misconduct to refer to police violence, corruption, and participation in criminal activities. I do not argue that this research is incorrect, but suggest that it must be complemented with an analysis of how officers' lives outside of the department – their socialization, constraints, opportunities, and networks – turn violence, corruption, and criminal activities into, as Bourdieu (1984) might say, "virtues of necessity." Understanding how young men's environments reproduce police misconduct is key to understanding why they resisted two tenets of the reform: the progressive and differential use of force[13] (UPDFP) and efforts to reduce police corruption.

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[13] See Chapter 2 for an explanation of the UPDFP

Denied other forms of capital that they can use to construct a positive self and a sense of security, some men learn to use violence as a resource to gain respect and reduce sensations of insecurity. It is my contention that when young men grow up in spaces left unsecured by the state, acts of aggression and violence become tricks and rules of thumb, commonsense responses to certain interactions. Violence here is not simply instrumental (a means to an end), but expressive. This is not to say that violence and aggression are not meant to achieve certain ends, but that thinking about these as purely instrumental misses the ways in which these can constitute the self and one's identity as well as why these can be called upon as resources due to one's gendered and classed habitus.

Drawing on Bourdieu, I argue that officers believe they must have recourse to unregulated violence and aggression on the job because they learned a dichotomous logic of domination/subjugation (see Zubillaga 2009) in the habitus in which they were raised. Rather than thinking about this logic as an unconscious code working behind the backs of officers, I argue that this logic emerges from experiences and practices that make violence "make sense" within some interactional orders. Like all knowledge and logics these are first formed through bodily action and practice (Bourdieu 1990; see also Lizardo, 2004). While the dispositions that we learn through our original habitus might eventually allow us to "navigate the social world without conscious reflection" (Miller 2016; see also Bourdieu 1984, 2000), these dispositions come from the concrete physical level of embodied experiences and practice. According to Bourdieu, as social actors move through social spheres or "fields" they learn attitudes and behaviors that allow them to most appropriately present themselves in certain contexts. It is these attitudes and behaviors that Bourdieu defines as the dispositions learned through the actor's

habitus. Habitus "represents a sort of deep-structuring cultural matrix that generates self-fulfilling prophecies according to different class opportunities" but differs from other cultural models by "emphasizing individuals' adaptation to limited opportunities rather than the cultural origins of deviant behavior" (Swartz 1997:104).

I also show that we must take into account gendered socialization and structural marginalization to accurately account for police misconduct. Previous explanations for police corruption elide the main reason young men join the force – for a steady a paycheck – focusing our attention on the individual intentions or culture internal to the police department rather than the structural marginalization that pushes men into corruption and illicit economies. I argue that, like other marginalized men, officers are constrained in meeting masculine expectations of being a "good" and sometimes turn to illicit activities as a result.

In her book on how the expansion of the criminal justice system has transformed the lives of poor Black people in Philadelphia, Goffman (2014) argues that some poor men and women have turned the heavy presence of the criminal justice system in their lives to their advantage – for example, by using the prison as a safe haven when the streets have become too dangerous – or by creating economic opportunities out of the restrictions and surveillance imposed by the system. Police officers too can creatively use the criminal justice institution they work for to cope during periods of economic precarity.

A mural painted on the outside of the state police department in Portuguesa © Rebecca Hanson 2014

In the first section of this chapter, I focus on the issue of police use of force and why reformers' attempts to regulate it did not make sense to officers or *dicentes* (officers-in-training). I show that practices young men learn growing up in marginalized neighborhoods structured by lateral and state violence entrench a logic of domination, which structures how these men think about using violence and aggression and helps them navigate uncertainty and insecurity. The practices can be entrenched by police culture and training, but are first learned through officers' "original habitus" – which is formed in one's childhood through experiences with the family, peer groups, and school – not their occupational field – which Bourdieu specify as a specific habitus, a specialized worldview shaped by a occupational or cultural field (Bourdieu 2000). Similar to other young men embedded in violent urban environments (Messerschmidt 1993; Bourgois 2003; Anderson 2000; Baird 2012, 2015; Ellis 2016), officers learn from a young age that in certain interactions, displays of domination can work as a form of capital or an "identity

surplus" from which they can construct masculine identities that garner respect (Zubillaga 2009). Drawing on literature that has highlighted the impacts violence can have on youths, I argue that we cannot accurately account for police violence or resistance to reform without understanding how violence has shaped the lives of young male police officers long before they join the force.

In the second half of the chapter, I argue that economic marginalization and precarity combined with traditional expectations of masculinity can motivate officers to engage in corruption and criminal activities in order to make ends meets. I show that participation in corruption and illicit economies does not require that officers enter the force with intentions to abuse their power and position. Contra the "bad apple" theory that undergirds scholarship and policy on police misconduct, I show how men's unfulfilled expectations of receiving a living wage combined with a declining economy can lead them to activate illicit networks both inside and outside the police force to supplement meager incomes. Challenging a fundamental assumption of police studies – that officers' separation from society reproduces misconduct – I show that police misconduct is also reproduced by officers' original habitus and the relationships they maintain outside of the department. While some of the data I use here is from accompanying officers on the job, most of the data I draw upon was gathered as I spent time with officers outside of their work – visiting with their families, running daily errands, and sharing meals after their shifts and on their days off.

Like gang members, rank and file armed actors, and paramilitary members (Méndez, O'Donnell and Pinheiro 1999), most officers in Caracas and other urban cities in Latin America grow up and continue to live in the poor barrios that they police (Hinton, 2006; Denyer Willis, 2015). And like other marginalized men in these neighborhoods, those who grow up to become officers have few resources upon which they can draw to construct a positive masculine identity

or a sense of security – two intertwined existential challenges. Both boys who grow up to be *malandros* and *malandros uniformados* are socialized within a gendered habitus that places certain expectations on men but provides them with few resources to meet those expectations. (Because Bourdieu largely used the concept of habitus to think about how class is reproduced, I include gendered here to signal that habitus is also structured by gender.) This intersection of class and gender is essential to understanding masculinity and violence in marginalized areas. I hope to show that young men make choices within limited opportunity structures, choices that reproduce lateral and state violence and the marginalization that they were born into.

PREVIOUS EXPLANATIONS FOR POLICE MISCONDUCT

A large body of literature exists on the topic of police misconduct. Here, I summarize two of the most common explanations for misconduct in this literature.

Police Culture

Previous explanations for police brutality, corruption, criminality and resistance to reform have focused heavily on formal and informal police culture. The concept of police culture refers to the culture within a police organization that separates officers from civilians and integrates officers into the organization, providing them with norms, values, and guidelines for patterned behavior. This concept recognizes that courts and laws are limited in their ability to shape the behavior and decisions of the police (Della Porta 1995). While laws and policies are not "obliterated by police culture," they are refracted through it (Marks 2005:16). Some scholars argue that training is where officers are first introduced to police culture. Others have argued that what happens in the academy matters little, since "the available evidence indicates that new officers learn the police

craft on the job (not in the academy) from more senior officers" (Moskos 2009). According to Moskos (2009:2), police culture emerges from "the grind of daily shift work combined with doses of unfiltered and politically incorrect reality."

According to Reiner (2010) and others (Uildriks 2009; Moskos 2009), a key aspect of police culture is isolation from society; the police are thought to be isolated both in and outside of the workplace, making it difficult for officers to interact with those that are not police. Ahren (1972) has argued that the more time an officer spends on the force, the smaller his social circle grows and the more dependent this circle becomes on other officers. Ahren refers to this as a socialization process that produces a culture of solidarity among officers, solidarity that can serve to keep officers quiet about corruption. For Punch (2000:301) police corruption is not an "individual aberration" but is "generated by the organization itself." According to Punch (304):

> When looking at different variations on police corruption, we see that we are not dealing with "*individuals* seeking solely *personal gain* (so-called 'bad apples') but with group behavior rooted in established arrangements and/or extreme practices that have to be located within the structure and culture of police work and the police organization. Police officers have to be initiated into these practices, rationalizations have to be produced to accept them, supervisors have to collude or turn a blind eye, justifications have to be sought to continue them, and organizations have either in some way to condone or encourage these activities – or else fail to tackle them. This is *social behavior*, conducted in groups within organizations, that is powerful enough to override the officer's oath of office, personal conscience, departmental regulations and criminal laws.

Police culture can also socialize officers into using excessive force by producing a paramilitary worldview (Chappell and Lanza-Kaduce 2010) wherein the police are the line between chaos and order; this worldview motivates officers to be aggressive and action centered (McConville and Shepard 1992). According to Sierra-Arevalo (2016), the cultural frame through which officers are socialized, both formally and informally, creates a shared understanding of police work as dangerous, legitimizing both legal and illegal techniques in the search to feel secure.

In much of Latin America, the informal rules and practices that constitute police culture have been particularly important due to a lack of formal rules, regulations, and policies. In the Venezuelan case there were no general standards for training, uniforms, or weapons before the police reform. There were at least 16 different hierarchies used among police in the country; procedures for promotion and retirement varied; and some forces only gave officers short term training, depending on the budget brought in by enrolled students (CONAREPOL 2007:126). According to Sabet (2012:213), "Policy design and the formal rules are only half of the story in an environment where such rules conflict with a long history of day-to-day behavior supported by culture, habit, and custom." These cultures, habits, and customs reproduce impunity (Neild 2000:237) and "informal practices of patronage and tolerance of corruption" despite attempts to restructure the police and revamp formal rules (Sabet 2012:211).

Authoritarian police culture in Latin America, handed down from the eras of military dictatorship, has long encouraged officers to utilize repression and extra-legal force. According to Hinton (2005:94), "In the wake of the democratic transition, this ideological and tactical legacy [of the military], compounded by glaring deficiencies in external structures of civilian oversight and management" proved intransigent to reform. Denyer Willis (2014:4) notes that there is a de facto consensus on why various attempts at reform have failed in Brazil: "Brazilian

police organizations actively resist democratizing pressures for greater accountability and transparency by continuing historic practices of extreme, and often extrajudicial, repression and corruption."

Police culture is certainly an important factor in explaining misconduct. Nevertheless, the overwhelming emphasis on this culture overlooks important factors outside of the department that can collectively shape officers' actions. If for Chan (1999) we must understand policing by linking interactions between the field of police work and the habitus of shared cultural knowledge among officers, I argue that we must go further and link the field of police work with the shared knowledge and dispositions that men learn growing up at the urban margins.[14]

Lax Screening

The lack of selection criteria for trainees is another important factor police scholars have proposed to explain police misconduct (Ungar 2011; Forné and Solares 2012; Glebbeek 2001; Fruhling 2007; Husain 2007; Lord 1998). This can be referred to as the "quantity over quality" problem, where governments are concerned with putting *more* police rather than *good* police on the street. Loose selection criteria are problematic because they allow applicants with criminal backgrounds and inappropriate intentions to be accepted into the academy and department. Unlike work that focuses on police culture, this concern recognizes that people bring histories and practices into the academy and the department with them, rather than assuming that socialization and culture within the police determines police behavior. Nevertheless, this perspective presents a rigid understanding of identity and leaves little room for agency and

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[14] Bourdieu defines dispositions as attitudes and behaviors that allow them to appropriately behave and act as socially competent performers in certain situations.

choice. It often assumes that officers who engage in corruption and crime were criminals when they entered the academy, failing to take into account how changes in the economy or officers' personal lives can lead them to fall in and out of crime throughout their careers. Furthermore, it creates an unrealistic standard, suggesting that only those officers with their hearts and minds fully committed to the profession of policing are fit to wear a badge. It tends to view corruption as a flaw in an individual's morals and ethics, failing to link this individual problem to biography and the structure of the society in which the individual is located (Mills 1959). As Crank (1998: 229) has written, police agencies have tended to deal with police corruption using the "rotten apple" theory. According to this theory "rotten-apple cops are responsible for the onset and maintenance of corruption in particular departments. Thus logic implies that corruption can be corrected by weeding out particular bad cops." However, these theories ignore the fact that "good" officers can become corrupt and vice versa, depending on social and situational pressures. In this chapter, I show that a focus on the police institution alone – whether that is selection, training, or culture – cannot fully explain police misconduct and why reforms to combat these have failed. Indeed, until we understand officers as social actors with lives and histories outside of the police department, we cannot fully account for officers' understandings and actions.

YOUNG MEN AND MARGINALITY IN CARACAS

The options that young men living at the urban margins have for social mobility, or as Ramón put it, "getting out of the barrio," are extremely limited. Economic, symbolic, and masculine capital are essential in the construction of both self and status, but are scare at the urban margins.

In the next section, I analyze how different sources of insecurity shape men's identities, leading some to rely on violence as a resource.

Economic Insecurity

The formal economy has been shrinking in Caracas and Venezuela more broadly since the 1980s (Roberts 2003:6). In 1989, as part of the president's structural adjustment package, the government began slashing jobs within the state, which has historically been one of the largest employers in the country. Roberts (2003:58) notes that neoliberal restructuring resulted in a "process of economic immiseration…a related but analytically distinct increase in economic inequality, [and] a restructuring of the labor market and work force, marked in particular by growth of informality." Indeed, when Chávez first took office in 1999, 53% of the country's population worked in the informal economy (Economist Intelligence Unit 2000:16).

By 2014 the unemployment rate for those 15 to 24 years old was double the national average, and men are more likely than women to be unemployed (Ramírez Cabello 2014). Only 42% of people ages 15-29 are regularly enrolled in some kind of learning center; fifty percent of 17-year-old boys and girls drop out of high school each year, translating into 1.7 million adolescents who neither study nor work. The majority of students studying to become officers at the UNES sites where I conducted research in Caracas fall precisely within this vulnerable category: they are young brown and black men, between the ages of 18-24, living in poor neighborhoods. According to one psychologist responsible for screening applicants to the UNES, 90% of applicants were from poor barrios. In contrast to the officers studied by Moscos (2009) in Baltimore or observed by Goffman (2014) in Philadelphia, officers are not very different from those they police in the barrios of Caracas. While for most white and black officers Moskos

(2009:38) studied, field training was their "first extended contact with the ghetto and its residents," in Caracas, police officers are those residents.

Most barrio residents make a living in the informal economy, selling produce, razors, sunglasses, and clothes on the street or in self-constructed markets. This can also involve working in illicit economies: the drug trade, the illegal gun market, and DVD and CD sales. The government has rolled back many of the neoliberal policies that catalyzed economic immiseration; however, its "redistributive policies, though capable of improving the living conditions of the poor, are not able to reverse the structural factors that generate poverty and exclusion given that their effects are neither permanent nor universal" (Antillano et al. 2015). According to Tremaria (2016: 69-70) the government's social services "generally ignored the groups most involved in violence, young men aged between 15 and 24 from the poorest neighborhoods and shantytowns. The Venezuelan labor market offers few incentives and very limited opportunities for social advancement to this group of unskilled workers." Thus, while the redistributive policies of the government were successful in reducing social inequality and poverty between 2003 and 2013 (Robertson 2014), these policies did little to help men cope with economic exclusion and social marginalization and what some have called the "crisis of masculinities" exclusion and marginalization have created. Though education, health, and food programs that the government implemented were successful in improving quality of life, "the programs aiming at facilitating access to the labor market, such as the *Misión Vuelvan Caras* (Program About-Face) seem to have failed in their expected goals" (Tremaria 2016: 69-70).

Indeed, neoliberalism impacts people differently depending on factors like their race, class, gender, and citizenship status (Richards 2004). According to Hume and Wilding (2015:100), "[P]oor young men have few possibilities by which to lead fulfilling and productive

lives and traditional male roles become undermined by the emasculating nature of the neoliberal economy." Berkman (2007:17) has documented the experiences created by this crisis as many young people "experience intense frustration with obstacles to social mobility, disparities in the quality of education, and lack of job prospects."

Beyond the social marginalization and economic precarity that we associate with poverty, many young men must also contend with threats to their own physical integrity. While Egon Bittner (1970:19) wrote that the police have historically emerged as interpersonal violence became "vestigial," these young men joined a fledgling police force at a time when lateral violence has increased steadily since the 1990s.

Venezuela. Homicides rates, 1986-2011.
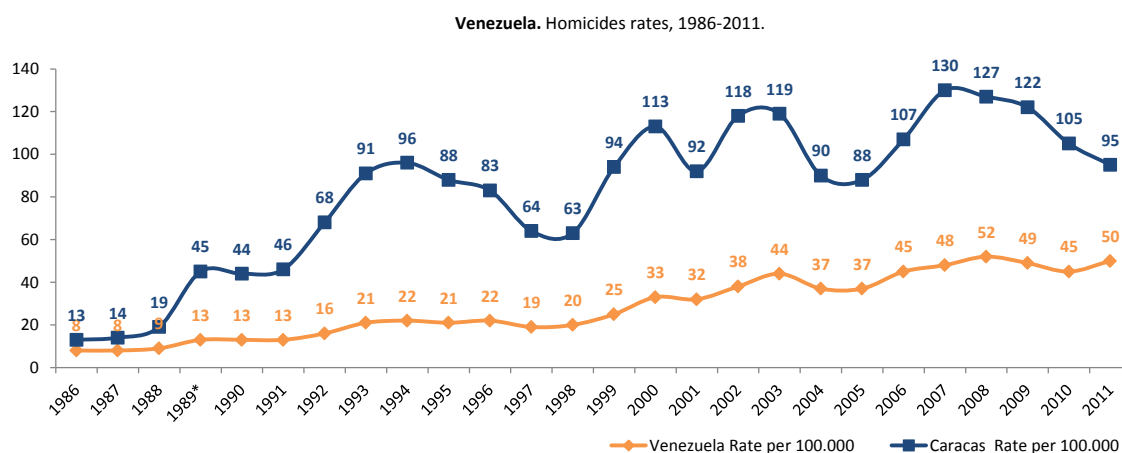
Source: Estadística Delictiva /División de Estadística CICPC/ Centro de Estudios Sociales (CES)

Figure 2

Homicide Rates in Venezuela and Caracas, 1986-2011

Young poor men have been deeply affected by the state's loss of control over violence. When looking at rates of homicide, they are the principal victims and victimizers: 95% of

homicide victims in Venezuela are men, 69% of who die between the ages of 15-29 (Sanjuán 1999). In 2000 the homicide rate for men was at 33/100,000, compared to 22/100,000 for the general population (PROVEA 2003).

The state in this context does not keep them safe from sudden attack, nor does it interrupt the regular "irruption of physical violence into [their] everyday lives" (Elias 1939/1978). In contrast to work done with marginalized men of color in the U.S. (Goffman 2014; Rios 2011; Contreras 2013) the neighborhoods in which these men grow up are not hyper-policed or regimented by a "youth control complex" (Rios 2011:40-42); instead, these neighborhoods are characterized by a vacuum of social control and the inconsistent and intermittent presence of the state.

Physical insecurity

As I took my seat in the class I had been attending for a few weeks, I listened to Professor Rafael call roll and waited for the day's discussion to begin. As Rafael went down the list he got to a male student's name, calling it out multiple times with no answer. Finally a young woman raised her hand and said that he had been shot and was in the hospital. She said he had been walking in his neighborhood at night with his girlfriend and brother and got caught in a shootout between gangs. Rafael marked the boys name as absent and moved on. Later in the week, I was texting with Franki, who had inexplicably missed a date we had planned to practice his English in the park a few days before. When I asked him where he had been, he responded that his cousin had been shot that day and the meeting had completely slipped his mind. I asked Franki how his cousin was and he said he was fine, that "he was only shot three times" (*solo le dieron tres tiros*) and that he would be in the hospital for the next few days.

This vignette could have been taken from research on any number of inner city schools in the U.S. or Latin America; but it was taken from notes I made while attending a class on Socialism and Democracy at the UNES, a required course for new students. Rafael was not the only professor who had students missing in his class because they had been victims of violent encounters. Students were absent in at least three classes I attended, either because a family member had been killed or they themselves had been injured.

Students traded stories about injured friends, family members, or fellow students over lunch. Similar to marginalized youths who Auyero (2013:27) studied in Buenos Aires, violence permeated "their talk about past and future events, and is part of their everyday worlds." In conversations students would sometimes reflect on the weakness, stupidity, or ignorance of those who were victimized. When talking about the deaths of off-duty police officers, both students and officers critiqued the victims for hanging out on the street late at night or attending a party in an unfamiliar barrio, suggesting that the careless habits of the dead were in part to blame. In less frequent but more sober moments, an overwhelming sense of despair and desolation would hang in the air as general comments about the precariousness of life in Caracas were listlessly exchanged.

Most stories were about violence related to gangs, but students had also experienced violence at the hands of state actors. While sitting in on a different section of the same course, I was talking with some students about why they had decided to become police officers. As the young men began to answer, the teacher stepped into the classroom and attempted to begin class. The students didn't even stop to recognize his entrance, and continued talking despite the fact that class had clearly begun. The men discussed their considerations of joining the police or the

National Guard. As they discussed the differences between the two one of the students removed the blue ball cap students are required to wear and showed me a wide scar that ran from one side of his head to the other. He explained that a few years ago a "*casco blanco*" (a slang term for the Metropolitan Police, which refers to the color of their helmets) had taken off his helmet and smacked him on the head with it to "teach him respect," leaving a huge bleeding gash. The gash had been so deep that the student would carry this reminder with him for the rest of his life. Students' daily lives were shrouded in what Richard Kernaghan (2009:5) has referred to atmospherics of threat, "the plural forms of sense that the violence produce, which in turn shape expectations…and…potential." Violence, according to Kernaghan (2009: 17), "haunts through threat" and "implicit presence."

Experiencing and witnessing prior acts of violence shaped how these young officers-in-training pictured the world. For example, after spending an entire class period trying to get students to agree that most barrio residents were not criminals or violent, Rafael left the classroom to head to his next class. During this transition period, students were allowed some free time, which they used to take a short nap, text, or break off into groups and chat. Once Rafael had exited the classroom a group of students formed a circle around me and asked me questions about the U.S., why I was in Venezuela, and if I liked it. After telling them that I lived in Los Magallanes, the students asked me why I had decided to live in a barrio and began talking enthusiastically about what it was like growing up in them. The most talkative boy of the bunch, Franki, asked me if I had heard "Petare: Barrio de Pakistan." When I said I hadn't he called to a boy across the room and asked him to bring the song up on his phone.[15] The boy walked over and handed me the phone and I listened to El Prieto, a rapper from the city, sing about Caracas

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[15] The video can be found on Youtube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TX49PUG4aYc

being the most dangerous city in the world. El Prieto's lyrics explain that in Caracas, no one has a "posse" or a gang; each person is responsible for their own life, for laying down their own law. According to El Prieto, "Here [in Petare] life is not lived, here life is survived." As the song played many of the boys chimed into different parts, confirming El Prieto's lyrics with "*Es asi*!!" [That's how it is]. Towards the end of the song Franki looked at me and said I could not tell anyone they had shown me the song because they would get kicked out of the UNES for it. He laughed but reiterated that I couldn't say anything to anyone.

Professors worked hard to convince students that the barrios were not the depraved, lawless, and violent places that the media and popular culture made them out to be; they tried to convince students that *golpes* [punches] and *cachetadas* [slaps] were not necessary for people to respect and obey officers. In other words, they sought to decouple the concept of poverty from the rebellious attitudes and criminal behavior often used to justify police violence. Nevertheless, students' experiences growing up in the barrios – which they felt were well represented by El Prieto's lyrics – trumped the professors' arguments. For men like Franki who were so taken by the song, this was a more accurate representation of reality than that offered by professors because it reflected his own experiences.

Like the young men Denis Rodgers (2015:25) writes about in a barrio in Managua, many officers-in-training and young officers live "in the shadow of death." Police officers do not inhabit the same social locations as gang members; nevertheless, both officers-in-training and those who have graduated regularly find themselves in dangerous situations making death not an "abstract concept but a very real possibility" (25). The increase in officers' deaths over the past five years, an increase that is widely discussed in the media, has popularized the notion that becoming a police officer makes death even more likely (Hanson 2016; Matamoros 2017).

Though most police officers are killed off duty (Ávila 2015), in the minds of young men, becoming an officer increases the probability of violent encounters and a violent death. Students' experiences outside of the university also verify this belief. For example, one evening I was walking along the interstate, the main exit from the UNES toward the Metro, with a sea of students who had just been let out for the day. The students, wearing the signature navy blue tracksuits with the UNES insignia on the jacket, were clearly marked as officers-in-training. The sidewalk built on the side of the interstate sat opposite the main PNB police department in the Sucre parish, where those charged with a crime were kept before being sent to prison (often without being tried beforehand). As we walked up the sidewalk, thin brown and black arms reached out of the barred windows and pointed at the students. From inside the holding cell you could make out a number of voices all screaming the same refrain in unison, "*Los van a matar! Los van a matar*!" [They are going to kill you! They are going to kill you!], a chorus of voices haunting through threat, through the future potential of violence and death.

COPING WITH INSECURITY

How do these young students and police officers cope with living "in the shadow of death"? How do they construct a sense of security in insecure environments? Previous research from both the U.S. and Latin America has shown that constructing a sense of respect is key to constructing a sense of security at the urban margins. Respect "is central to demonstrating successful masculinity…Within a gender system of competition for scarce masculinity resources…men must constantly demonstrate that they possess the required attributes of masculinity" (Huggins et al. 2002:85) Of course, while all definitions of respect and pathways to it are structured by

hegemonic masculinity, what respect means in a particular context and how one goes about

achieving it depends on one's social location.[16]

       According to Messerschmidt (1993:110) participation in public violence is a "more

frequent practice when other hegemonic masculine ideals are unavailable (e.g., a job in the paid-

labor market)…In fact, it is in marginalized communities where we find a greater proportion of

peer groups that subscribe to violent macho ideal" (see also Schwendinger and Schwendinger,

1983:205). While middle-class and upper-class boys and men can validate their masculinity in

educational and occupational spheres, these spaces are denied to many poor men, particularly

those marginalized by race or ethnicity. "This denial…creates the context for the more

pronounced public aggressive masculinity" (Messerschmidt 1993:112). Much ethnographic

research has shown that respect is intertwined with public displays of aggression and violence in

marginalized urban areas (Bourgois 2003; Anderson 2000; Zubillaga 2009; Baird 2012, 2015;

Ellis 2016). According to Briceño-Leon and Zubillaga (2002:29), it is increasingly common for

marginalized young men to grow up believing that "their only resource is the 'respect' they

inspire, as the only way to ensure a certain personal immunity to the insecurity that prevails in

their neighborhood." Respect in these contexts can be predicated upon being a man of action

(Bourgois 2003) (i.e. not a passive participant in an interaction but one who dominates and

controls it), gaining a physical command over others, demanding subjugation, and even ceasing

to respect life (Jones and Rodgers 2009; Zubillaga 2009). Violence here can be thought of as a

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[16] Hegemonic masculinity is not hegemonic because most men achieve the expectations set by it

or because most men strive to meet these expectations. It is hegemonic in the sense that it is

normative and requires "all other men to position themselves in relation to it" (Connell and

Messerschmidt 2005:832).

multi-purpose tool: "retrospective in its intention to punish an action that has already taken place and prospective in its goal to deter a future action by someone else" (Kalyvas 2006:27).

It is essential to keep in mind that men often turn to violence as an "adaptation to isolation and poverty. It is not the cause, but rather the consequence of racial isolation and poverty" (Duck 2015:8). As Baird has noted in his work in Colombia on young male gang members, "Navigating pathways to manhood in a performative sense varies according to opportunities and the tools at hand, which depend on the socioeconomic circumstances male youths grow up in." If neoliberalism has required that women take on responsibilities previously shouldered by the state (Richards 2004), the withdrawal of the state at the urban margins has transferred the responsibility of security to young men, some of who take up this responsibility through a practice of "personal and family defense, [believing] their only resource is the 'respect' they inspire" (Briceño-Leon and Zubillaga 2002:29).

This logic of domination, I argue, is an embodied one; in Bourdieu's terms it is logic performed and learned through what he refers to as "bodily gymnastics" (1990:89). For these young men, bodily gymnastics might include learning how to fight as well as how to avoid a fight; how to take a blow from a police officer in silence; and how to walk, speak, and hold your body in a way that adheres to hegemonic representations of masculinity.

The bodily gymnastics that Edmond practiced as an adolescent made him comfortable with the most commonly used tool of violence in Venezuela through regular practice in his youth. Indeed Edmond attributed his skill with guns to his youth, not to what he described as shoddy training in the UNES. While talking to Edmond one day, I asked him if he had ever shot a gun before he became a police officer. He laughed as if to say "Oh please!" and rolled his eyes, saying he had dealt with guns all the time before being a police officer. He told me that in fact he

had been one of the best shooters in his cohort due to his stock of experiences. He said that his professor had even complimented him on his skills while he was being trained. Edmond's skill with guns was based in his regular practice with them when he was young, which provided him with what I refer to as masculine capital. Indeed, weapons are an important component of masculinity, identified with domination that provides the basis for building a recognized identity (Connell 1987; Messerschmidt 1993). While using a gun requires knowing how to shoot, the comfort and ease that Edmond felt with weapons did not come from learning about them at the UNES, but practicing with them from early in his youth.

According to Bourdieu (1990:68–69) the body of a child acts as a "living memory pad" through which children learn to enact beliefs before they are fully understood; the body "leads the mind unconsciously along with it." Practices of the body learned at a young age teach children "procedures, tricks, rules of thumb" that eventually become "analogous to the rhythm of a line of verse whose words have been forgotten." In other words, practices feel instinctual because they have been practiced from a young age; we can engage in them without thought or consideration. It is my contention that when young men grow up in spaces left unsecured by the state, acts of aggression and violence become tricks and rules of thumb, commonsense responses to certain interactions.

Some students used the classroom to practice domination over figures of power – their teachers – and deployed aggression and threatening language in an attempt to assert control. For example, one day while sitting in Alexis' office between classes, a woman with dark brown skin and striking black hair, wearing a grey polo shirt with the UNES logo stitched on the front and UNES badge, walked in and threw herself in a chair, seemingly already exhausted by the day even though it was not yet noon. After chatting about some course decisions she had made, she

asked Alexis if he had talked to Fredy (another professor) about the trouble he was having in his class with students. Alexis said he hadn't heard anything about it so the professor continued, saying that, while the professor was not very trustworthy, she believed his story 'because the same thing has happened to me.' She explained that he had been having problems while trying to get his class under control. His attempts to direct students' behavior had led to some students warning him to 'be careful' because 'the streets are very dark…'

Alexis laughed and asked if she was serious and she said yes, that they had told him multiple times to watch out for himself and in an excited voice – not one that suggested fear but instead amazement – said that her students had threatened her before too. She told Alexis that in her current class a group of men made veiled threats to rape her when she called them out for disruptive behavior. Describing to Alexis how she dealt with these kinds of situations she said, 'The only way to deal with a *malandro* is to talk to them like a *malandro*…you can only treat a *malandro* as a *malandro*.' She said when her students threaten her she replies by asking 'What are you going to do?! Are you going to rape me? You are going to rape me in the park or something?...What are you going to do to me with that little dick [*este palito*] you have?!!' She said this in an aggressive voice while at the same time motioning towards her crotch. Both Alexis and I burst out laughing as the woman took on a masculine stance and grabbed at her genitalia. She finished by saying that she told her students 'don't bother offering me money or death.'

Coming up against the aggressive masculinity that these young men had learned as a performance of power, the professor had decided to speak to her class 'in their own vocabulary,' i.e. denying their ability to dominate her, to gain control of her classroom. By making fun of the size of her male students' genitalia she delegitimized their ability to rape her, neutralizing the

verbal threats they made when they attempted to subvert her control of the class. She subverts the domination that students attempted to achieve through threats of sexual violence by challenging their ability to physically follow through with their threats, making their attempts at domination impotent. In utilizing this language, the professor played into the logic and performance of domination. The professor's stance that her *malandro* students had to be dealt with through a "street code" speaks to the complex and interwoven meanings of the term. Here, the professor uses this term to refer to both possible criminal activity (the rape) and to young brown and black men from the barrios that display aggression and disrespect in the classroom.

It is important to note that the threats used by these men were just that – threats. While they most likely did not plan on following through with them, utilizing dominating language and aggressive tactics made sense to them as ways to gain control over a situation in which, as students, they were by definition under the control of others. The fact that the professor was a woman undoubtedly factored into male students' contestation of her control and the type of threats they used in an attempt to usurp it. Indeed, the sexualized harassment that the professor faced in the classroom cannot be understood without considering harassment as an exercise of power. Indeed, sexualized harassment is "a manifestation of the larger patriarchal system in which men dominate women" (Thomas and Kitzinger 1997:1). In the professor's story, her students performed what Bourgois (2003) has referred to as a "street culture of resistance," which celebrates misogyny and normalizes violence to cope with a lack of economic opportunities. Street culture of resistance does not only target women, but is set in opposition to general exclusion from mainstream society. Nevertheless, this response to "patriarchy in crisis" (213) is particularly damaging to women.

Students' attempts to exercise control through language indicates that domination is not only about physical coercion. Time and again officers and students explained to me that walking up to people in "the West" with a calm voice and "*Buenos días, por favor….*" [Good morning, please…] put officers' lives at risk, as their body language (as embodied language) and form of speech communicated to others that they were *bobos* [idiots] with their guard down, ready to be taken advantage of. [17] Or, as Nico said, "*Si comenzamos 'Buenos días, tal, tal…' te comen, te comen….*" [If we start with 'Good morning, etc. etc….they will eat you alive, they will eat you alive].

When students and officers talked about the importance of showing up at a scene and demonstrating one's control, they did not always mean that they needed to physically harm another person. Demonstrating control and dominance was not just about physical force, but required certain comportment and forms of action that officers believed the UPDFP prohibited. During my interview with Edmond, he explained to me:

> It isn't just that "Good morning" takes away your authority, it isn't the "Good morning," it is the way in which you show up, you have to show up in a way…[pauses to think]…For example, I remember this one time that I arrived at this small alley [*callejón*] in Los Magallanes and there were a bunch of people drinking and I came up with my "Good day," you know, I show up with a polite

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[17] When officers talked about needing to use force with people in the West, what they essentially mean is that repression was necessary to control poor people and black and brown bodies. More often than not, however, officers would refer to class or culture rather than race in referring to those in the West. Nevertheless, this reference suggests the internalization of and racist ideology by poor men of color.

manner, "Good day citizens, could you please turn down the volume of your music…" and this was just a clusterfuck…horrible. I couldn't do anything, you know? Now, I don't do that. If you are making a ruckus, messing around with the volume all the way up I am going to show up and turn that music off for you. I will turn it off, I'm not going to ask. I will take [the stereo] with me, I'll take it. You might get it back tomorrow, but you have to go get it. And this makes people respect you…But if you show up with "Please, turn off your music, it is bothering other people, please," no one is going to pay attention to you.

In this understanding of respect, the **ability** to act, and act first, is fundamental; "passive" action (such as beginning an interaction in a conversational tone) puts officers in a position of submission. In the minds of officers, the UPDFP regulated not only force but also self-presentation, and by making their actions dependent on a civilian's actions or comportment neutralizes the utility, the potential power, of physical and verbal coercion. This is why the model progressive and differential use of force – though incorrectly interpreted – was so disconcerting for both officers and students. By emphasizing what young men interpreted as polite dialogue over action, this model violated the practices and skills they had learned growing up in an unsecure habitus. Approaching a civilian with words spoken in a calm voice contradicts the performance through which many young men had learned to construct respect – performances based on action, intimidation, and domination.

MAKING SENSE OF THE UPDFP

The dispositions that men relied on to navigate certain public interactions were at odds with the UPDFP model, discrediting it as illogical, inappropriate, and dangerous. Like the rule of law, the UPDFP contradicts how young men learn to make sense of spaces and how to interact within them. The UPDFP teaches officers that physical coercion is a last resort and that dialogue is a more useful tool than domination. However, students and officers had a hard time understanding the utility of coercion if it was a measured reaction. Though victims of state violence themselves, many endorsed these kinds of actions. They could personally attest to the effectiveness of these strategies, noting that after beatings by security officers they had been respectful and obedient.

Alexis often reflected on the "choque" or clash between masculinity and the UPDFP. While drinking coffee one morning at the UNES before class started, Alexis told me a story that well illustrated how important it was to establish oneself as a dominating figure, a man of action, from a young age.

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'I had this girl I was seeing when I was 20, 21, who was already going out with a *malandro*, but she was '*bien buena'* [good looking] so I kept seeing her. It was worth the risk' he said, with a mischievous smile on his face. 'Besides, her family was a good family and I knew they wanted her to stop dating this *malandro* and start dating me. One night I had snuck up into her room and was leaving around 5 in the morning when I see her boyfriend walking up to the house with a gun in his hand.' Alexis explained that only later did he figure out that the guy had not seen him, but was probably walking around with his gun pulled because it was so early. 'In

the moment though I think this guy has pulled out his gun because he has seen me. I get nervous when I see the gun and slip on my way out of her window, so the guy definitely sees me and yells that he is going to kill me and I am running away as fast as I can.'

Alexis said he knew what he had to do, that he had to show this guy that he had to respect him, that he was not *chigüire*.[18] 'So I call all of my friends and tell them to get to a specific corner in the city and then call this guy and tell him that I will be waiting for him there by myself, to show up so we could settle things.' Alexis said the guy agreed to come but when he showed up he saw other armed men and became suspicious. 'So this guy leaves and calls me and says that I was supposed to be alone. I tell him that I have no idea what he is talking about but that I will be waiting there on that corner for him until he is ready to fight it out.' After the incident Alexis said he was always very cautious but he never heard from or saw the guy again. 'A few years later I heard that the guy had been shot and killed and *ufffff*, what a relief! I didn't have to worry about watching my back anymore.'

<div align="center">***</div>

In Alexis' story, he does not immediately or "instinctively" utilize violence in a situation where he felt in danger. First, he runs. However, after running, he set up an interaction over which he had control and the numbers were in his favor, making it less likely that his girlfriend's boyfriend would attack; thus, he decreased the level of uncertainty and, by demonstrating his willingness to deploy violence, he was able to successfully enact his dominance.

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[18] The Venezuelan name for the capybara, or water pig. Apart from referring to a particular animal, calling someone chigüire means that a man is soft, submissive, and capable of being "exterminated" (Duque and Muñóz 1995; Márquez 1999).

As a professor in the UNES, supportive of and charged with fostering a non-repressive mentality that emphasized dialogue over action, Alexis struggled with how to build confidence in the new model. In his words, officers learn from a young age that to be a man, to gain respect, they must be aggressive and violent (or at least demonstrate that they are willing to use violence) so that others would not *sobrepasarlos* (overcome them). He understood that coercive practices allowed men to gain as much control as possible in uncertain situations. He empathized with these young officers, aware from personal experience that men felt the need to act in ways that demonstrate domination over others if they are going to garner respect.[19] Alexis understood that failing to garner respect had consequences in the minds of young men. Control over a situation within this logic does not allow for gradations. Interactions become dichotomized: one can either dominate or be dominated. Here, "the demand for respect…is displayed through command over others. Violent action…acquires an expressive sense, as a rite of domination providing the reason to look up to an actor" (Zubillaga 2009:94).

The UPDFP concerned officers and students not only because it regulated coercion as a response to others actions, but also because it banned prospective coercion, constricting their

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[19]Alexis was old enough to remember a time before violence had saturated many neighborhoods inside and outside of Caracas, but his recollections of performing masculinity remain inseparable from aggression and weapons. In contrast, many of the students and young PNB officers grew up in an urban context at a time when homicides began to steadily increase. For a man born in an urban barrio in Caracas in the early 90s, homicides would have increased by around 200% during his lifetime (using homicide rates complied by Sanjuán 2008); police violence has also increased dramatically. The pluralization of violence in the country has most likely only exacerbated performances of hegemonic masculinity to display strength.

ability to be a "man of action" who could intimidates peers and discourage violence (Bourgois 2003). Indeed, as Anderson (2000) writes, preemptively attacking an enemy to prevent victimization is a principal strategy offered by the "code of the street." Furthermore, like the function of the stories that Primo and others tell about Ray in Bourgois' (2003) *In Search of Respect*, students believes that one's reputation for being violent, ruthless, and cruel, like the Metropolitan Police's reputation, could produce compliance without having to deploy violence. As Nico said above, if you let people push you around, "they will eat you."

These young officers do not learn to use violence as state actors first. They experience, and in some cases deploy, lateral violence early on. Because of what they learn through laterally violent encounters, before ever confronting a civilian, many of these young men already believe that violence and coercion are only effective if they frame the interaction; coercion is much less effective as a reaction or a response, from this perspective. Take the class where Alexis had asked a roomful of young *dicentes*, who had yet to go out on patrol or learn how to police from the "old guard," to give their opinions on the new and old policing models. There was an overwhelming response of shouting and murmuring by students in support of the old model. Once they quieted down a few of the students said that people do not respect the PNB like they did the Metropolitan Police. Venezuelans, they said, do not respond to "*Buenos días*" (saying this in a soft and polite voice) but that they responded to repression and punches. The young man in the back of the room said that when you ask a guy "Good morning, would you please move over here…" that they just start yelling at you and refuse to do what you ask. The student sat up straight in his chair and puffed his chest out, began throwing his arms around wildly, and cussed at an imaginary cop in front of him. This set off a barrage of comments. Another young man raised his hand and asked about the deaths of officers the past year, asking what officers can do

to protect themselves. Another man followed up this question by asking what happens when an officer stops someone and ask them for their identification and the other guy just "pulls out a gun and BOOM!!"

These students had yet to request anything from a civilian as an officer, but spoke as if they were telling their own personal stories, as if they had engaged in these interactions just a few days ago. These responses from students who had yet to be "tainted" by police culture evidence a taken-for-granted understanding of how interactions work "in the barrios": If you want someone to do something, especially something they do not want to do, they will resist. If you can anticipate this resistance, you can respond accordingly by acting in a way that puts you in control of the situation. Embodied dispositions can communicate to others that one is not averse to violence, a message that students believed they needed to send in order to receive deference and respect from the moment they arrived on a scene. If they did not immediately communicate this with their movements and tone of voice, they worried that instead of treating them with deference people would challenge them and test them to see how far they could be pushed. Indeed, as Bourdieu wrote, learning to "play the game" does not just imply an actor "seeing" but "foreseeing" (1990: 81). The *habitus* in which these men were raised framed how they "foresaw" interactions and offered them embodied solutions to not just play the game, but win it.

Holdaway (1989:65) has written that police culture in Britain presents the world "as a place that is always on the verge of chaos, held back from devastation by a police presence. In this police view, people are naïve and potentially disorderly in all situations; control, ideally absolute control, is the fundamental police task." However, these responses by students suggest that they enter the academy with an understanding of the world as chaotic, disorderly, and

unpredictable. Like the men Duck (2015) writes about, these officers have been raised in an environment where "being able to take [interactional] orders for granted is one of the foundations of understanding, trust, and stability in social life. When nothing can be assumed, social life has a fragile edge" defined by uncertainty (49). Becoming a police officer may entrench this worldview, but the police force was not where it was originally engrained. The officers I knew were not presumptuous enough to think that their actions would hold back this chaos or implement social order as Holdaway writes (see Chapter 4); they only sought to control the daily interactions that they felt put them in danger. In other words, their actions were not intentionally aimed at regulating society, only at regulating the day-to-day in such a way that would improve their individual chances of survival.

The increase in lateral forms of violence and the pluralization of actors has most likely entrenched this logic of domination among police officers. The diffusion of coercion, previously centered within the state, has delegitimized state authority and, thus, delegitimized the authority that state actors wield in interactions with citizens. This delegitimization increases the uncertainty of daily interactions. The breakdown of the state's monopoly over coercion and the disintegrating legitimacy that results from it most likely contributes to police uncertainty, which then increases the likelihood that an officer will use force (Gabaldón 2009).

PNB officers and *dicentes* both feel that their institutional affiliation does not or will not provide them with respect and authority a priori. Rather than thinking about police legitimacy and authority as a function of belief, as Weber presumed, we must think of these as ongoing social processes constituted by everyday interactions (Jauregui 2013: 647). And, in contrast to a Weberian understanding of authority – which allows for the imposition of one's will on another due to a belief in someone or something (a legal order or charismatic leader, for example) – any

authority these young officers hope to have is not based in belief or investment in a legal or traditional system of authority. At the most they hope to produce obedience not for the sake of obedience, obedience based on "compliance rather than legitimacy" (Wedeen 1999:6).

Because the state does not represent the center of social control or authority, the police do not feel that they can invoke authority and legitimacy as state actors to guarantee obedience. The expectation that the police can request compliance rather than demanding it is predicated upon the assumption of legitimacy that the police do not have.

ALTERNATIVE COPING STRATEGIES

Just as there is a plurality of masculinities, there are various ways in which the same men can cope with threats, challenges, and constraints. Responses to hostile surroundings vary drastically within a single neighborhood (Anderson 2000) and even within a single individual (Kilanski and Auyero 2015). Smilde (2007) and Rubin, Smilde, and Junge (2014) have argued that some men in poor urban barrios in Latin America can turn to Evangelical faith to construct a positive sense of self while signaling that they have removed themselves from cycles of violence. In his ethnography of marginalization and precarity in a poor African-America neighborhood, Duck (2015:30) found that for many young men "learning to walk in a way that says 'you can ignore me, I am not a threat' becomes a survival skill" while Rios (2011:127) has found that many young men in poor neighborhoods choose to avoid guns, a traditional symbol of masculinity. Rios (2011:120-121) has also shown that men, criminalized in their youth by both the criminal justice system and civil society, can develop "oppositional consciousness," become politically active, and fight to "dismantle punitive social control and transform other forms of oppression."

It is important to note that, though the men I discuss here felt that violence and aggression were necessary in certain interactions and circumstances, they did not consider these their only resources to deal with physical threats and threats to their masculine identities. Take an interaction I observed when I traveled with Edmond to visit his family, who lived about two hours away from the city. Edmond's aunt was having a birthday party, which lasted all day. Almost everyone had passed out by the evening, after spending hours drinking beer, playing truco – a common card game – and dancing the afternoon away on a broken slab of concrete behind his aunt's house. Only I, Edmond, his younger brother and two friends of the family – wiry thin young men with braces and curly hair overpowered by heavy applications of gel – were left sitting around finishing off the rest of the bottles of Polar Ice. Edmond's younger brother confessed to him that he felt that he might be in some trouble because he had been hanging out with a group of guys involved in transporting drugs in the area. Though his brother was not involved in the business, he had been identified as a possible enemy by another group of drug sellers because he had been seen with their competition.

One of the young men told us a story about a friend who had recently been shot just because he had been out riding motos with some guys one night who were entangled in a *culebra* that his friend had nothing to do with.[20] Edmond shook his head and frustratingly told them that they knew better. In an authoritative voice he said that the only way to stay safe was to be careful about who they were hanging out with. 'There is no reason,' he said 'to be out in the street at

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[20] A culebra is literally a snake but in this context refers to cycles of violence in which young men respond to an insult, attack, or death by physically confronting the party responsible for the injury. This confrontation lays the groundwork for future confrontations, each responding to the former.

night with those guys.' He asked them if it was not better to 'just drink a few beers at home inside with some friends' instead of putting their lives in danger to be out in the street. Edmond repeated over and over again that the only way to stay out of a *culebra* was to stay away from the guys involved, stay out of the street at night, and be careful about who you hang out with. His younger brother was silent for most of the discussion and his two friends responded to Edmond's admonishment by smiling bashfully and nodding their heads in agreement. Here Edmond advocates for a strategy other researchers have found is commonly used by both men and women to survive in violent neighborhoods – staying at home (Hume and Wilding 2015:98). He advises the younger men to be smart, ridiculing their choice to ride around with drug traffickers (even though this might have gained them some respect in their neighborhood).[21]

If officers feel the need to aggressively approach situations while in uniform, many choose a different tactic when off duty—anonymity and inconspicuous behavior. When not in uniform, officers, like civilians, often try to avoid confrontations by hiding their occupation in the neighborhoods where they live. While visiting Nico in his neighborhood one day, we were drinking a soda at a panadería close to his house when the man working behind the counter overheard us talking and broke into the conversation with wide eyes, telling Nico, 'I had no idea you were police!!!' Nico responded 'Well…look…I don't have anything against you, you don't need to hold anything against me either.' The attendant responded, "No, tranquilo, tranquilo," but as we left Nico told me that once people find out that you are police they do not look at you the same. When I asked him during his interview if he ever wore his uniform home, he responded:

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[21] In an unfortunate twist of fate less than a year later Edmond would start selling drugs and guns, which I explain in detail later in this chapter.

I leave the comando and I enter the comando dressed as a civilian. It is really rare for me to arrive home in uniform…I think it has happened two, maybe three times, somewhere around there, because…you know, just out of necessity. I didn't have anywhere to change or because they have sent us to some service that we can't go as plainsclothes officers…I try to leave my house in uniform as little as possible…it is reckless to go out in uniform.

Being on-duty and in uniform, though, means that one cannot keep a low profile, stay indoors, or use other strategies to stay, or at least feel, safe; once men put on the uniform, they automatically forfeit these strategies. Donning the uniform seems to require, at least for some officers, that threats be negotiated in ways traditionally associated with masculinity; for example, once given a gun, they may feel the need to publicly demonstrate their willingness to use it. In order to establish for others, but perhaps principally for themselves, that they are men worthy of respect they may feel that they have no other choice than to perform domination when in uniform.

Indeed, the "code of the street" only structures men's conduct in certain interactions, suggesting that rather than a cultural "code" or a fixed set of beliefs, the code is dependent on what Duck (2015:7) has referred to as interaction orders. [22] According to Duck (2015:16), this order is not about beliefs, values, or individual acts, but is "a set of practices that enable mutually coordinated sense-making in specific spaces and situations." It is "a constitutive requirement of mutually intelligible action" within certain interactions.

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[22] For a critique of Anderson's *Code of the Street* as a fixed and rigid set of repertoires see Wacquant (2002)

Officers, then, do not engage in public displays of aggression and violence because they *are* "street" (Anderson 2000). Instead, in an attempt to become "decent," men join the police force, thus placing themselves in interactions in which they believe that they must act "street." Anderson (2000) describes men as choosing from an early age whether or not they will be decent or street; in contrast my findings suggest that categories of "decent" and "street" might be better understood as interactional styles than a way of "being" in the world.

BECOMING A MALANDRO UNIFORMADO

Previous work on young male gang members has shown that men view the gang in utilitarian terms, understanding the group as a "reputational and economic project, a mechanism to obtain wealth and status" (Baird 2015:118). As Baird notes, young men do not aspire to become gang members or drug dealers, but turn to these activities due to the limited opportunities they have available to them. I argue that officers also have limited opportunities to gain wealth and status and, like gang members, turn to the organization they have joined to pragmatically (if illegally) solve problems.

As discussed in the introduction, much previous research on police misconduct has focused on 1) the lax selection process that police departments and academies use to choose applicants and 2) police culture, which sanctions corruption.[23] Much of the discourse among scholars and policymakers focuses on keeping "bad apples" out of the force (Crank 1998) by tightening screening procedures to keep "criminals" from sneaking into the department, infecting

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[23] This is not to say that previous research has failed to note that poor salaries contribute to police corruption. Nevertheless, this is usually included as a minor point and the fundamental way in which economic marginalization constitutes men's identities and choices is left unanalyzed.

the force from the inside out. According to Ungar (2011), without quality control, fast recruitment can result in officers that apply for "reasons not associated with the professionalism or reality of the job" (36). Ideally, screening and training processes should act as a "weeding-out" process.[24] In classrooms at the UNES the concern with trainees motivations was evident. Questions and prompts directly and indirectly queried students about why they wanted to be a police officer: Were they there for a paycheck and bribes, or because their heart was committed to the profession? (See Chapter 6)

Those writing about police culture worry that "clean" officers become corrupt once they are socialized by the organization. Sabet (2012) has argued that the main impediments to police reform in Mexico are within the police itself, such as institutional incentives that give rise to corruption. For those who enter the force for the "right" reasons, their shrinking circle of friends outside of the department and increasing solidarity with others on the force can socialize officers into accepting corruption as legitimate, or at least into covering for their brothers in arms (Ahern 1972). Scholars concerned with police culture look beyond individual motivations, viewing corruption as social behavior that is influenced from inside an organization that is "powerful enough to override the officer's oath of office, personal conscience, departmental regulations and criminal laws" (Punch 2000:304).

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[24] Moskos notes that even in the U.S. the academy does not work this way. "The academy environment is less a learning process than a ritualized hazing to be endured. Except for one trainee held back due to injury, all members of the academy graduated on time and became police officers" (2009: 21).

However, these concerns elide the main reason young men join the force – for a steady a paycheck – focusing our attention on the intentions, and in some cases the moral integrity, of police officers (see, for example, Uildriks 2009: 218) rather than the structural marginalization that pushes men into corruption and illicit economies. In his research on marginalized men in a barrio of New York City, Bourgois (2003: 293) has argued that men cannot be a "good" provider without engaging in the illicit economy. I argue that this is true for many officers as well, who feel responsible for providing for their families and have similar access to illicit markets to meet this responsibility. When men fall into periods of economic precarity and their expectations of a living wage are dashed they can choose to activate networks both inside and outside the police force to make ends meet.

Intentions to achieve economic security became dashed after a year or two on the force, and most officers had become disillusioned with the PNB, or were going through this process, by the time I came to know them. In fact, the general disillusionment that most officers can experience with compensation once they are on the job was perhaps exacerbated for those who became PNB officers right after the reform was implemented.

This is because official statements and promotional materials released by the government and informal rumors communicated that PNB officers would be better paid than Metropolitan Police officers; in some cases, it was even suggested that the police would receive subsidized housing and would be moved out of the barrios. During one episode of Alo Presidente,[25] when

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[25] Aló Presidente was a weekly show that Hugo Chávez hosted, where he commented on news, discussed theories of capitalism and socialism, and visited different cities and towns in the country.

Chávez (2009) was celebrating the inauguration of the PNB, he announced to a room full of officers:

> Tareck [the then Minister of Justice] gave me a budget and I am going to sign it right now, I am going to approve it for you so that you don't have any problem, let's get moving with the necessary budget for the equipment, the technology, communications…salaries, salaries that are fair, the social security of the police…the guaranteed social security of your family. The issue of housing, Tareck, housing for them, for their family members…we are going to build a building…and bring police who do not have a place to live…police that live with their mother-in-laws, who live with their wives' families…who live in *ranchitos* [homes built high up in the barrios]…we are going to speed this up…Ok, so this is something I am insisting on, housing. Housing.

During his interview José, who lived with his parents, talked about the difference between his expectations and the reality he crashed into once he had graduated:

> Yes, there are a lot…it was thought that…they told us one thing and you believe it…one thinks that something is going to be one way…they told us that the National Police, people respect the National Police a lot and one thinks that is how it must be… "You are going to have a good salary, a salary and your time off will be respected", things like that…but you can't hide everything. Because when we graduate we think that we are going to enter this world of marvels and then we collide with the Berlin Wall.

The fact that the economy took a drastic downturn during the time period I was conducting my research and the bolivar was officially devalued twice over the course of a year only exacerbated this disillusionment.[26] Over the course of just a few years officers saw their once barely sufficient paychecks decrease in purchasing power. This changes in the economy had dire consequences for officers, especially those with families to support. In contrast to the U.S., where pay and pensions by and large incentivize officers to stay "straight" (Moskos 2009:80), in Venezuela officers most likely worry less about losing their salaries and benefits and more how to supplement them (either legally or illegally).

All of the new (i.e. those that did not emigrate from other forces) PNB officers that I knew had worked in the informal economy at some point and most continued to do so after joining the force. While sitting in class one day, some young male *dicentes* talked about the informal work they had done over the weekend and ribbed a friend who reported that his father gave him 100 "bolos" a day (at that point the equivalent of a little over $1) while he was studying at the UNES. All *dicentes* still lived with their families, and if they were not transferred to other states after graduating, continued to do so as officers. Many who were transferred slept in police departments or stayed with other officers during the week, making long journeys back home over the weekend or on consecutive off-days, unable to afford the rent in the cities where

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[26] The bolivar was officially devalued in February 2013 and again in May 2014. From 2012 to 2015, inflation went from 18% to 181% (Weisbrot 2016). The bolivar began to depreciate monthly in 2012 and between May 2012 and May 2013 food prices increased by 50%. In 2012 a rank and file police officer made around 6,000 bolivares a month, which would have been around $300 according to the black market exchange rate at that time—$300 a month to survive in one of the most expensive cities in the world.

they were stationed. Once they graduate, the economic situation of these men improves very little. Though illegal, corruption in these cases "may persist because it contributes in some positive way to the social context in which police find themselves," a fact that is "utterly rejected by police and reformers alike" (Crank 1998:229).[27]

Edmond's story

Edmond was the police officer with whom I spent the most time, largely due to the fact that he respected the work I was doing and was only mildly flirtatious throughout our friendship. Because he worked in a sector close to where I lived, Edmond and I met the first few times at community police events and on the street while he was conducting foot patrols. He was in his late 20s and working in the PNB was the first job that he had held in the formal economy. He had a keen interest in the U.S. and said he felt connected to the country, even though he had never been there, which undoubtedly contributed to his interest in maintaining a relationship with me. Edmond, who had very dark skin, also liked to joke that walking around with me in public was good for his image since people would wonder how he had attracted a *catire* (light skinned women) like me.

Edmond's development as a PNB officer provides a good example of how men's marginalization, occupations, and networks *can* lead to police corruption. I emphasize *can* here because, as we will see with Edmond's story, a succession of events occurred in his life outside of the department that pushed him to engage in illegal activities. At each juncture, Edmond could

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[27] In fact, my research suggests that some forms of corruption have developed as mutually beneficial forms of exchange between officers and citizens.

have made a different choice; however, he had very few available to him given the ways in which his economic background, precarity, and opportunities intersected.

Though Edmond was open about the experience and expertise with guns that he had gained during his youth, he also made it very clear that he had only committed one criminal act before becoming a police officer. One day, while walking around Central Park in Caracas, we talked about his childhood. He said that he had hung out with some rough guys when he was younger and once tried robbing a factory for money to buy a birthday present for his father. Edmond's grandfather had been a dominant figure in his life and was as much of a parent to him as Edmond's mother was; when I first visited Edmond's hometown he was most excited to introduce me to his grandfather and asked me multiple times on our trip back to Caracas what I thought of him. As we walked around the park he talked about how scared he had been as they broke into the factory and brought his hand to his chest and tapped it quickly over his heart to show how quickly his heart had been beating. The boys were caught while inside the factory and were taken home by the police. He said that his mother and grandfather had been so disappointed that he never ever thought of doing anything like that again. Edmond had a deep amount of respect for both his mother and his grandfather, but was particularly concerned with maintaining his grandfather's respect. Listening to Edmond talk about his childhood and his relationship with his grandfather was always extremely touching and it was clear the impact this man had on Edmond and his desire to be a "good" man.

Edmond said that he avoided criminal activities after seeing the look of disappointment on his grandfather's face, but he continued to hang out with the same friends, who eventually became involved in dealing crack, cocaine, and marijuana. One of the reasons Edmond had experience with guns was because his friends considered him a safe person who could hide guns

and weapons since, in contrast to his friends, he did not have a record and was not in and out of *culebras*. For Edmond, these activities were not crimes. Instead, he thought about them as favors he did for old friends when they were in trouble.

Edmond disagreed with parts of the reform and was critical of the PNB, but when I first met him he was passionately dedicated to policing and was proud of the fact that he had never engaged in illegal activities to supplement his income. As he explained during his interview, "Perhaps it is because I don't need [*no me hace falta*] that money, I don't need money that is obtained in the wrong way. Do you know what I mean? I mean, I am police and I believe that I am an officer more so for the profession than what they pay me." Because he was single and had no children, he was even able to send money to his family in Barlovento, which was very important to him. His grandfather, who was in his late 80s by the time I met Edmond and had recently undergone heart surgery, was no longer able to work; nor did his mother have a steady job. Edmond expressed the kind of genuine love for his profession that scholars and police reformers tend to idealize, telling me "those little details that you do for a person that you don't even know, that you have never seen, it fills you up in a way that…well, damn, you are there and it is as if you forget that you are in uniform, you are just Edmond helping people you have never met."

Edmond would sometimes talk about the corruption his fellow officers and supervisors engaged in. He was very aware of the fact that corruption occurred within the PNB (though, according to him and others, PNB had to be more careful due to new accountability mechanisms, which, in their opinions, made corruption and criminal activities less common in the PNB than in other security forces). Edmond said he understood why men with families might take bribes, but he was particularly incensed by one of his supervisors who was widely acknowledged by the

UNES and the media to be a model officer but who, according to him, was running one of the biggest rackets in the force. This particular supervisor was neither married nor had children, which perhaps made his *ensuciamiento* (sullying) unjustifiable in Edmond's eyes. After a few months of knowing him, as we sat around drinking beers after one of his shifts, Edmond sheepishly admitted to me that he had used his position for personal gain. He explained that a few nights before his unit had raided an illegal liquor store and, though all of the money and most of the alcohol had been turned into the station, he and his fellow officers had hidden a few bottles of aguardiente, liquor made from cane sugar that was often mixed with juice.

In the second year of our friendship, Edmond fell into what he described as a sustained period of *mala racha* [bad luck], which forced him to stop sending money to his family and caused him to burn through the small savings he had been able to accrue. When I met up with him one night after his shift, I could see the concern tightening his face before he mentioned the bad news he had received. A friend had recently been shot and killed, a friend to whom he had loaned over half of his savings in order to pay for a leg amputation after a motorcycle accident. As a single man with no children, Edmond had been able to accrue a small amount of savings during his first year as an officer, before salaries took a hit after a downturn in the economy and a national devaluation. Edmond had often mused about what he could do with this money, thinking he might buy a hotdog or hamburger stand that he could pay someone to run, which would provide him with two sources of income.

A few days after this conversation, Edmond told me that both the motorcycle accident and his friend's death were the result of *culebras* that his friend was embroiled in. As we chatted throughout the evening, he kept returning to the subject, trying to come up with ways to recuperate the money and continue to support his family back home. Indeed, providing physical

security is not the only expectation imposed on men by hegemonic masculinity. Despite the fact that few families are now organized in this way, in Venezuela, like in the U.S., there is a "cultural bias that assumes that the male-headed household, with woman as homemaker, is the norm," (Brewer 1988:332). Later in the month, he was robbed while taking a moto-taxi, further compounding his bad luck.

Over the same period, Edmond became increasingly disillusioned with the PNB, saying that 'this police doesn't get things done.' He frequently remarked that he wanted to transfer to a municipal or state police force or leave policing altogether. It was during this time period that Edmond began to talk more often about corruption in the force, almost as if he was just beginning to notice the degree to which it was occurring. He began to complain about the excessive restrictions the officers faced, their inability to do their jobs due to politicization and political turmoil, and the poor pay and benefits.

He sometimes voiced his dissatisfaction with his work by mentioning what seemed to me at the time inconsequential requests. He said they had been enforcing that all officers wear their hats all day long and that "I am not much of a hat wearer." According to him after walking around in the streets and the sun all day he didn't want to wear his hat and this was not something his bosses understood since they were in their offices all day. He also said his supervisors were going to make all of their officers wear the bright green vests that transit cops wore, which seemed to him both unnecessary and perhaps even dangerous, since they made spotting the police even easier. Perhaps it was a coincidence that this rising dissatisfaction developed as inflation increased and the bolivar was depreciating rapidly.

After about three months of struggling through his *mala racha*, one weekend while back home in Barlovento, Edmond made a decision that would impact the rest of his career as an

officer. I found out about this encounter the morning after it had occurred when I met up with Edmond at a mall close to where the buses left for his hometown. He was clearly panicked. As soon as he saw me he grabbed me and hugged me, as if he needed something to keep him on his feet. When he let go, he asked me if he could borrow 2,000 bolivares [BsF]. Over the next ten minutes, I tried to understand what he needed the money for, but he kept starting sentences that he failed to finish and debating different strategies to a problem that he had yet to explain. As we walked to the upper level of stars that wrapped around the outside of the mall he kept saying he didn't want to tell me what had happened because I would think poorly of him. He finally stopped moving and leaned over the railing, staring out at the horizon. Without ever looking at me he told me that over the weekend he had decided to help some friends transport drugs to make some extra cash. While he was riding on the back of a moto, protecting the cargo, the driver he was riding with was stopped at a CICPC checkpoint [*alcabala*] whose officers found the drugs. They negotiated with Edmond and his friends to let them go with the package if they could come up with 50,000 BsF over the next week. Edmond was released to find the money while his other two accomplices were forced to stay with the CICIPC officers.

Throughout the story Edmond stopped a number of times to say that he had joined the police with only good intentions, that he wanted to do the right thing but he felt so much pressure and responsibility from his family, to take care of them and be able to loan them money if they needed it. He said that he knew all this was a bad idea but that he felt he had to do something extra for money. Edmond's desire to be a clean officer conflicted with a particular expectation of hegemonic masculinity: that men be the main economic providers for their families. This expectation persists despite the feminization of the workforce throughout much of Latin America. In fact, employment conditions and opportunities for men as a general category in

Latin America have worsened over the past three decades, in both relative and absolute terms (Paulson 2015:14).

Before he got on a bus back to Barlovento I gave him all of the cash that I had on me (500 BsF) and promised to give him as much as I could the next time I saw him.[28] Over the following week Edmond and I were in contact inconsistently; he would send me updates about new ideas that he had, would ask if I could lend him more money, and expressed concern that the CICPC would eventually find out that he was PNB. By the end of the week he was only able to come up with a small percentage of the amount demanded. Given that they accepted much less than the original sum they had demanded, it seems likely that this was a common racket that was run by officers who were willing to take whatever they could get from small time drug dealers. When the CICPC officers released his friends and, to my surprise, the drugs, his friends promptly skipped town with the product. Edmond was then forced to consider how to deal with the seller for whom they had been transporting drugs. Luckily, Edmond knew the dealer and said he was aware that Edmond did not regularly traffic drugs. Edmond was relieved to find out that the dealer believed Edmond when he said he had no idea where the drugs were. However, he did not return to Barlovento for over two months, waiting, he said, for a moment when things were 'not so hot.' Eventually he told me that the other two men were found dead a few towns over, which made him feel safe returning to his hometown to see his family. After this ordeal, Edmond was set back even further financially and was even more disillusioned with the police, since he felt

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[28] There are, of course, ethical and perhaps legal implications of these kinds of actions. At the time, however, easing Edmond's panic and concern were at the forefront of my mind. I also knew about CICPC officers' violent reputation and was worried about Edmond becoming a victim of this police force.

that the corruption of the CICPC – not his one-time involvement in transporting drugs or even the betrayal of the two other men he had been arrested with – was to blame for the entire episode. With his salary as well as his respect for security forces depreciating each month, Edmond decided to begin selling guns and weapons accessories on the black market with another PNB officer. The last time I spoke with him, Edmond was trying to set up a cyber café with his brother, but was unable to buy enough computers. He told me 'There isn't a job here that allows you to live honorably.'

In my interview with him, which I conducted before his mala racha, Edmond identified the moment when he decided to become a police officer as an important moment when he recognized he could not engage in "unethical" activities. But he also clarified that he did not judge others who fell to temptation, reflecting on the fact that anyone can be compromised, "So, we come across this thing with the system, 'The system changed me, the system brought me to this point.' So no, I don't blame any officer that allows themselves to be tempted, to grab some money. You know? Because maybe the situation in the country brings you to that point. I still haven't done it, I haven't done it. I don't want to do it…"

Edmond's eventual participation in criminal activities did not result from original intentions that he had when he entered the force; Edmond was far from one of the "bad apples" that reformers talk about needing to keep out. Nor did his initiation into police culture catalyze his decision to engage in criminal activities. If either of these had been the catalyst, Edmond would have begun making extra money through the drug trade long before he hit his patch of bad luck. If violence is fist rooted in men's original habitus, corruption, I would argue, is better understood as heavily rooted in an occupational hazard of policing in Venezuela: poor pay. Both violence and corruption are the result of economic and social marginalization, but this

marginalization has different sources, sources that are important to identify in order to correctly address police misconduct.

Instead, it was the economic constraints and relationships outside of the force that initially caused his economic precarity and allowed him to do something about it. Edmond was not completely cut off from this neighborhood, even though he moved almost two hours away. Indeed, Edmond visited his family almost every weekend, feeling that, as the oldest male, he had the responsibility to take care of them despite the distance. These visits allowed him to maintain ties to childhood acquaintances and a connection to friends in the drug trade.

However, it was not Edmond's direct ties to acquaintances working in the illicit economy that incentivized his decision to get on the motorcycle that night, but an indirect connection through a friend whose *culebra* enveloped the lives of those close to him. Edmond's *mala racha* began when he provided support to a friend who was first injured and then killed due to his participation in the drug trade. Lending support to a childhood friend caught Edmond up in a downward financial spiral. It was only after he had been caught in this spiral for a few months and could no longer help support his family that Edmond activated his childhood connections, which facilitated his botched entry into the drug trade. Edmond's story shows how the networks that officers maintain after joining the force might make them vulnerable to punctuated moments of economic crisis, due to extended family's dependence on their income or the "costs" of maintaining friendships with men involved in culebras. These networks then provide possible (illicit) solutions when these crises hit. Edmond's relationships within the police also eventually facilitated his participation in the gun trade; yet, again, Edmond did not call upon these connections until his economic situation deteriorated and his disillusionment with both the PNB grew. It is likely that if Edmond had been paid a living wage he would have never activated these

connections. While it is true that severing the ties between the police and criminal groups is particularly difficult because these ties emerge both at officers' place of residents and their place of employment (Denyer Willis 2014), some officers do resist pulling on these ties for long periods of time. Thus, we must explain misconduct by looking at the conjunction of multiple social forces that act as switchboards to catalyze officers' decisions to activate ties to illicit networks when they do.

The disillusionment with the PNB that Edmond developed undoubtedly eased his conscience when he decided to run drugs for extra money. Similar to José, Edmond found that the discourse of the reform was quite contradictory to the reality: his pay became insufficient due to inflation and devaluation; citizens did not adhere to the principles of human rights Edmond had learned at the UNES; and, despite the promotion by the government and reformers of the community police as a key ingredient to the new police model, he spent much of his time working protests or political events. The fact that his PNB superiors came from the Metropolitan Police and regaled him with tales about solidarity and strength in the old force only further discouraged his commitment to policing. If the institution and culture of policing ate away at Edmond's *compromiso*, it was his economic precarity and relationships outside of the force that motivated both his need to engage in the drug trade and facilitated his doing so.

Just as the decreasing resources that poor young men have access to that might allow them to come closer to meeting expectations of hegemonic masculinity are key in explaining why men value violence and aggression and rejected the UPDFP, they are essential to understanding how a "good" cop might justify corruption: in order to be a "good" man.

An increasing body of literature has argued that marginalized men are dependent on illegal markets and activities to survive. Rather than conceptualizing poor men as helplessly

formed by a cultural maelstrom that shapes them into criminals and thugs, this literature has argued that, when faced with obstacles to economic, psychological, and social security, men will use the limited resources they have to cope with threats. It should perhaps come as little surprise, then, that marginalized men who become police officers will turn to resources inside and outside of the department when those provided by the force are exhausted. Focusing on screening measures that will identify if applicants have the "right" motivations for joining the force is not only unrealistic but also elides a contradiction at the heart of why most officers join the police – because it is one job available to them that offers regular pay and benefits. As long as officers remain in economically precarious situations and can turn to illegal activities to supplement their income, keeping "criminals" out of the force (or keeping the force from become criminal) will remain a Sisyphean task.

CONCLUSION

Academics writing about marginalized and oppressed populations have often fallen into one of two pitfalls: they either pathologize poverty and destructive patterns by attributing them to intergenerational transmission and "culture" (such as Oscar Lewis) or they sanitize the lives they study in an effort to counter "traditional moralistic biases and middle-class hostility toward the poor" (Bourgois 2003:11; for critiques see Scheper Hughes 1992; Benmayor, Torruelas, and Juarbe 1992; Stansell 1987; Bourdieu 2000; Wacquant 2002; Rios 2011; Contreras 2013). According to Wacquant (2002:1501), one of the principle problems with these approaches is that both rob the marginalized of agency, one by focusing on a code that works "behind the backs" of actors and the other by highlighting "the deeds of the worthy poor, exalt[ing] their striving, strength, and creativity." Bourdieu (2000:233) critiques these sanitized portrayals of "simplistic

rhetoric of 'resistance'" and the "humanist" preference to focus on oppressed groups' honorable defiance of their domination as concealing "one of the most tragic effects of the condition of the dominated – the inclination to violence that is engendered by early and constant exposure to violence."[29]

In contrast to these "humanist" or "pathologizing" explanations, feminist scholars like Villalon (2010:122) have argued that we must embed actions in particular sociohistorical moments and intersecting structures of oppression if we are to accurately understand and portray agency. By embedding agency in the "multiplicity of experiences and the actual views of the oppressed" we must accept that "agency does not always equal resistance…instead, agency may be compliant" and even reproduce power hierarchies (123). In this chapter, I have attempted to describe the effects marginalization and violence have had on the lives of young men who choose to become police officers and show that young men resist this marginality, precarity, and insecurity, albeit in ways that contribute to the same processes that form them. I have tried to show how young marginalized men's acts of survival and resistance reproduce marginalization and violence. Indeed, actors can be constrained by structural inequality and injustice but can also use their position to their advantage, albeit in limited ways. Like Goffman's (2014: Chp.4) analysis of poor Black men in hyper-policed neighborhoods, I have tried to emphasize that the situations in which men are placed have been created by a structural problem while holding men accountable for using this problem in ways that reproduce inequality.

Using Bourdieu's concept of habitus, I have shown how the logic of practice learned within violent environments provide men with limited pathways and resources to construct a sense of self and security (economic and existential). Men assimilate schemas and practices from

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[29] Bourdieu labels this the "law of the conservation of violence."

their early socialization into new environments and problems; in these cases, these schemas and practices inform how young men navigate policing. These dispositions and strategies that these men have come to depend upon have tragic consequences for citizens, especially those who look most like rank and file police. Indeed, 98% of those killed by extra-judicial executions are poor young men of color (PROVEA 2005; see also Zubillaga 2009). The withdrawal of state services and protection turns poor men of color into coercive forms of social control against those who are most like them. In Bourdieu's (2000) terms, officers' occupational field has become more and more like their original habitus – defined by insecurity and uncertainty.

Goffman (2014) and others have shown how intensive state surveillance and hyper-policing have transformed the relationships and identities of poor men of color. But the absence of state security can also work upon men's identities and subjectivities long before they become its representatives.[30] Rather than thinking of the state as producing violent actors through training and institutional socialization, here I have argued that the state can also reproduce violence and violent actors in a less direct fashion. Though the Chávez government was different from previous neoliberal governments, in that it provided social and welfare services, the socialist government failed to provide the main service associated with the modern state: physical protection. Without issuing any formal social cleansing policy or training officers to views citizens as threats, the state produces an endless supply of coercive laborers, willing to control the "problematic populations" produced by state withdrawal.

Rather than attributing police misconduct to a problem of "bad apples" or deterministic police culture, I have shown that environments and pressures outside of the police department can also drive police misconduct. These findings provide insight into why officers resisted and

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[30] To the degree that they feel they are representatives of the state and its power; see Chapter 4

rejected key aspects of the reform: the UPDFP and accountability mechanisms. These findings

call attention to the potential limits of police reform within a violent context where most security

officers are economically and socially marginalized. They suggest that changing a culture of

violence and corruption is not just an institutional issue. While we like to think that these

problems will be solved if we get institutional reform and training right, my findings indicate that

these are only two aspects of a much larger and multifaceted problem.

Finally, this chapter challenges an aspect of police culture that has long been taken for

granted: their isolation and separation from society. The police are frequently characterized as

one of the most insulated state institutions (see, for example, Fabián Sain, 2010). Yet my

findings suggest that it is not officers' isolation from society, but how they are shaped by their

structural locations and what networks they are embedded in outside of the department that

informs their understandings of violence, corruption, and criminal practices. As I will discuss in

the conclusion, these findings have implications for both our theories of how states exercise

control as well as the degree to which police reform – in Latin America and beyond – can be

understood as solely an institutional issue.

Chapter 4:

Making Security Forces Insecure: Police Vulnerability, Pluralized Violence, and Justified Killing

It was a bit after 11pm and Johan and I were sitting in the main room of his apartment. The furniture in the room was sparse – a small dining table and matching chairs on one side of the room and a worn-in love seat and chair on the other – but filled the small room, giving it a cozy, if cramped, feeling. Johan sat at the kitchen table, still dressed in pressed jeans, a long-sleeved buttoned-up shirt, and the brown leather shoes that he buffed on every weekend. Johan always left the apartment dressed in business casual attire and with a notebook and pen, saying that how one dressed was important, especially if you live in a barrio. He believed that his appearance set him apart from many other poor barrio residents, and that 'looking like someone that lives in eastern Caracas' would help him pick up work.

I sat across from him, on a sofa whose cushions had long given up their integrity, allowing me to sink deep into the sofa's frame. We were discussing the recent meeting of the city's police accountability group (CCCP) of which Johan was a member. I had been renting a room from Johan for a few months, after having met him at one of the accountability group meetings. At the meetings, he always greeted me with a "Hello How are you?" in English, before reverting to Spanish.

As Johan detailed his concerns regarding how slow the group's formation process was going, he was interrupted by three rapid shots fired somewhere down the street. After a substantial pause, Johan shrugged his shoulders and said it must not have been anything serious,

since no retaliatory shots had been fired. He chalked the noise up to a *malandro* (thug) scaring

off another one and we resumed our conversation.

The next morning, as Johan and I were walking down to the nearest metro station, a petite

woman in slacks and a blouse called from behind us, telling Johan to slow down. We stopped

and waited and as the woman weaved her way through the crowd, a mix of morning commuters

heading for the metro, women with small children dressed in school uniforms, and *buhoneros*

(informal street vendors) going to set up shop on the main avenue. As she approached Johan

informed me that it was Beatriz, one of his neighbors. Beatriz greeted Johan and introduced

herself, and then paused to catch her breath. As we resumed our descent down the street, she

informed us that she was heading to the Bolivarian University, a university subsidized by the

Chávez government. Johan nodded his head in approval and mentioned that he was considering

enrolling in the free courses offered by the college. Beatriz encouraged him to do so, saying that

she was getting close to completing her degree in law.

As we got closer to the metro, she asked us if we had heard about the National Police

officer that had been killed up the street the night before. Johan replied that we had heard the

shots but that he had not known an officer was involved. Beatriz began to slowly shake her head

back and forth, lamenting the news she was about to share. She told us that the officer had been

shot by the Tupamaros—one of the armed community groups in Caracas, referred to as

"colectivos" (collectives). With a pained look on her face she said that he had just graduated

from the UNES and had left behind three children. "It is so sad, how young they are dying…"

she said, letting her voice trail off. We walked for a few moments in silence until, in an

exasperated voice, as if we had been debating the issue all along, she said 'These *colectivos* are

out of control, but what is there to do about it? All of this talk of disarmament is a waste. Did

you see [President] Maduro's speech, calling for all Chavistas to disarm? That is part of the

government's plan?' she asked us. 'This disarmament mess will never work…The government

will continue supporting the *colectivos* under the table.' Johan, a cautious Chavista, agreed.

'But,' he said, raising a counterpoint, 'what can the government do about it? That is their base.

Look, I mean, Diosdado Cabello, one of the most powerful Chavistas, he has ties to the

colectivos.' Beatriz did not argue, but the rest of the conversation down to the metro was spent

discussing how brazen the *colectivos* had become.

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In this chapter, I look at a key source of insecurity and vulnerability for National Bolivarian

Police officers in Caracas—the relationships between non-state armed groups and state actors.

Like other sources of insecurity discussed in this dissertation, these relationships have important

implications for why a principle tenant of police reform—the regulation of police use of force—

was rejected, by both officers and many poor barrio residents. The term "colectivo" came to be

attached to armed community groups organized in the 1980s to defend their neighborhoods from

micro-trafficking and police violence in popular sectors of Caracas.[31] Though historically

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[31] It is not completely clear when the term *colectivo* began to be commonly used to refer to these

groups. Alejandro Velasco (personal communication 2016) reports that this term was never used

in the early to mid 2000s. Crime journalists had begun to use the term by 2008 (Robert Samet,

personal communication 2016) and the term colectivo was the most common term I heard used

to refer to these groups throughout my time in the field (2012-2014). However, according to

George Ciccariello-Maher and Naomi Schiller (personal communications 2016) it did not seem

to gain widespread traction until 2010, becoming most common in 2014 during the La Salida

antagonistic to the state, this relationship changed after Hugo Chávez became president. Indeed, the Chavista governments and the *colectivos* are highly intertwined in the minds of many in Caracas. Simple stencil graffiti painted on the walls of homes and businesses in some neighborhoods in western Caracas announce that "Chávez es Tupamaro," reminding those passing by of the interconnected radical and revolutionary history that gave birth to both the *colectivos* and Chávez government (Ciccariello-Maher 2013). The graffiti does not only designate the former President as a member of the *colectivo*. It also speaks to the recognition and institutionalization that some groups, historically targeted by the state as enemies, have received under the Chavista governments. Chávez was not only adopted as a symbol for a non-state group; the Tupamaros organized a political party during Chávez's time in office. The graffiti represents the transition of a group that had been organized to struggle against and resist the state (Ciccariello-Maher 2013) into the state itself. While these groups did not completely acquiesce to government, this type of transition represents the porous boundaries created by the government that brings into question where state sanctioned violence ends and where it begins.

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protests. According to Ciccariello-Maher, the name Tupamaros served the same function as the term colectivos does today, expressing both elite fear and popular awe.

The extent of connections between state actors and the *colectivos* remains unclear. What we do know about these relationships is that they are fluid, flexible and inconsistent. Government actors have gone back and forth between publicly supporting the collectives and calling for the arrest of their members, and collective leaders have been vocally critical of the government's decisions at different points in time. As early as 2002, the Chávez government publicly denounced the "anarchic groups" of 23 de Enero when they coordinated an assault on the Metropolitan Police (Rojas 2002). State actors, including Chávez, have also called for the *colectivos* to disarm at different moments as well. And some *colectivos* have stated that their support for the government is contingent on political leaders pushing through with the Bolivarian Revolution or *el processo* (the process), the names given to the 21st century socialist political project catalyzed by Hugo Chávez (see Ciccariello-Maher 2013: 86-7).

Nevertheless, these connections have transformed the relationship between the police and the state. These connections—both real and imagined—fracture the relationship between the

police and the state, which is predicated upon the state's unique authorization of the use of coercion by the police.[32] According to (Mawby 1990:3, 192), "Legitimacy implies that the police are granted some degree of monopoly by those in society with the power to so authorize." Similarly, Jon Vagg (1996:107) has noted that one of the most important aspects of police legitimacy is the "legitimating accounts presented by the state." The relationship between state actors and the *colectivos* represented a fracturing of this monopoly and, thus, a direct attack on police legitimacy.

In this chapter I focus on how the vulnerability and insecurity produced by state-*colectivo* relationships can motivate acts of police violence and how officers' use these relationships to justify violence as acts of (in some cases preemptive) self-defense. The process of delegitimization represented by state actors sanctioning, implicitly or explicitly, non-state armed groups, creates a sense of vulnerability and insecurity among police officers. Stories about the *colectivos'* power, exaggerated and enhanced by police officers and poor barrio residents, contribute to this sensation. These experiences, interactions, and stories confirm that police power and state power have been uncoupled and that the government has abandoned PNB officers, caring little about them in life and in death. The vulnerability officers' feel is exacerbated by the 2008 police reform, which limited the type of guns officers could carry and implemented regulations on the force they were allowed to use. Aware that state actors have supported the arming of non-state groups, at least to some degree, officers interpret recent efforts

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[32] The "uniqueness" of this relationship between the police and the state is distinct in Latin America, where the military have also been charged with performing policing functions within a country. Indeed, police in countries such as Venezuela, Chile, Brazil, and Honduras have either been headed by or incorporated into the military.

by state actors' to rein in police use of (lethal) force as an attack on the police and a disregard for officers' lives.

A growing body of research has documented how neoliberalization, and the economic marginalization and violence it catalyzed, has transformed the subjectivities and worldviews of poor (Auyero and Berti 2015; Auyero, Bourgois, and Scheper-Hughes 2015; Rotker and Goldman 2002; Alves and Evanson 2011) as well as the relationship between state and society. However, apart from documenting the role the police have played in destabilizing the state's monopoly over coercion (Caldeira and Holston 1999; Call 2003; Davis 2006), little work has asked how police officers' worldviews and relationship to the state have been transformed by these changes (but see Denyer Willis 2015). This is a particularly glaring absence, given that the pluralization of violence has undoubtedly impacted those who have historically monopolized its use. If we know that the pluralization of violence has delegitimized the state, what has it done to the legitimacy of those who have traditionally represented state control?

Research on the pluralization of violence has also focused on how neoliberal policies have made civil society and non-state actors responsible for personal and public security. But the recent pluralization of violence in Venezuela has not been primarily driven by neoliberalism, but the socialist government's support for both "institutional" violence (traditionally wielded by police) as well as liberatory violence, understood by Fanon (1963) as non-instrumental, transformative, and creative action. The pluralization of violent actors is not driven primarily by neo-conservative economic ideology, but tension between institutional power and revolutionary violence, both of which certain state actors have interests in supporting.

It is most likely the case that police officers believe that they receive too little support from their government and, thus, are vulnerable to unjust attacks. In the United States, "Blue Lives

Matter" movements have emerged in response to the negative media attention and demands for reform after police officers killed Eric Garner, Michael Brown, and other unarmed Black men. Citizens and politicians too have rallied around these "beleaguered" forces. In May 2016, the governor of Louisiana signed the "Blue Lives Matter" bill into legislation, which made attacks on police officers a hate crime (Craven 2016). In his book *Cops Under Fire: The Reign of Terror Against Hero Cops*, journalist Larry McShane (1999) argues that "hero" officers often lose their reputations, careers, and lives when scapegoating, race, politics and other factors weight cases against them. The shooting of police officers in Dallas on July 7, 2016 at a Black Lives Matter protest has intensified concern that there is a "war on cops," one which some officers and citizens claim the government cares little about (Buchanan 2015). This is despite the fact that the rate of officers killed in the US per year has dropped over the past decade (Balko 2015). Presenting the police as vulnerable and beset, these reactions obscure the power officers hold over others, particularly subalterns; they distort the domination built into officers' positions as state actors by replacing the victims of police violence with officers themselves, making the police victims of the power they exert.

Complaints of vulnerability are particularly hyperbolic given the support and protection officers receive as state actors. As Fassin (2013:216) writes regarding the police in Paris, governments have increasingly backed "harsh" versions of law enforcement, which extend the discretionary power of police. That Grand Juries have repeatedly failed to indict police officers who have killed unarmed men (and a child, in the case of Tamir Rice [Williams and Smith 2015]) suggests that the police are well protected by the criminal justice system (see Casselman). Indeed, "police have been nearly immune from criminal charges in shootings" (Pinkerton 2015).

However, there are a few reasons that we should not write off all fears and vulnerabilities

voiced by the police. First, even where claims are hyperbolic and misrepresent the officers'

powerful position within the state, these claims speak to a worldview that puts officers on the

defense. If officers understand themselves as under attack, they will respond as such, utilizing

the resources at their disposal (i.e. physical coercion) to protect themselves and others. Where

reforms are implemented to control that resource, these may catalyze that which reformers seek

to reduce: violence.

Furthermore, police forces suffer from different threats and insecurities depending on the

contexts in which they are embedded; feelings of abandonment and marginalization should not

be equally discounted out of hand. Instead, they need to be contextualized and their causes

accurately identified. Indeed, perceptions of abandonment would be distinct in contexts where

police officers operate within a relatively well functioning criminal justice system, receive

decent pay, and maintain a middle-class lifestyle compared to contexts where impunity is high,

salaries and benefits are low, and officers go home to parts of the city where they are even more

likely to be murdered than when in uniform (see Barbara 2014 on the Brazilian case).

While it might be counterintuitive to think of the police as marginalized or vulnerable, we

must consider that in certain contexts pluralized violence has drastically altered relations of

power. In the case of São Paulo, Brazil, Denyer Willis (2015:9) has argued that organized crime

groups like the Primeiro Comando da Capital (PCC)[33] can no longer be understood as marginal

because "they are now at the center of social control." Venezuela, of course, is not Brazil. Stories

about the *colectivos* sometimes portray their power as comparable to the PCC in São Paulo or the

Mara Salvatrucha in El Salvador, large criminal organizations that control massive amounts of

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[33] The PCC is a criminal organization that controls a large amount of territory and a number of

prisons in São Paulo and other parts of Brazil.

territory, including prisons, and present potent threats to state authority. But ideologically, organizationally, and territorially the *colectivos* are completely distinct from these other groups. Furthermore, they are one of many armed groups that spar for control and dominance in small territories across the city. In contrast to São Paulo, where organized crime groups have successfully institutionalized rules and regulations in certain areas, in Caracas, there is no "center," no group that controls massive swaths of territory and the business that takes place within them. Nevertheless, the pluralization of violent actors still has implications for how power is structured—it has broken apart the center of social control, requiring that we rethink previous assumptions about "violence workers" (the term Huggins et al. 2002 use for police officers in Brazil) and the violence they deploy.

Like moral panics over "thugs," "muggers," and "druggies" (Marsh and Melville 2011) officers' often exaggerated accounts of the *colectivos* justify indiscriminate violence by repackaging long held stereotypes about the population that bears the heaviest brunt of police violence – young, poor, marginalized men of color. In fact, *colectivos* and the police do come into violent confrontations, but the *colectivos* are not a primary threat to the police. The police are much more likely to come into conflict with other violent actors, such as gangs, armed criminals, or even other state security forces. Nevertheless, this specter seems to serve the same purpose as previously imagined "violent phantoms" – political dissidents or "antisociales" – that have justified social cleansing under both authoritarian and democratic governments in the region (Goldstein 2012).

Officers' accounts of the *colectivos* should not be taken as just another justification for the killing of marginalized men, however. Despite the fact that the *colectivos* are not the most potent threat to officers' lives, the fact that the government has made public statements backing

the *colectivos* makes this threat particularly salient for PNB officers. It is because the *colectivos* represent government collusion in the democratization of violence that the police characterize this threat as so destabilizing. Thus, these accounts also speak to the how shifting political relations have changed the nature of policing in Venezuela.

Indeed, this justification reveals an important difference from previous accounts of police violence. Rather than understanding police violence as embedded in an entire state machinery "that calls for and justifies the death of young men of barrios" (Zubillaga et al. 2015:177), the instances of police violence discussed in this chapter are ones motivated by officers' belief that state machinery is set against them. Within this context, we must question the degree to which police officers identify as empowered state actors and, thus, the degree to which police violence can be equated with state violence rather than thinking about it as a form of lateral violence.[34]

If the failings of the criminal justice system in Latin America is not about "failed institutions but is the result of specific types of relationships that emerge in the political system and how these relationships link alternative political structures" (Arias 2006), in this chapter, I look at how relationships between the government and non-state armed groups delegitimize police authority. How these alternative political structures realign relationships between state and non-state actors is fundamental to understanding certain acts of police violence and how officers and some barrio residents justify them; they are also key to understanding why attempts to regulate police force remain unpopular.

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[34] Indeed, police officers often use violence as a means to their own criminal ends, thus further destabilizing the State's legitimate monopoly over coercion. Policing in some places has also become privatized, which contributes to this decoupling (O'Neill and Thomas 2011).

The complaints and concerns that I analyze here provide a window onto current political relationships in Latin America. Though previous research has focused on the structural, individual, and situational causes of police violence, here I look at its "relational underpinnings" (Auyero 2007).[35] A relational account requires that we look at the networks that connect actors. As Arias (2006) and Auyero (2007) have argued, understanding how state, non-state, and criminal actors are connected to one another is essential in accounting for multiple forms of violence in Latin America. Here, I show that the government's connection to the *colectivos* has altered the relationship between the state and the police in the minds of officers and some citizens. I argue that these alterations require us to question the assumption that police violence is always deployed in the defense of state interests.

THE POLICE, THE STATE, AND VIOLENCE

Working from the assumption that the police act to protect state interests, many have explained police violence through the function that it serves – manufacturing social control that the state needs to dominate its population (Chevigny 2003; Huggins 1998; Ungar 2011). According to Marenin (1996:10-11) the police "cannot be distinguished from the role and functions of the state…they are controlled by the state who stand behind the throne." If the modern state is defined by its monopoly over the legitimate use of force, then the modern police can be defined as those that exercise that force. The unique tether that ties the police to the state, then, is the authorization to use physical force on behalf of state control. Coercion applied as a means to achieve certain social goals is a core element of policing (Marenin 1996). In fact, Marenin

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[35] For an overview of sociological, psychological, and organizational theories of police violence see Worden 1996. For the Venezuelan context see Birkbeck and Gabaldón 1996, 1998.

(1996:7) defines the police as "social ordering structures...a persistent effort by (somewhat) specialized personnel to reconstruct order in preferred forms of social arrangements, often by coercive means."

Much research in Latin America has shown that the militarized training of police has sustained extralegal and excessive use of force by the police, socializing officers into believing that killing the enemies of the state/society was and is their duty (Huggins et al. 2002; Huggins 1998; Langguth 1978; Bayley 1993; Bailey and Dammert 2006; Basombrío 2003; Zubillaga and Antillano 2013). Balko (2013:xiv) has made a similar argument in the case of the United States, pointing out that order is more often than not "preserved by armed government agents too often conditioned to see streets and neighborhoods as battlefields and the citizens they serve as enemies" (on the U.S. case, see also Andreas and Price 2001). Social control and militarization are key to understanding police violence and its excessive use. Indeed, excessive violence is more common in contexts where officers feel a responsibility to protect the state rather than citizens.

While vital, this research can only account for violence that is deployed by officers who identify as state actors and believe they are working to defend state interests. Arguments that focus on the police as protecting the state and police violence as a means of achieving that end miss the ways in which recent changes in Latin America have transformed the police-state relationship. The police are traditionally understood as the state's principle mechanism for deploying non-negotiable coercive force in response to internal threats to social order (Bittner, 1970). However, in Latin America state actors have actively participated in the "democratization" of violence, willfully ceding power to non-state armed actors (Arias 2006). Thus, the relationship that has principally tethered the police to the state has been dramatically

altered. Given the ways in which the pluralization of violence and the fracturing of state sovereignty have transformed social and political relations, officers' identification as state actors can no longer be taken for granted (Davis 2010). If officers' "identities and actions cannot be reduced…to the discourses that are produced at the center" (Kalyvas 2006), we need to look beyond the police as state actors in order to account for certain acts of police violence and why these might seem justified to officers and some barrio residents. Indeed, rather than guardians of state interests who are uniquely designated to wield coercion, my research shows that officers see themselves as abandoned by the government.

In order to account for officers' motivations for and justifications of police violence we must take into account the alternative networks that have disassembled the state as the "center," which, by default, destabilizes the role the police play in "enforcing order" (Fassin 2013). Rather than viewing the police as setting "the tone of government-civil-society relations," (Bailey and Dammert 2006:2) we also need to understand how government-(un)civil society relations set the tone of the police. Thus, officers' accounts of the *colectivos* should not be taken only as a police force lamenting the power it has lost or justifying the power that it wields; these accounts should also be understood as emblematic of a worldview wherein no center of social control exists. It is a worldview defined by vulnerability, insecurity, and abandonment; it is one in which regulating police force makes little sense for officers; and it is one that overlaps with that of many poor barrio residents. Indeed, unlike the police officers observed by Fassin (2013), Goffman (2014), and Moscos (2009), who look nothing like the populations they police, most officers in Caracas are barrio residents themselves. A principle contention of this dissertation is that the police are quite vulnerable and powerless in certain ways (see Chapter 3).

THE POLICE AND THE *COLECTIVOS*

Venezuela has often been held up as the exemplar of democracy in the region. While the second wave of democracy in many countries collapsed in the 60s and 70s, Venezuela's democracy remained stable after transitioning from a military dictatorship to a democracy in 1958. Nevertheless, police violence was key in solidifying the democratic regime against threats posed by competing parties, leftist organizations, or those that might sympathize with opposing groups (Ciccariello Maher 2013; Velasco 2015; Coronil and Skurski 2006; Hernández 1991). Similar to neighboring authoritarian regimes, the stabilization of Venezuela's democracy rested upon generating fear of internal enemies and their elimination by the police and military. According to Coronil and Skurski, "In an effort to buttress its legitimacy and to strengthen its control of dissent, the democratic regime has kept alive the image of threats that reside concealed within the polity and at its borders, seeking the chance to return" (2006:86). Events like the Yumare killings in 1986, the El Amparo Massacre in 1988, and the *Caracazo* in 1989 (see footnote 6 and 41) evidenced that long after its transition Venezuelan democracy depended upon force rather than the rule of law to remain stable.

But poor barrio residents did not simply acquiesce to state violence. Some organized and armed themselves. Starting in the 1980s barrio residents in Catia, principally in 23 de Enero,[36] began organizing *colectivo* in the poor neighborhoods where they lived.[37] Mostly male barrio

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[36] The neighborhood of 23 de Enero is perhaps most associated with the *colectivos*, as many of them were founded there.

[37] The term *colectivo* is used for a wide variety of social organizations, many of which are not

residents organized into armed groups to protect their communities from drug trafficking as well as the police and military, who entered their neighborhoods and systematically killed or abused those suspected of being an enemy of the new democratic regime. Thus, the colectivos were born as a response to the violence employed by the liberal democratic state against its own citizens (see Ciccariello- Maher 2013; Velasco 2015).

The *colectivos* were not only para-police groups, however. Writing about La Piedrita, one of the oldest *colectivos* in 23 de Enero, Velasco notes that the group sought "collective solutions to a scourge [crime and narcotics] threatening to unravel their once close-knit community," not only by providing security but also by renewing a "sense of pride and solidarity in their community through the organization of festivals for local youth, the formation of a muralist brigade to propagate messages of solidarity, and the construction of a commons where strict rules of conduct were observed and imparted to all members" (2015:181).

However, the environment in which both the police and the *colectivos* are embedded has changed drastically in recent decades. The flow of drugs and guns through the country has created fertile ground for a plurality of violent actors to grow, including newly formed *colectivos* autonomously organized during Hugo Chávez's presidency to protect the revolution and its ideals (Dutka 2014). While many *colectivos* continue to act as social, cultural, and educational organizations, some now engage in micro-trafficking to raise funds. In everyday conversations, the term *colectivo* is sometimes used in place of "banda," (gang) blurring distinctions between groups with ostensible political principles and those explicitly organized for profit.

The multifaceted meanings of the term *colectivo* is well captured by Magdalena, a young

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armed. However, this term is the most frequently used one to refer to armed non-state groups that are aligned with the Bolivarian Revolution, so I use it here.

National Police officer who lives in 23 de Enero. Magdalena told me during her interview, "Right now in 23 de Enero there is a problem, there is a *colectivo* that is killing people, because they are not the Tupamaros, the Tupamaros are the ones that protect the barrio, the *colectivos* are different [from the Tupamaros], they are just young kids that get involved in a *colectivo*, they are thugs, they are killers, they have murdered." Here, Magdalena differentiates between gangs, which she refers to as *colectivos*, and the Tupamaros, a group that controls killing and protects the barrio. Implicit in her statement, however, is the understanding that both groups are armed and use violence to achieve different ends.

As noted above, relationships between the government and the *colectivos* have also changed. The conversation between Johan and Beatriz that opened this chapter suggests that some barrio residents believe the *colectivos* are protected by high-ranking politicians. This can be compared to previous governments, who ordered that members of armed leftist non-state groups be found, arrested, and even killed. Velasco (2015:207) documents Juan Contreras' memories of "scuffles" with police during the 1970s. Contreras, part of the radical Marxist-Leninist leftist groups that the democratic government viewed as a threat, recounts participating in "many of the confrontations typical for activist youth of the day: scuffles with police, students barricades, an occasional shootout. Early in the decade, he helped stage an armed assault against a newly opened Metropolitan Police substation" just below Contreras' family apartment. Thus, the competition and contention that characterizes the relationship between officers and *colectivo* members is long-standing.

In contrast to the previous governments against which the *colectivos* struggled, since the early 2000s the Chavista governments (first led by President Hugo Chávez [1999-2013] and then President Nicolás Maduro [2013-current] after him) have cultivated relationships with these

groups. Early in his presidency Chávez praised the *colectivos* as "el brazo armado de la revolución" (the armed arm of the revolution) (El Universal 2012). This support communicated solidarity with the poor, marginalized, and repressed sectors of the city where the *colectivos* emerged.

This relationship, and the protection it implies, separates the *colectivos* from other gangs. For example, when I asked Matias, a young PNB officer who worked highway patrol, about what was different about policing after Chávez was elected he told me:

Where I [work] they send a lot of operations[38]…Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays every Thursday, Friday and Saturday…one weekend they sent me to Carpintero, this is a ***slum***, the station calls us and tells us to have two patrols pass through an area, I don't remember the name of the street…San Miguel…where we come up against some *colectivos*. Already I am…I have heard of problems with the *colectivos*…I don't work in this area, and the [other officer] that was working in this area told us that we should leave because he knew some guy [in the *colectivo*] knew a representative in the National Assembly, I don't know which one he knew, the guy that was the head of this gang knew some person…I mean, even if we had taken all their weapons, all their drugs, everything they had, we would still have to turn it in, sooner or later [and then it goes right back to them] and if [we don't turn it in] we get fucked, us, doing our jobs.

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[38] The operations, or *operativos*, refer to the deployment of police and National Guard officers into the barrios to perform mass identification checks and round up suspected criminals, sometimes killing them or other poor barrios residents in the process.

In the following sections, I look at how officers' perceive the relationship between the *colectivos* and the government as delegitimizing and disempowering the National Police and why this relationship has contributed to an understanding of the police as vulnerable and insecure. I argue that this delegitimization arises from two understandings produced by the government-*colectivo* relationships: a new form of politicized security and a new center around which power has coalesced. I also argue that this delegitimiztion and the vulnerability it produces has contributed to police violence.

Because there is only a murky understanding of how close the *colectivos* actually are to the government it is difficult to parse out fact from fiction in officers' claims. In this chapter, I provide evidence that PNB officers believe that the government supports and protects the *colectivos*. To a degree, this is an accurate representation of reality – state actors have voiced support for the arming of *colectivos* and called upon them in moments of political crisis. I do not, however, directly investigate the extent of this support or seek to establish the "truth" of any specific claim of government–collective relations; while I establish that PNB officers believe that *colectivos* enjoy certain privileges, such as judicial immunity, whether they *actually* enjoy more or less immunity than other citizens is not the subject of this chapter. While some of the claims of government support for collectives are exaggerated, there is factual basis for some of these claims, which I provide in this chapter. However, even if all of these claims were false, the fact that they are perceived to be true, by both officers and some poor barrios residents, is important to take into account as we document the changing forms of police violence.

POLITICIZATION

A primary impediment to reforming police in Latin America has been the politicization of police forces, which have remained closely aligned with the government sectors that provide them with funds *(*Frühling 2003; Hinton 2006; El Achkar 2012*).* Since police departments depend on parties and leaders for material resources and high-ranking officers depend on politicians to keep them in their positions, police prioritize the interests of parties and leaders and keeping them in office. Politicization, then, impedes the democratization of the police by aligning the interests of the police with those of political actors and parties. Thus, a fundamental aspect of successful police reform is breaking the close ties between the state and the police in order to make the police accountable to citizens and society, rather than subservient to state actors.

Yet, PNB officers in Caracas rarely complained about this kind of politicization.[39] Instead, when officers spoke of politicization or pointed to specific cases of it, they were more likely to discuss the politicization of security functions, not security forces. By politicization of security functions, I am referring to the belief that policing functions, and thus officers' authority to intervene on behalf of the state, have been transferred from state security forces to non-state actors ideologically aligned with the Chávez government. This concern suggests a different form of politicization, one that breaks bonds between police officers and the government, rather than cementing them. If the police are defined as the State's principle mechanism for deploying non-negotiable coercive force (Bittner, 1970), experiences, interactions, and stories that validate the

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[39] This is not to say that cronyism and politicization do not operate in the National Police.

colectivos as the state's preferred security body would destabilize the very ground upon which the police stand.

This is not to say that official discourse on and internal training of the PNB are free from politicization. Police officers are given a "revolutionary" education at the Universidad Nacional Experimental de la Seguridad (UNES), and UNES professors often reference the Bolivarian Revolution and Chávez as founders the PNB. For example, apart from their regular curriculum, professors at the UNES would sometimes organize events like *cineforos* (movie forums) for officers-in-training. At the beginning of one *cineforo* held in the Che Guevara room at the UNES, one of the UNES instructors explained that during the *foro* officers-in-training were to 'think about and reflect on the importance of the 4th of February for both the history of Venezuela but also the creation of the UNES, where you were studying.[40] The university was a product of this event, was a product of El Caracazo[41]…we are a rebel university, children of the 4th of February. Thanks to the rebellion that catalyzed the 4th of February young people like you aren't objects of capitalism, they aren't for making money for the bourgeoisie, but are active subjects involved in a transformation of society.' For the next thirty minutes, a short

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[40] The 4th of February refers to the failed 1992 coup d'état led by then Colonel Hugo Chávez and other military officers. The coup was motivated by the officers' belief, among others, that the neoliberal measures adopted by the government of Carlos Andrés Pérez had produced disastrous effects on the population.

[41] El Caracazo is the name given to protests and lootings that began on February 27. Protestors flooded the streets in Caracas, Guarenas, and Guatire, reacting violently to a spike in transportation costs that resulted from the liberation of petroleum prices, one of the many austerity measures that made up President Carlos Andres Perez's neoliberal "*paquetazo.*"

documentary about the 4th of February was shown, and a short discussion was held after. While these forums and events could be seen as evidence of ideological indoctrination, most of the ideological "work" done in classes was not aimed at garnering political votes or support; instead, professors and training manuals attempted to link tenants of the Revolution to policing, such as the decriminalization of poverty and respect for *el pueblo* (the people).

Because the Chávez government created the PNB, The political opposition has often characterized PNB officers as politicized protectors of the Revolution. In an interview with the coordinator of citizens security for the MUD, the political opposition's coalition party, Luiz Izquiel told me, "In no other country are officers asked what party they are in order to become police. It is not that way here. Here they give red jackets [the color of Chavismo] to the police…The National police, one of the defects it has, is that it is highly politicized, its directors are political tokens." Izquiel's hyperbolic comments about the lack of police politicization in other countries emphasize the egregious politicization he believes has occurred within the PNB. Ironically, however, police officers report a very different kind of relationship to Chavismo. Rather than feeling pressure to secure the government's revolution, police officers see themselves as being supplanted by groups they believe are already prepared to do this. From this perspective, the government already has a security body aligned with its political project, thus there is little need to politicize the police. Instead of becoming a "battleground for power," as police institutions were under the PRI in Mexico (Davis 2010:43), police officers characterizations sometimes make the PNB seem almost irrelevant.

A conversation I had with Alexis, a National Police officer who also teaches classes at the UNES, and Antonio, who works as an intelligence officer in the military, illustrates this sentiment well. Alexis and Antonio were taking the weekend to return home, a small pueblo on

the eastern coast of Venezuela, and invited me to join. As we wound down the dark empty highway in an old sedan, so well-worn that any markings of brand or make had long since vanished, we sipped on beers Alexis had purchased from the gas station earlier. We began talking about the protests occurring in urban areas throughout the country, demanding "La Salida" (the exit) of President Maduro. The *colectivos* were reported to have been acting as para-police forces at many of the protests and were blamed for much of the violence (unfairly in some cases). I asked the men what they thought the *colectivos'* role in the protests had been so far. Alexis said that many of the stories of the *colectivos* inciting violence were *pura paja* (bullshit) but immediately followed this by saying 'the *colectivos* were organized by the government and were armed because the government knew they could rely on the *colectivos* to support them.' Antonio jumped in and agreed, saying that the *colectivos* thought they were the defenders of the revolution and believed that its survival depended on them. Alexis continued when Antonio finished, saying that, 'the *colectivos* are groups organized by the state…to counteract any kind of situation that represents a danger to the government." Alexis's insinuation that the *colectivos* had not yet played a major role in controlling or stamping out participation in the protests was followed by Alexis and Antonio assuring me that they were poised to do so at any moment. Other officers I knew had different opinions on the *colectivos'* role in the protests, and there was significant disagreement on the subject. But officers generally agreed upon what their presence represented: a volatile and uncontrollable variable protected by the government that could set off a chain of violence in which officers themselves would become embroiled.

The moment that officers see as catalyzing the change in police-state relations is the 2002 *golpe del estado* (coup d'état). From their perspective, The Metropolitan Police's support for the political opposition during the 2002 attempt to remove President Hugo Chávez from office

signaled to the government that the police could not be trusted; according to most accounts, this is what motivated the government to turn to the *colectivos*.[42] Though the government replaced the Metropolitan Police with the PNB, a police force that did not exist before the Chávez government, officers believed that ideological affinities had permanently demoted the police.

For example, during my interview with Nico, a young PNB officer who worked in the Community Police service, we were discussing the difficulties of policing a city as dense as Caracas. Nico began by explaining that the dense population made it virtually impossible to secure the barrios. However, after mentioning this, he continued:

> I mean, since 2002, when the coup d'état occurred, the government armed a lot of *colectivos*. Imagine, I'm telling you because around where I lived a lot of guys arrived, they were Lina Ron's bodyguards…a popular leader [of La Piedrita], a blond woman that wore a hat and they assigned her bodyguards, a pistol, and a moto (motorcycle). They even gave her a salary. They gave her men, malandros, guys with no kind of training…So, it's difficult, you see, because there are so many guns now. Remember, in 2002 the Metropolitan Police played a key role in the coup, they practically disarmed the Metropolitan Police and armed the *colectivos* instead, like the Tupac Amaru *colectivo*, La Piedrita, we are talking about all of 23 de Enero, all of an extensive parish…And now, I think, there are so many guns in the streets, if there was going to be a struggle over power, it

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[42] Interestingly, the "betrayal" of the Metropolitan Police suggests to PNB officers that relationships between all police forces and the government have been changed, even though the Metropolitan Police was one of 140+ police bodies that exist in the country.

would end up being a civil war because there are so many guns out there in the streets.

I had expected Nico to continue describing certain characteristics of the city that made his job difficult; instead he quickly moved to discussing how the soured relationship between the police and the government complicated policing. Nico identifies the breakdown between the Metropolitan Police and the government as the catalyst for the politicization of security; and he closely links Hugo Chávez and popular leaders of the *colectivos* like Lina Ron, who died in 2011. For some, these ties represent the government's recognition of poor sectors of the city, sectors that have fought for decades to have their voices heard by state leaders. They acknowledge the revolutionary and rebellious history of these sectors, to which Chávez and the Bolivarian Revolution owe their rise. But for Nico and other officers, these ties represent the fractured relationship between the police and the government. More concretely, they mean an increasing number of armed actors in the streets and, by default, an unregulated gun market.

The coup d'état and the Metropolitan Police's participation in it, however, also provided the impetus for the creation of the PNB. This "betrayal" by the Metropolitan Police resulted not only in support for non-state armed groups but support for the birth of a new state security force. The government's response to the 2002 coup indicates its contradictory response to violence and security in the country. The government quite literally contributed to the pluralization of violent actors here.

A water tower in Catia with Hugo Chávez's face on one side and the face of Lina Ron (founder of the Venezuelan Popular Union party and symbol of La Piedrita, another well known colectivo) on the other © Richard Snyder 2014

If officers are concerned about the arming of the *colectivos*, they also worry about the government extending a particular privilege to them that has historically been associated with police and military officers: impunity. The power of security forces has long depended on this impunity; paradoxically, operating "above the law" has been a defining marker of the police in Latin America. Accounts and stories of interactions, or the avoidance of interactions, with the *colectivos* communicate that they now enjoy this privilege *at the expense of the police*.

One of these accounts implicated Cilia Flores—previous head of the National Assembly[43] and the wife of the current president, Nicolás Maduro—and was widely circulated among officers. For example, one afternoon during a retraining class at the UNES for the National Police, officers took the opportunity to critique the new police model by referring to the government's protection of the *colectivos*. The professor and the officers eventually agreed that

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[43] The National Assembly is the legislative branch of the Venezuelan government.

the protection of favored groups by political actors had a long history in the country, but one officer in the back of the room refused to drop the issue. Launching into the story that I was already well familiar with, other officers around him made sounds of approval, shaking their heads in anticipation of the story that was about to be told. The officer told us about how Flores' nephew, who lived outside of Caracas, and his friends, all members of the Ho Yi Minh *colectivo*, had been blasting noise and bothering neighbors one evening. When officers went up to ask them to turn their music down, they became belligerent. Taking on the role of the nephew, he screamed that he was Cilia Flores' nephew and he could do whatever he wanted. He said that while Flores' nephew screamed at the officers to leave they noticed that the nephew had a gun on him and asked that he turn it over so they could check and see if it was registered. After the gun had been checked, the officers found that it was not registered and arrested Flores' nephew, taking him to the closest police station. Members of the *colectivo* followed the officers down to the station, destroyed police property, and shot off rounds as they demanded the nephew's release. The story ended with the then Chief-of-Police intervening in the matter, the nephew being released, and all of the officers involved suspended, put in jail, or placed under review by the police accountability office.[44]

I heard different variations on this story from over a dozen officers, but all end with Flores' nephew set free and the officers punished. The story is unremarkable in that it involves gun-wielding youths being released from police custody without punishment. Usually, officers would just chalk this up to common impunity or an overly lenient court system. The story becomes

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[44] That two of Cilia Flores' nephews were arrested for transporting cocaine in Haiti in 2015 and confessed to this crime certainly only bolstered officers' suspicions that the government supported "illicit actors" (AlJazeera, 2015; Mazzali 2016).

remarkable, however, by linking *colectivo* members to the highest rank of government authority. Because the term *colectivo* is invoked, the men's freedom suddenly becomes representative of a problem distinct from everyday impunity. Impunity here is not due to a weak criminal justice system, but the power exerted by politicians to protect particular people. This story becomes representative of the inversion of police and *colectivo* power that officers perceive to have taken place. The fact that the story ends with officers either sanctioned or in jail for having done their job communicates that the government has granted impunity to the *colectivos* while at the same time persecuting officers who do not respect that impunity.

Colectivo members become much more than "common criminals" within this conceptualization, capable of questioning, overriding, and destabilizing police authority. Similar to the "criminalization of politics" in India (Jauregui 2013), the politicization of security functions delegitimizes the PNB in Caracas. Even apocryphal stories such as the one above can still delegitimize police authority in the eyes of officers and citizens, because they corroborate that the government allows for the consistent flouting of law by certain groups.

NEW SOURCES OF ORDER

Edmond and I stood against a short wall, made of old planks of wood, as we watched Marcos, his uncle, pay for beers at the open window of an apartment that also operated as a bodega a few feet away. The wall protected a stretch of dirt in a small courtyard, the only open space left by houses that were stacked beside and on top of one another. Once Marcos had distributed the icy glass bottles, we turned to watch the game of bolas criollas (a game similar to bocce ball) being played on the sand. I tried to pay attention to the game and ignore Marcos' relentless stare. Since

we had arrived in Pinto Salinas to visit his family, Edmond's uncle had made numerous jokes

and inquiries as to how Edmond had attracted such a 'beautiful white princess.'

After Edmond and his uncle caught up, Edmond mentioned that I lived in Catia. After

asking why a pretty "catire" (light-skinned woman) would live in a barrio in Catia, Marcos told

me that he had been working at a pharmacy in Catia for years. He liked working there but said

that he worried about the *colectivos*, 'running around loose on their motorcycles.' He told me

that just the day before he had seen a group of them walking past some police officers with their

guns hanging out of their pants in plain sight. But, he asked, 'What could the police do?'

Edmond agreed emphatically and said, 'The police have absolutely no control over the

colectivos. In fact, I know officers that were jailed for trying to arrest their members.' He said a

few months back he and another officer had arrested a young kid (chamito) on a motorcycle for

having drugs on him and that he was screaming the entire time that he was "*colectivo*." 'They let

him go the next fucking day. Can you believe it?' he asked, laughing and shaking his head.[45]

With a "let me tell you what" tone in his voice Marcos said that his son had told him that the

other day he had seen a National Police officer handcuffed 'while in uniform!!!' being led out of

Los Magallanes (the sector in Catia where I lived) by a few *colectivo* members. Edmond

responded with an aggressive look on his face saying 'No fucking way…I would die first! No

way I would let them put me in my own handcuffs! I'd rather them kill me!' After a few minutes

of silence, Marcos said aloud what he seemed to have been musing over while drinking his beer,

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[45] There is nothing abnormal about this and people arrested by officers are often released the

same day they are taken in, whether or not they are members of a *colectivo*. However, from

Edmond's perspective, this release only further confirmed for him that officers can do nothing to

colectivo members since someone with political clout will always intercede.

'It's more dangerous to be a police officer than *colectivo* these days. Officers walking around, they hold them up and kill them, all so they can take their guns.' Edmond agreed, saying that an officer had been killed just the other day outside of a metro station because he had his gun on him. Edmond repeated that there were officers in jail because they arrested *colectivo* members, but not a single *colectivo* member had been punished for killing an officer. Marcos looked at me and shook his head in agreement, muttering 'Es así.'

The police are often conceptualized as reproducing and representing order (Chevigny 1995:6-8). However, in this conversation, it is exactly these functions, assumed to be so integral to the definition of the police and police power, which are carried out by *colectivo* members. The *colectivo* members represent order as they escort the officer out of their neighborhood. He is a trespasser, handcuffed and taken out of a neighborhood where he is out of place. The description of this scene is in stark contrast to those witnessed by Fassin (2013) as he followed the police in Paris. According to Fassin, interactions between the police and residents living in poor sectors of the city are "a recall to social order. They remind each individual of his place. They signify to the youngster from the projects that he is a subject of the state who can be checked at will by those who hold the monopoly of legitimate violence in its name" (220). In Marcos' story, however, it is the officer who is reminded of his "place." This interaction may also signify to the officer that he is a subject of the state, but not one that imposes order (if the state imposes order at all). Indeed, the *colectivos* are at once a symbol of community power and state power, an extension of state power and presence that does not require the incursion of state actors. In this way, the loss of control over violence does not disempower the state, but only certain state actors, those whose authority depends upon the understanding that they can deploy force and be backed by other state actors if this action were to be challenged after-the-fact.

In this interaction, Edmond and his uncle discuss power/violence as not only diffusing out of the state, but coalescing around a completely new center, one located outside of the state but still connected to it. This power is represented by the ability of the *colectivo* members to bind and coerce bodies, power previously monopolized by the police and military. Because the government-*colectivo* relations decouple police power and state power, officers' instruments of coercion are drained of meaning, even reappropriated – as the handcuffs were – to signify the power that non-state armed groups have assumed. When discussing the recent deaths of officers, which they suspected to have occurred at the hands of *colectivo* members, Edmond and Marcos do not only mention that these officers were killed, but again note that a tool utilized by the police to regulate violence has been appropriated by those who have taken their lives.

Though officers' stories of the *colectivos* are difficult to corroborate, I did witness interactions that suggest their concerns are not completely unfounded. One day, while chatting with Ramón outside of a police station in Catia, he received a call on his cell phone. The phone call lasted for less than a minute. After hanging up Ramón apologized and then quickly explained that he had to leave. All officers were being called to a police *modulo* (a miniature police station placed in some neighborhoods) in Blandín (a sector of Catia) because a *colectivo* had taken it over. Officers were being called to the *modulo* to "negotiate" with the *colectivo* and get the modulo back under PNB control.

It is not only encounters with *colectivos*, or stories about them, that delegitimize and disempower the police, however. In numerous community meetings I observed, PNB officers were reminded that they were only one of many security forces in the city; often, these interactions also suggested that they were the least powerful among them. Take an interaction I observed at a meeting between community police officers and community members of El Mar, a

sector in Catia. El Mar is a community built high up the hillside of the mountain range that separates Caracas from the Caribbean Sea; to reach the center hub of Catia and access the subway requires a bus ride down a steep mountainside. The meeting took place in the communal council space, a cool room with concrete floors and walls. The walls were painted with the colors of the Venezuelan flag. Posters of Hugo Chávez hung off of doors leading to back rooms. Papers and pamphlets on state-sponsored programs and legislation spilled out of old metal file cabinets and covered the desks that were set up inside.

After Carlos, the highest-ranking officer at the meeting, went over information on local crime statistics and community police projects – all of which were disputed and questioned by community residents – he opened the meeting up for Q&A. Gabriela, a woman in her late 40s, stood up with a pen and pencil in hand. She asked Carlos a few questions about their qualifications and education, cutting him off before he could answer each question. After a round of questions, Gabriela said in a grave voice, 'It is very worrying to me that so many officers have been taken out of the area. And why are the PNB not working with the National Guard? When the National Guard was patrolling the area, there were zero deaths (homicides).' She continued on to say that the community police were 'welcome' in the neighborhood and the community appreciated their service during their hours of operation. 'But this community is going to maintain our *colectivo*, it is necessary for our protection. What is going to happen during the hours that the police are not around?' She made a circle with her arm around the group and said that "we are a *colectivo*" and that they had to be able to protect themselves. She ended by assuring the officers that members only carried registered weapons. Carlos, nodding all the while she was spoke, looked at the officers standing behind him and motioned for them to start taking notes. But he said nothing in response to Gabriela's announcement. While walking back down to

the police station after the meeting, the officers even agreed with Gabriela, saying they knew that the security that the police could provide in the barrios was limited at best.

Carlos might have remained silent as Gabriela voiced support for the *colectivo* in order to gather the information and intel that the community police are meant to collect as they interact with community residents. However, that he did not argue with Gabriela, and once out of the meeting even agreed with her, also suggests that the *colectivos*, and the police disempowerment they represent, are an accepted aspect of officers' realities. In her speech to Carlos, Gabriela created an implicit hierarchy of security forces: The local *colectivo*, which she describes as necessary for protection; the National Guard—a branch of the military that is notorious for human rights abuses and lethal use of force—to whom she attributes a recent drop in homicides; and the PNB, appreciated for their service but otherwise unremarkable, perhaps even uneducated and untrained. While emasculating, this hierarchy is one which other PNB officers that I knew had themselves described.

Edmond's reaction to his uncle's story also suggests a certain acceptance of this reality. Indeed, Edmond could have countered his uncle's story with one of police power and dominance; given that impotence and weakness are not valued characteristics in machista culture, and are most likely not proudly displayed in front of 'pretty catires,' it is perhaps surprising that Edmond did not defend the strength and reputation of the PNB. That he not only listens to an embarrassing and emasculating story about the police force for which he works, but also agrees with it and encourages the narrative, suggests that police disempowerment has become in his eyes a "fact" of life.

In his book on politics and violence in Argentina, Javier Auyero (2007) argues that the dissolution between state actors, police forces, insurgents, and party members – what he calls the

gray zone of politics – can contribute to violence. If the dissolution of lines between state and

non-state actors, and state and non-state power, can contribute to violence, so too can the

redrawing of these lines. In the following section, I show how the delegitimization and

disempowerment of the police produced by obscure linkages between state actors and non-state

armed groups can incentivize and justify violence.

JUSTIFYING POLICE VIOLENCE

On October 7, 2014 the CICPC (Venezuela's investigative police) and the Shield of the

Revolution *colectivo* engaged in a shootout in the downtown neighborhood of Quinta Crespo.

The confrontation lasted from the early morning until noon, as the CICPC made their way into a

building that was known to be the *colectivo's* base. When the gunfight was over, five *colectivo*

members were dead. Over the course of the next few weeks, tensions were high as both the

police and *colectivos* waited to see how the government would respond. CICPC officials,

Renowned Chavistas, and journalists took turns declaring which side was a bigger threat to

democracy, socialism, and the state. In a statement after the shootout, Douglas Rico (Noticia al

Dia 2014), the head of the CICPC, told the press, "A real *colectivo* does not go around with guns

suppressing people, killing people, and even less so the authorities, a vehicle that represents the

authority of the state. The CICPC, through its officials, represents the authority of the State. So,

is it that they are more of an authority than the proper authority?" Jose Vincente Rangel, a former

vice president and well-known journalist, observed in an editorial that the way the CICPC

officials had "assassinated militant chavistas, members of a *colectivo*" was unacceptable in a

democracy (Dutka 2014). Javier Mayorca (2014), a leading crime journalist, reported that the

CICPC officers had attacked the *colectivo* because some of its members were suspected in the

killing of a PNB officer earlier that year. According to Mayorca, since the 2002 political crisis, "the *colectivos* have followed the principle expressed by Hugo Chávez himself, according to him the political process that he led was 'pacifist, but armed.' The reality showed that it was less and less pacific and becoming increasingly armed."

Two weeks after the shootings, groups of *colectivos* organized a march in downtown Caracas to demand justice. By the end of October, the government responded with a dramatic shakeup of Venezuela's police institutions. Six CICPC officers were arrested, the CICPC's administration was reorganized, and Miguel Rodríguez Torres, the Minister of Justice, was removed. President Maduro even called for a revolutionizing of every police force, which eventually led to the organization of a Presidential Commission to (re)reform the police and a "purification" of multiple police forces.

When I talked to Alexis a few days after the incident, I asked him what incited the shootout. He responded with no hesitation, explaining that the CICPC officers "saw the opportunity to take out a group of criminals who enjoy the protection of the government and took it." Alexis was not an officer resistant to the 2008 reform; in fact, he was deeply committed to it. He was part of the group selected from the former Metropolitan Police to transition into the PNB when the Metropolitan Police was dissolved. Alexis was not only a police officer, but was also a professor at the UNES, where he taught classes on community policing. He had decided that he wanted to be part of implementing the new police model after being disgusted by the corruption and violence he witnessed during his time in the Metropolitan Police. Before the massacre, Alexis had discussed with me the need to reform and "humanize" the CICPC on multiple occasions.

The logic espoused by Alexis after the shootout, however, is the exact logic that police reform and the new model sought to change. It is one that is common among police officers in Venezuela, as well as those in other Latin American countries: In order to deal with criminals the police must act extra-legally. Alexis frames extra-legal violence as part of "getting the job done," in much the same way that the "violence workers," Huggins et al. (2002) interviewed justified violence. Nevertheless, though Alexis defends the CICPC's actions by appealing to the "social function" of policing—taking down criminals—this function is no longer aligned with state interests, as indicated by Alexis' remark about the government protection extended to the "criminals" killed. In contrast to the USSR, where the police were integral to "defending the revolution" (Hagenloh 2009; Shearer 2009), in Caracas officers do not see themselves employing violence at the state's behest; rather officers feel they must act against the state and the security forces it relies upon in order to do their jobs. A core belief among police officers (inside and outside of Latin America) is that they are the line between chaos and order, a belief that provides a motivation to be aggressive and action centered (McConville and Shepard 1992). Though it is true that police officers feel that they hold the line between chaos and order, they do not see the state as on their side in this fight. Their battle to keep chaos at bay is, in their minds, a battle against the government rather than in league with it. Thus, this "vocabulary of motives" (Mills 1940) is distinct from the vocabulary that Huggins and others have found to be prevalent in authoritarian and post-authoritarian contexts.

The announcement of the CICPC reform could not have come at a worse time. Indeed, while extrajudicial killings are hardly uncommon, rarely do they generate such a dramatic response by the government. In the wake of the confrontation, the announcement only further cemented the divide between the police and the government in the minds of officers. The

government's actions seemed to demonstrate where its loyalties lie; Douglas Rico's declaration that that police "represents the authority of the State" rang hollow, as a desperate effort to back police actions with state authority that was lost long before. Indeed, if "spectacular performances of police power" in the favelas of Rio are an attempt to "shore up fissures in state control at the margins," (Larkins 2013:555) the bloody spectacle put on by the CICPC seemed more like an attempt to demonstrate control despite the fissures that the police have marginalized their role in the government.

If the CICPC were "vindicating" the death of an officer, as Mayorca believed, the move corroborated for police officers whose lives the government did and did not care to defend. If the CICPC were simply doing their jobs by "taking out criminals," as Alexis believed, the decision communicated that the police would be punished for using force to control a violent criminal world. Either interpretation could intensify officers' feelings of vulnerability and impotence, feeding into their justifications for extrajudicial violence.

Police officers felt that without the backing of the government, they have to act violently. As Matías, the young PNB highway patrolman, told me a few days after the massacre, 'Just a few weeks ago a PNB officer was shot wearing a bulletproof vest…The bullets went right through. But the government doesn't care that the *colectivos* have better weapons than the little pistols we have. They don't care. But I am just to stand by and watch when they shoot my partner right beside me? *No joda* (Don't fuck with me).'

Here Matías voices a need to respond with violence, given that, from his perspective, the police are facing other violent actors on equal footing. But the lack of government backing that Matías refers to in his comment also "works" in his justification of violence; these two "facts" feed into and compound one another, justifying violent responses. If officers believe that

responding with violence is deemed necessary, the ability to utilize proactive force is believed to be equally important. In the words of Stanley Kalvas (2006:27), violence can be "retrospective in its intention to punish an action that has already taken place and prospective in its goal to deter a similar future action by someone else." Where legitimacy and hegemony are lacking, and thus submission can no longer be guaranteed or taken for granted, both forms of violence operate as means through which to gain control over others. In lieu of legitimacy, officers rely on both small and ostentatious performances of violence and aggression, which can serve to produce fear, respect, and perhaps, in their minds, even obedience. This practice is also one that reproduces the idea that life on the streets is a battle between police and civilians, much like the attitude of police toward black and brown men in the U.S.

Instances like the Quinta Crespo massacre allow for ostentatious displays of violence. However, seemingly insignificant actions that signal one's propensity to use force, and thus wield authority, also take on significant weight. For example, debates in retraining classes not only touched on when an officer could fire their weapon, but whether or not they should be allowed to leave their gun holster unclipped. According to some officers, a clipped holster suggested that one was less likely to use force, whereas an unclipped holster signaled that the officer, like other armed actors, was willing to deploy force at any moment. Officers' conversations in classes demonstrated that these small signs performed a communicative function, and could even deter others' willingness to deploy violence. In attempting to control the resource that officers believe protects them from other violent actors, and might even deter violent encounters, the government's response to the Quinta Crespo massacre, as well as the 2008 police reform more generally, are seen as direct attacks on officers' lives.

Writing after the confrontation, Roland Denis, a renowned Marxist and leftist figure in the country, praised the government's response to the massacre, arguing that "the better armed the people are and the more disarmed the oppressive structures are, starting with the state, the closer we are to victory" (Dutka 2014). His account draws from Gramsci's vision of the withering away of the state. This is also what Lenin (1917/2009:301) had in mind, writing that the "special repressive force" (i.e. the police and the army) would become increasingly irrelevant, first "[devolving] upon the people." Rather than victory, however, the disarmament of the police, through police reform, and the arming of the people, through the *colectivos*, has seemed to catalyze more violence.

In fact, according to records collected by the Venezuelan NGO PROVEA, police killings that are designated as "resistance to authority" have increased since the reform was implemented.[46] The police, it appears, are fighting against what seems to them to be either their impending irrelevancy or in an effort to take care of their own in what they interpret as a battle for survival. I contend that state actors' support for non-state armed groups and the vulnerabilities this produces within the police force is an important factor in explaining this increase. (That the family of a National Police officer receives a one-time payment of 30,000Bs ($40 in 2016) from the state when they are killed contributes to feelings of disposability.)

Absent a consistent, fair and effective court system, officers will continue to use excessive force to both "combatir el hampa" (fight the criminal underworld) and "take care of

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[46] Not all deaths categorized as "resistance to authority" are unjustified killings by the police. I use this data as a proxy for unjustified killings, since this is the category in which these kinds of killings are classified. Though it would be difficult to claim that unjustified killings have gone up by a certain percent, the numbers are clear enough to indicate that police violence has gone up.

their own." Like many in the poor barrios they tend to come from, officers believe that

exercising violence communicates to others that they can protect themselves and their group. In

the next section, I look at how police vulnerability and insecurity can delegitimize the regulation

of police force for citizens as well. While previous work has attributed citizens' support for

violent police measures to "hysteria" or extravagant events of criminal violence, I argue that this

support is grounded in a commonsense worldview shared by many police officers and poor

people.

CITIZENS' PERSPECTIVES ON POLICE VIOLENCE

After a police oversight committee meeting in a city in the southwest region of Venezuela, I

spoke to two of the members, asking them if they felt the reports they had turned into the mayor

had resulted in any changes. Juan, a stocky man in his 40s wearing a windbreaker with the

Chavista party symbol, shrugged. His fellow member, Elias, also in his 40s and wearing a hat

with a Chavista slogan, concentrated on the floor as he considered the question. After a few

moments, Elias answered that the municipal police had 40 more guns the second year from the

first. Juan replied that this was great but said 'What the police really need and what the

committee should ask for is armas largas. These pistols they carry are pretty (bonitas), but they

are against other groups with large guns and better weapons, these guys are walking around with

uzis and the police cannot compete with the equipment they have.' Elias nodded his head in

agreement as Juan talked. In CCCP meetings in Caracas members also often commented on the

inability of officers to protect themselves, due to the better arms and looser restriction *colectivos*

and "thugs" enjoyed. The committees were created by the same police reform that limited the

police to carrying only 9mms; however, one of the principle suggestions made by the committees I observed was to put military-grade weapons back in the hands of the police.

Police reform, then, has not remained fragile because citizens overwhelmingly approved of the reform and officers did not. Rather, one of the fundamental reasons why police reform has been so contested and has remained so fragile is because regulating force does not make sense within the worldview that many officers and citizens share. In a national survey conducted in July 2013, 42% of respondents were in favor of deregulating officers' use of force (compared to 35% who were not), believing that the restrictions on their use of force hamstrung their ability to fight crime (Hanson and Smilde 2015). Venezuelans have supported unregulated killing and use of force by police officers in the past (Gabaldón & Bettiol 1988). However, the violently plural context in which they operate, created in part by relationships between state and non-state actors, has generated a new and powerful justification for this.

Discussions in CCCP and community meetings correctly portray concerns over insecurity and violence, concerns that are prevalent among both citizens and officers. In the minds of those I worked with, police are "marked" as targets in a way that citizens are not. Combined with poor pay and few benefits, officers feel – and in many ways are – economically and physically vulnerable, much like other men in the marginalized sectors of the city where most of them grow up.

In the case of Guatemala, Snodgrass Godoy (2006:11) has argued that economic inequality and neoliberalization have made law a "central staging ground for struggles to define citizenship, justice, and order." In this context, bottom-up violence can represent "agentive moments" of popular injustice wherein marginalized and abandoned communities can "reassert their local autonomy and agency" (102). Speaking about poor barrio residents, Goldstein (2012:122) writes

that when faced with an array of "phantasmal characters" that deploy violence—the *delincuente*,
the *loteador*, the *pandillero*, and the *policia*—"it is only through their own direct interventions
that people feel they can defend themselves against these threats." That the police have come to
be seen as a marginalized group by many may also justify moments of extra-legal injustice.
People's belief in the need for popular police injustice is one of the reasons why the regulation of
police force does not make sense to many, since that force is thought to be what allows them to
assert their claim to order. Though the Venezuelan government has successfully moved away
from neoliberalism in a number of ways, security itself continues to look very neoliberal: it
continues to be outsourced, even "devolving upon civil institutions, local communities, and
individuals" (Goldstein 2012:13); a well-functioning black market for guns supplies individuals
and groups with the tools they need to take up this responsibility; and the erratic imposition of
laws, regulations, and punishment feeds into constant suspicion, fear, and threat. The
"devolving" of security onto non-state actors in Venezuela has not only been a byproduct of
neoliberalism but is also the result of revolutionary ideology and clashes between Chavismo and
the political opposition.

In this context, officers' deployment of prospective and retrospective violence can seem
justifiable to both officers and citizens. Like the overall homicide rate, the number of police
murders has been on the rise in the past 15 years. 338 police officers were killed in 2014, a 15%
increase from the year before.[47] And both national and international news sources report on the
dangers of being a police officer in the country, using headlines like "To Be a Police Officer in

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[47] Though most police officers that are murdered are killed while off the job, many still suspect
that they are killed for their weapons even when out of uniform.

Venezuela is to Be Sentenced to Death,"[48] "In Violent Venezuela, Police Killings Surge to Almost One a Day,"[49] and "Together *Colectivos* and the Underworld Win the Battle Against the Police in Venezuela."[50]

It is not always clashes between the police and civil society that destabilize security reforms. In some cases, it is the agreement between officers and citizens that keep reforms from taking root. This agreement can only be understood by taking into account the pluralization of violence as well as the withdrawal of government support for the police, both of which are embodied in by the *colectivos*.

CONCLUSION

While conducting an interview with Ileana Ruiz, a chief member of the General Police Council, the institution created to oversee the implementation of the 2008 police reform, I asked how police officers who come from marginalized and poor barrios come to repress those like them – poor young marginalized men. She told me: "They fall into a relationship with power, but this power that they supposedly have, because they have a uniform, because they have a gun…it goes to their heads…they kind of dissociate themselves from what is the reality of the barrio and they become indifferent towards abuse…[for example] it is a permanent protest with police officers of "We need to have a privileged sector to live, only us," all of the time, "like the military." Here, Ileana explains police violence as the result of the power that officers feel they have, a power akin to the military, which psychologically dissociates them from the barrio. The request to live

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[48]http://www.elcolombiano.com/historico/ser_policia_en_venezuela_es_estar_sentenciado_a_muerte-EYEC_263632
[49] http://www.reuters.com/article/us-venezuela-violence-idUSKBN0L21DH20150129
[50] http://www.lapatilla.com/site/2015/06/08/colectivos-y-hampa-comun-le-ganan-la-batalla-a-la-policia-en-venezuela/.

separated from society is a request to make their material world commiserate with their ideological one, with a worldview in which they are already set apart from barrio residents.

The same issue came up one day when I was running an errand with Ramón, whose wife was also a municipal police officer. Riding back to the barrio where he grew up Ramón told me that he had decided to join the PNB because he had heard that they were going to 'take officers out of the barrios; and put them in separate sectors, in an area where only police lived, so that they could live in peace. He told me that he had recently moved his family to a different barrio because a couple, who were both police officers, had been killed on the street where they had been living previously. He said he was already thinking of moving again, however, since he had heard that some guys had recently come around where he lived asking about him.

Police officers in Caracas have most likely felt insecure and vulnerable living in the barrios for decades. Indeed, it makes sense that one who represents state violence might feel insecure living around those toward whom that violence is directed. However, in our conversation, Ramón's desire for the police to be taken out of the barrios does not speak of power, but powerlessness. The officers' concerns that I have analyzed in this chapter are distinct from the ones Ileana describes; they do not arise from officers' relationship to the state, but their marginalization within it – a marginalization that is produced by other economic and structural factors I explore in other chapters. These concerns do not separate the police from poor barrio residents, but instead make them look very much like them.

Police power, legitimacy, and domination cannot be taken as a given within these contexts; nor can officers' mental cartography of the state and their position in it. None of these can be accepted a priori, but are crafted through everyday interactions with others, which validate understandings of them. Police legitimacy (or the lack of it) can only be understood "in

light of the institution's broader symbolic meanings in relation to social order " (Jauregui 2013: 648; see also Reiner 2010). As Jauregui has argued, police legitimacy is an ongoing social process, and in the case of some cities this social process delegitimizes police authority (2013: 647).

In places where the social order is constituted by a variety of armed actors and a fracturing of police-state relations, police violence cannot be understood as synonymous with state violence at all times. It is no longer adequate to explain police violence by looking only at how the police's relationship to the state empowers them; we must also look at how these relationships have been ruptured by new, more lateral, forms of violence deployed by various state and non-state actors. Where state actors participate in the pluralization of violence, they may also participate in the delegitimization and disempowerment of the police, signaling to officers that their security and impunity is no longer guaranteed. Within this context, certain acts of police violence should not be seen as performances of power; sometimes, these are motivated by the lack of it.

Officers' stories about the *colectivos* and the way they think about the relationships between these groups and state actors do not recognize the conflictive and inconsistent nature of these relationships. They portray connections between state actors and non-state armed groups as strong ties, missing how the government's simultaneous support for police violence and *colectivo* violence contributed to a dismantling of social order and a net increase in violence overall. This cacophony of violent actors has undoubtedly contributed to the increase in violence that we have witnessed in Venezuela since the early 2000s, but not in the way that officers' explain it. It is not strong ties or well-coordinated relationships between state actors and non-state armed groups that is driving this violence. Indeed, though the media and reports by Human

Rights Watch tended to portray the relationship between the government, the police, and the colectivos as well-coordinated, as groups all working together, these are better portrayed as fractured and poorly organized. And the presence of various security groups operating at in similar spaces – whether those be neighborhoods or protests and demonstrations – who are not communicating with one another or working together has great potential to increase violence. But this problem of violence is quite different from a coordinated one.

Although the *colectivos* are unique to Venezuela, the delegitimization of the police that has been produced by linkages between state actors and non-state armed groups is not. In the case of Brazil, Arias (2006:8) has shown, the state is made up of flexible networks that connect drug traffickers to state actors: "State power and social forces actually help build, maintain, and extend trafficker power." Connections between police officers and drug traffickers are also part of these networks, the shifting networks that make up the state undoubtedly put all state actors in precarious and vulnerable positions. In order to accurately understand why, when, and to what end state security actors employ violence we must take into account the challenges and vulnerabilities that arise from these networks.

Chapter 5:

Policing and 21st Century Socialism

After over three hours of waiting for the state governor to arrive,[51] one of his assistants finally

showed up at the CORPOELEC building, a power company owned by the national government,

to announce that the governor would be unable to make it to the accountability meeting. The

2009 police law requires that all police forces hold regular accountability meetings with their

affiliated CCCP, which were normally small and poorly attended affairs held in communal

council buildings or police departments. At this meeting, the state police had taken the

opportunity to honor police officers for different achievements and deliver a bound version of the

yearly accountability report to CCCP members on red velvet pillows. Despite the hours-long

delay, the large room at the CORPOELEC building was filled, mostly with police officers and

their family members.

Once the event began the CCCP and their promoter, with me in tow, were led to a table at

the front of the room, covered by a white linen tablecloth. The chairs had velvet bows tied

around the back, giving the table an air of formality. After an hour of presentations by the police

and a few acts to pay respect to the CCCP – which included delivering the police's

accountability report to CCCP members on a maroon velvet pillow – the governor's assistant got

up to speak. He was a man with a small frame who looked to be in his forties, with thin greying

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[51] I have intentionally left out the name of the state in which the meeting was held for anonymity

purposes.

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hair but a thick mustache. As he began to speak, the depth and resonance of his voice filled the room. He apologized for being late and declared the practice of the accountability meetings as a 'socialist activity.' 'This,' he said 'is the legacy of Hugo Chávez Frías, a revolutionary act that had never occurred under the fourth republic. This is part of Chávez's socialist plan to battle insecurity and the interference of capitalism and imperialism, when security was just about *operativos*…now security is about education, sports, and culture!' In response one of the women from the governor's office, easily identified by the red polo shirt she was wearing, which matched other state employees' clothing, shouted: 'And VALUES!' The assistant shook his head enthusiastically and asked 'How many universities has the revolution created? How many social programs? Insecurity comes from a lack of education…the revolution has given us sports, sport fields in the barrios, stadiums, the Vinotinto!'(Venezuela's soccer team)

He gave thanks to the governor for the fact that there were 11 symphony orchestras in the state made up of 'children from the barrio.' He asked 'Before in the fourth republic who played violin? The children of the rich and the capitalists…not now…now children from the barrios are learning how to play the violin!...Our state has gone from the 4th most dangerous state to the 4th safest thanks to our socialist governor!' He then asked for us to clap for the police and the role they had played, saying, 'This police, this is a revolutionary police, a Chavista police. Thanks to socialism the police are working tirelessly, they are no longer motivated by selfish reasons like they are in capitalism.' He then congratulated the police director for not allowing a capitalist mentality to continue in the police, for 'not allowing officers to work that had a mentality and the heart of a capitalist.' Raising his voice and with a reddening face the man said that socialism was about love, about going out into the streets, about police chiefs who told there officers over Easter weekend, 'I will go, I will be working, I will be out in the streets.' He said that capitalist

officers faked a need to take time off [reposos chimbos] because they thought of themselves first because of their capitalist mentality, that this was natural-born capitalism and that they had to change this mentality from top to bottom [*de arriba a abajo*].

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In the secretary's fiery speech about socialism, security, and policing there are few "catch phrases" traditionally associated with the Marxist lineage of socialism. Nowhere in his speech does he mention labor, jobs or the takeover of industry; indeed, none of the accomplishments of socialism that he discusses are related to the economy. He doesn't even attribute improved policing to the material advances made by the reform, such as an increase in salaries; rather than pointing to material conditions, he attributes better policing to a change in officers' mentality and values. Throughout his long speech, the secretary focuses on the cultural and ethical accomplishments that had been achieved under socialism, which he repeated over and over again had reduced both crime and police corruption. This focus on culture and values is reminiscent of conservative discourse on the culture of poverty, not scholarship by Left wing and Neo-Marxist criminologists, who have proposed material and socioeconomic changes like "good jobs with a discernable future, housing estates that tenants can be proud of, community facilities which enhance a sense of cohesion and belonging, [and] a reduction in unfair income inequalities" to reduce crime and violence (Lea and Young 1984). According to Lea and Young (1984), the left, in its attempts to resist reifying class and race-based prejudices associated with criminology has instead focused on "the 'real' problems of the population, like unemployment, exploitation, and poverty."

In its first eight years, the Chávez government adhered to what might be considered traditional Left wing strategies to deal with crime and violence. The government largely ignored

issues of "law and order" and focused on social and economic policies to reduce poverty and inequality, relying on an interpretation of Marxism that Andrés Antillano has referred to as a "functionalism of the left" (Bujanda 2015). In this view the roots of crime are poverty, inequality, and limited life opportunities. Though the government successfully reduced poverty and inequality from the early 2000s up until about 2012 (Weisbrot 2006, 2016; but see González 2015) violent crime continued to soar throughout these years and blatant police corruption gained sufficient media attention to push the government to act.

In this chapter, I argue that when the government turned its attention to "law and order," creating new institutions and programs to deal with crime and police corruption head on, these institutions and programs ended up targeting transformation at the ideological level. Structural changes, such as reductions in poverty and inequality, did not produce the intended results, i.e. a reduction in violence. The government continued to fund the same social initiatives and welfare programs, but began to take a more direct approach to insecurity. These approaches, I argue, prioritized that which Marx referred to as epiphenomenal: ideology, consciousness, and culture. The focus on ideology, culture, and education might seem antithetical to the socialism, but it is precisely what previous studies of "actually existing socialism" would predict.

I argue that socialist discourse was important because it set the rules by which things (solutions to crime and violence, identifying their causes) were understood as true or false, prioritizing or "attaching power" to "the true" (Foucault 1972:131-2.). However, while I agree with Foucault on how discourse operates, I do not argue that discourse had the outcomes that Foucault (1972, 1977/1995) envisioned: successfully producing (subjugated) citizen-subjects through processes of intimate individualization and objectification. Instead, socialist discourse operated as a terministic screen, selecting out and directing attention to some channels while

letting others fade into the background (Burke 1966). Socialist discourse selected out and

directed attention to culture, values, and morals as both the cause of and solution to crime,

violence, and police corruption, deflecting attention away from material and institutional issues.

This selection reproduced an individualized understanding of insecurity. Though highly critical

of neoliberalism, the government's socialist project did not end the individualization or

privatization of security, but promoted these processes in ways distinct from neoliberal

governments.

It is important to keep in mind that neither the state nor discourse determines reality, even

though ideological projects of socialist governments have often been portrayed this way (see

Burawoy and Lukács 1992:29-31). I argue that the ideological turn that security took was not

imposed from the top down, but was the product of local understandings linking up with socialist

discourse. In other words, socialist discourse on crime made sense because it was "verified"

when held up against previous understandings (Glaeser 2011). Ideology was not imposed but

worked in tandem with commonsense understandings to select which explanations and solutions

made the most sense. The government's socialist ideology was not powerful because it

suppressed on the ground understandings (c.f. Froese 2008) but because it fit into them so easily,

successfully keeping particular grievance and solutions out of "sensical" conversation and

debate.

In the following sections, I use data from police training classes, community policing

activities, and community outreach programs organized by the UNES to analyze the

implementation of socialist security reform and why a transformation of the "epiphenomenal"

became the target of security initiatives, making the conscience and the self the main terrain of

warfare in the fight for social progress. In classes and in public discourse, police corruption

ended up being constructing as a problem of values and moral integrity rather than salaries or accountability mechanisms. The service of community policing came to focus on improving values in poor communities and "saving" children before they were "contaminated," while community workshops asked women to "work on themselves" in order to change their communities and champion peace in their neighborhoods.

FITTING POLICING INTO THE SOCIALIST AGENDA

The CONAREPOL report that provided the foundation for police reform is, in comparison to later documents, strikingly apolitical. As noted in the Introduction, the commission's report and recommendations were characteristic of other democratic reforms: increase accountability; improve training, professionalization, and pay of police; and depoliticize the police. The words socialism, revolution, and even inequality are absent in the report, which consists of recommendations regarding hierarchy, training, promotions, uniforms, and human rights. Like the CONAREPOL report, the law that created the PNB does not contain the word socialism even once.

Policing does not fit easily with Leftist projects, especially radically Left ones. Chavista politicians and figures critiqued police reformers for pushing a Right wing agenda from the beginning. In 2007 the CONAREPOL commission was halted by then Minister of Justice Pedro Carreño, who referred to the reform as Right wing and bourgeois; reform was put on hold until Ramón Rodríguez Chacín replaced Carreño in 2008. Even years later, after reformers had adopted Chavismo and socialism, Chavista leaders had their doubts. In 2013 a leaked phone call conversation between Mario Silva – a popular Chavista figure and host of La Hojilla, a political news show on the state-run channel VTV – and Aramis Palacios – a Cuban intelligence agent –

Silva told Palacios, "I am telling you, the National Police is connected, I mean, those running the National Police university are tied to NGOs, protectors of human rights that are Right wing…Achkar, the one that has the Arabic name…she is deeply tied to the Right" (EL PAIS 2013). He went on to describe a public fight that he said occurred between El Achkar and Chávez at the inauguration of the UNES. In his version the story, El Achkar is giving a speech about the institutionalization of the National Police and Chávez "takes her down a few notches," telling her "No, that is not the way it is, the National Bolivarian Police have to base themselves in revolutionary principles" (El PAIS 2013). In contrast to Luis Izquiel's perception that the PNB were plagued with politicization (Chapter 4), from Silva's point of view, the PNB were never the revolutionary body that Chávez intended them to be.

Police reformers like Soraya El Achkar and Pablo Fernández originally framed reform as an issue of professionalization and education, but by the time the first UNES buildings had been erected and the official publications of the CGP had been published, there had been a clear re-branding of police reform. Documents, manuals, and reformers' rhetoric were all shaped by revolutionary ideology. Rooms in the UNES in Catia and San Agustín were named after famous revolutionaries like Alí Primera and Che Guevara. After its repackaging reform was no longer only about human rights training, teaching officers the UPDFP, and accountability mechanisms, but was also a "socialist-humanist" project that was intended to give "power to the people." And, by the time she became the director of both the UNES and the CGP, El Achkar had been converted to the socialist project (or at least convincingly towed the line in public). In her introduction to various training manuals she wrote:

> Those who think that socialism is only a mode of production are wrong. Socialism, at least this one that we are constructing for the 21st century is, above

and beyond all else, a just, solidary and equal mode of relations between people

and los pueblos, in all areas of life. And this includes security.

By melding their human rights approach with socialist critique reformers developed a discourse

of "integral" citizen security, referring to the new model as a "socialist-humanist" model of

policing. Traditional aspects of democratic policing, like the progressive use of force and

community policing, were counterpoised to what reformers identified as capitalist forms of

social control, such as reactive and repressive policing, aimed at controlling and appropriating

the "potencia" (power) of the lower class. (In the following chapter, I will argue that this

"humanist" approach actually complemented and bolstered the repressive model of policing that

reformers and some state actors attributed to capitalism). The director of a state police force in a

Western state in Venezuela explained the new model to me this way:

> We have lived two phases of Venezuelan politics, we had a neoliberal
> phase…where our model was a copy of the North American model, afterwards we
> had a social and political change, with a socialist model different from any other
> model of socialism in the world….that focuses in the people who are least
> protected….A president works for the people who are in the most need. Now, I
> do not tell my police to vote for Chávez, but they have to understand what is
> happening and what existed before: now there is a socialist police. First, this has
> to be understood in the social situation in Venezuela….second we have to
> understand that a [socialist] man [is a man] respectful of human rights, like the
> word Socialist, a man integrally prepared…a protector of sovereignty….a
> protector of the people. That is a socialist police.

However, police reformers and Chavista politicians had little to go on in thinking about Left security and 21st century socialist policing. The Left has historically had an uneasy relationship with the institutions of "law and order," often intentionally marginalizing the police in its discussions of crime and insecurity (Young 1986). Classic Marxist texts provide little in the way of understanding the police's role in either a socialist society or the capitalist context. With what work they did produce, Marx, Engels, and Lenin all conceptualized the police as the state institution from which human beings were most alienated. The main purpose of state security forces for traditional Marxists is to maintain class divisions. Given that these theorists viewed the police as an irrevocably repressive institution, in a post-revolution society they anticipated its relegation, alongside the state, to the "museum of antiquities" (Engels 1884). According to Engels (1877), in a post-revolution society nothing more would be left "to be repressed, which would make a special repressive force, the state, unnecessary." Lenin (1917/2009) described both the police and the military as the "chief instruments of state power" that allow the state to mediate inevitable class antagonisms and keep armed struggle between the classes at bay (275). For Lenin, once a socialist economy had been organized under the dictatorship of the proletariat, the state and its "special repressive force" (i.e. the police and the army) would become increasingly irrelevant, first "[devolving] upon the people," and then eventually withering away (301). Gramsci (1935/1971) did allow the law some productive functions, in that its normative sanctioning created a more educated and civilized population (246), but he also anticipated an eventual disappearance of the state and the police (263). Thus, police reformers had the task of fitting an institution that was heavily associated with capitalism within socialist discourse and practice. In doing so, they configured the police and security institutions as part of social transformation, rather than making socialist transformation dependent on their disappearance.

Reformers also had to face the history of socialist policing in the 20th century, and they were deeply concerned about repeating the errors of previous socialist police forces. They organized conferences at the UNES to debate what a "Leftist politics of security" would look like, where they openly discussed the violent and repressive policing that took place under previous socialist governments. According to Malaguti Batista (2012) relationships between officers and citizens were offered as a potential catalyst for institutional change, with the suffering the police experience in their work and the suffering of the people due to quotidian violence thought to be potential points of articulation between the two groups.

The UNES was an active site of discussion and investigation on alternative policing and structural causes of crime. The university even published research and findings in magazines and online, which were made available to the public. In keeping with Chavismo's participatory democratic vision (Hetland 2014; López Maya 2008) the UNES was envisioned not only as a police university, but a space where community members could attend workshops and become involved in shaping the new police. El Achkar attempted to make the space one that was open to community members (though ID checks and reasons for entering the university became more rigid throughout my fieldwork) and incorporated young activists from Tiuna El Fuerte, a "political, cultural, and revolutionary collective of young public art activists," into events and training.[52]

Classes at the UNES attempted to decriminalize poverty and instill solidarity between the police and officers-in-training and the poor; in other words, professors attempted to transform social relations through pedagogy. For example, one entire class session in the Democracy and Socialism course I was observing was taken up with Rafael debating with his students about

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[52] Tiuna El Fuerte. "Somos." Retrieved February 2, 2017. http://tiunaelfuerte.com.ve/somos

where criminal actors lived: in the poor barrios or on the rich eastern side of town. Rafael started by asking the class if there was more delinquency in popular sectors of the city. There were some murmurs of yes and no, with one student in the back casually leaning back in his chair and answering with a firm yes. Rafael walked over to his desk quickly and said 'Really? Really?! Where do you live?' The student answered 'Propatria' (a lower-class sector at the end of the metro line in Catia) and Rafael asked him 'So are you a delinquent??' The entire class laughed as the boy exclaimed 'No!!' Rafael laughed and say 'Ooookkkk!!' He said that the Right believed that everyone in the barrios, in Propatria, in Casalta, were delinquents, but the real delinquents were those with money. Rafael ended the class by asking 'What, so there aren't any criminals in the East? Who is running narcotrafficking in the country? People who live in places like El Cafetal, in the East!!!'

The UNES also created an office of "social outreach" that funded workshops in the barrios on conflict resolution, domestic violence, and self-esteem. They worked with local communal councils to organize health events, ranging from immunization days to exercise classes and ideological cookouts or *sancochos ideologicos*.[53] All of the UNES *enlaces* (literally a "link" but in this case refers to outreach coordinators) that I knew and spent time with were passionate about the social work they were doing, and connected this passion to their own personal journeys to Chavismo. For example, the first time I met Carmen, an energetic woman in her 40s who worked as an *enlace* between the UNES and poor communities, she explained to me that she was "Chavista Chavista." She said that her outreach group had been working with these

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[53] *Sancochos* refer to days when people from a neighborhood contribute ingredients to cook a large pot of soup over the course of a number of hours. As the soup cooks, people drink and socialize and eat in the late afternoon.

women for two years, marveling at the way they that they had worked and studied, "forming themselves." She said what drove her to become educated (through government programs) and begin community work was her fervent belief that 'this is what the revolution has allowed, for women to involve themselves and form themselves.'

The consciousness-raising that Carmen and others at the UNES advocated for is precisely the kind of change some Neo-Marxists have advocated to advance revolution. For example, Densmore (2007) has written that revolutionary consciousness can, and in some cases must, precede economic transformation. Drawing on Lenin, she argues:

> A transition from capitalism to socialism occurs intentionally, that is, by people who understand what they are creating and why. People with particular perspectives, habits, customs, beliefs, criteria, attitudes, relationships with others—in addition to specific abilities and knowledge—are critical in order for socialism to advance…Clearly, a purposeful, systematic, and ongoing process of education, broadly defined, is necessary in order to achieve advanced ideological development. Thus the role of the subjective, of consciousness, of motivations, of initiative, of ideology, of explicitly communist education, is of prime importance in the class struggle and in progressing towards socialism. (376, 378)

From this viewpoint, if consciousness is not "the sole 'independent variable' to trigger socialist transformation" then it is "the key 'intervening variable'…of successful socialist transformation" (Glaeser 2011:92). Despite Marx's focus on the material world, even his writings in Das Kapital and the Grundrisse leave room for consciousness and ideology to play a role in the transition from capitalism to socialism. In the case of socialist thought in Latin

America, Che Guevara (1965) wrote that developing the new socialist man would begin with a change in conscience. Recognizing that socialism was being implemented in context not foreseen by Marx, where economic transformation did not immediately follow or induce revolution, Guevara wrote:

> I think the place to start is to recognize the individual's quality of incompleteness, of being an unfinished product. The vestiges of the past are brought into the present in one's consciousness, and a continual labor is necessary to eradicate them…There remains a long way to go in constructing the economic base…Meanwhile, the economic foundation that has been laid has done its work of undermining the development of consciousness. To build communism it is necessary, simultaneous with the new material foundations, to build the new man and woman.

Guevara writes that the economic base of capitalist society has created a "past" consciousness that must be eradicated, thus a change of consciousness must take place as the country waits for the necessary economic changes to take place. From this perspective, the temptation to return to the old economic system must be resisted, and education and changing consciousness are required if men and women are to make the sacrifices needed to wait out the transition. Studies of actually existing socialism have found that ideology and consciousness-raising become the focus of socialist governments and institutions in the 20th century. In the case of the GDR Glaeser (2011) writes that revolutionary ideology became increasingly important once it became clear that the socialist economy could not compete with capitalist production. The role attributed to consciousness as instrumental in socialist politics increased and politics of

education moved to the foreground when the arrangement of ownership and change in workflow did not lead to a more robust economy. This "selection" of formation and consciousness-raising, I argue, became the main goal of different groups created by the reform, not despite socialist discourse but because of how this discourse framed crime and violence. The initiatives supported by the reform and the reform's institutions were ambitious and laudable, but were not complemented by "material" changes that were needed for these initiatives to succeed.

POLICE CORRUPTION

In the CONAREPOL report, researchers noted that pay, benefits, and retirement pensions were all insufficient to allow officers to have a decent quality of life and, thus, to deter corruption (see Vol. 1). As discussed in Chapter 3, Hugo Chávez himself talked about the need to improve officers' pay and general economic security. Presenters at UNES conferences talked about officers as exploited laborers and emphasized the need to alter their economic situation in order to transform the police. However, in the classroom a much heavier emphasis was placed on officers' hearts, conscience, and their moral integrity.

Classes were intended to be dialogic spaces through which officers would develop new political subjectivities. According to UNES training manuals and educational curriculum:

> [The university] seeks to constitute political subjects in learning environments through ethical values, political and ideological postulates of socialism of inclusion [socializing them within] the profound democracy that ought to currently characterize police officers in Venezuela in the 21st century. These postulates are based in the fight for liberty, social justice, and dissidence against any attempt of subjugation to precepts of neoliberal domination.

In another section of this manual the UNES is described as

> [A]n institution committed to profound transformations that are occurring in the country, breaks with traditional paradigms of education…and adopts a Critical Theory focus, understood as the possibility of approaching formation from a perspective of emancipation, whose ultimate end is the apprehension of reality to transform it, not by simply modifying the state of things, but through profound change from reflexive comprehension, by the individual as well as the collective, oriented towards the construction of quotidian history by the part of historical subjects through the means of a critical conscience.

In the course on "The History of Security," which students took during their first semester, the required text provided an overview of the repressive history of the police in Venezuela. For many UNES faculty, the constitution of new political subjects was considered necessary if any real changes in policing were gong to occur. Or, as the governor's assistant said, successful change in the police means changing officers' capitalist mentalities *de arriba a abajo*.

Students challenged this focus on values and changes in conscience, however, and were far from compliant subjects. During one community policing class, after a lengthy discussion of different instances of recent corruption within various security forces and why they had occurred, a slender young woman slumped back in her chair and asked Alexis why PNB officers were paid so poorly.

'Values and ethics are pretty and all,' said the young woman, 'but why not increase officers' pay as well?' In a sympathetic voice Alexis agreed but answered, 'These are matters of the state, they aren't decisions I can answer for. But think about this: Teachers do not make a good salary either but that they do their work because they care about it and are committed to doing a good job.' The young woman responded without missing a beat: 'Well, if the PNB is the new model and represents the new police why do they make less than all of the other cops in the country?'[54]

Professor Cuenca, a short and portly man who had been a municipal police officer in a former life, jumped into the conversation and agreed with the woman that officers' pay had been great a few years ago, especially in comparison to minimum wage; but, he acknowledged, salaries now did not cover what they used to. 'Regardless,' he said, 'a police officer can earn a horrible salary, not even enough to live off of, but it wouldn't matter. This is about the ethics of the police officer. He can decide to *matraquear* [shake people down] or not, but this is about his own personal ethics…'"Do not *matraquear*," that was my own personal ethic as an officer for 30 years,' he said. This statement set off a back and forth question and answer about how much

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[54] When the CONAREPOL was conducted, the minimum wage was 512,325 bolivares (at that time $239 US dollars). On average, the police earned more than minimum wage. However, when looking at the salary of the lowest ranks, officers made the minimum wage or less. Salaries for all police officers were doubled after the reform with base pay moving from around 1,500-1,800 bolivares a month to around 3,200. After the rifrst few years of reform this would have been around $750. However, in 2012 a rank and file police officer made around 6,000 bolivares a month, which would have been around $300 according to the black market exchange rate at that time.

professors at the university made and what benefits they had, chatter that Alexis had to stop with a firm voice.

'No one in this room has been tricked,' he said, 'you all knew what the salary was when you signed up…no one has been tricked into thinking that things would be different…the salary I had as a Metropolitan Police officer was much worse than the salary of a PNB officer but I **NEVER** robbed anyone.' Cuenca shook his head in agreement, saying: '*Ustedes se han montado en este autobus.*'[55]

During this discussion, both Alexis and Cuenca sympathized with students regarding the low pay they would receive once they became officers. While agreeing that it was an unfortunate reality they disagreed with the linkage between pay and corruption, turning instead to the issue of personal ethics and morals. Similar to the assistant's speech, Alexis and Carlos chalked corruption up to a matter of the self, even if they did not directly connect this to capitalism. According to Alexis, he was paid much worse while working as a Metropolitan police officer, but he never used his position for economic gain (or at least he claimed). Like police scholarship (see Chapter 3), this perspective turns the problem into one of individual morals and choices rather than analyzed the structural and social locations that constrain the choices people have available to them make ends meet. The argument that low pay did not excuse corruption fit well with what professors attempted to convince students of in other classes: poverty does not lead to illegal or criminal behavior. Just like professors tried to present an "honorable" portrait of the

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[55] This was a slogan from Maduro's 2013 presidential campaign, which literally means: "You have gotten on the bus." Maduro had been a bus driver before becoming a politician in with the Chávez government and this occupation became a part of his campaign image, aligning him with working people.

poor, surviving economic hardship without falling to the temptation of illegal activities, they attempted to convince students that honorable police officers did not fall to the temptation of corruption, regardless of their economic precarity. Ironically, this position is counter to the one that Chávez often took when discussing poverty and crime during his show – *Aló Presidente* – and public events.[56]

The notion that changing ethics and values was the key to ending police corruption fit easily into commonsense understandings of Venezuelan culture. One did not have to be Chavista or socialist to buy into this framing. For example, in a news article detailing the firing of 101 police officers in Caracas for various "irregularities," one of the police directors interviewed about the firings never mentioned capitalism or socialism, but still attributed officers' behavior to a lack of values. According to the director, these officers "come from disintegrated homes…they grow up without a paternal figure and, because of this, parents do not cultivate values in them" (Matamoros 2014). The congruency between official socialist discourse and commonsense understandings made this explanation of police corruption even more powerful.

Ramón, who identified as a Nini, espoused this same exact view without invoking socialist ideology. While hanging out one day before he had to go in for his shift, we circled around a public park in his truck and talked. I told him that I felt bad for PNB officers since their salaries had not gone up. 'I think it is understandable why they might shake people down.' Ramón shook his head and said that this was not true: 'A police officer could make no money at all and still not become corrupt. This is about a person's ethics. Police officers grow up in the barrios and we see people being abused by the police…One decides to be different, to not abuse

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[56] Chávez is still remembered for stating on his show that if a man cannot afford bread for his family, then it is not wrong for him to steal.

people, you decide that this is not the kind of future you want…We grow up seeing abuse, seeing violence and decide that we want something different.'

He said the problem is that many people enter the police and see it as 'any other job but it is not…it is not just a job but takes a personal ethic and love for what one is doing.' He parked his truck and we got out and began to walk around the park. As we sat down on a park bench I asked Ramón what an officer was to do if they reached a point where they had to 'shake people down' to survive, to provide for their family. He responded: 'Everyone knows that one's formation begins in the home, and that good formation leads to being a good cop. It is not just about one's current situation but the personal ethics that come from one's formation, this decides whether or not one will become corrupt.'

Like police officers, *dicentes* did not need to agree with socialism to identify cultural values as a principal problem in the country. For example, one day in a course on Socialism and Democracy Professor Suárez, a man around 5'5'' with a large round read and thinning hair who always seemed tired and worn down, attempted to begin a lecture on political economy. Professor Suarez's classes were always more rowdy and disruptive than other classes I attended (perhaps his students had something to do with his consistently haggard appearance). For the most part, the UNES site in Catia was a place of quiet and calm reprieve from the neighborhoods where I worked. The classrooms were built to capture the refreshing breeze that consistently flowed in from the northern coast and compared to the informal markets and catcalling that filled the air out in the street, the corridors and classrooms inside the university were (relatively) peaceful. With the exception of Professor Suárez's class. Inside his classroom, students continued to loudly converse after the lesson had started, got up and walked around the room, and came and went during twenty-minute long bathroom breaks. Suárez loaded up a Powerpoint

presentation that was projected onto a white concrete wall and loudly announced three or four times that the class was beginning. With conversations still occurring in the background, he brought up a slide that contained a description of capitalism. Someone in the class commented that in Venezuela if you went into the *cerros* (the poorest areas of the city built high onto the hills surrounding the city) you would find people who were supposedly poor but had three plasma screen TVs. Suárez agreed, saying that from the outside the houses in the barrios might look ugly but as soon as you went inside you would think to yourself '*Conchale*!' One student said, 'They don't have toilet paper…but a massive TV? Yup' Feeding off of this, a number of exchanges took place between Suárez said that people in the barrios they complain all the time about not having money and not being able to buy food but they always had money for a rumba on the weekends. Suddenly, he had the attention of the entire room. Students jumped in to participate in the discussion, talking over one another about Venezuelans' unnecessary and irrational spending (and here they included themselves). Suarez said that it was true that 'we make the superfluous more important that basic needs.'

Many students agreed that there was something deeply wrong with Venezuelans' morals. But, more often than not, students disagreed with the solutions put forth by the moral focus in class; their attitudes towards ideological education ranged from critical to apathetic. For example, one day in Professor Suárez's class, while taking the roll he called on a random student and asked him to define capitalism.

The student was slouched back in his seat and became flustered and embarrassed, rolling his head up and down his palm until he began to leaf through papers that Suárez had handed back to him at the beginning of class. Letting out a heavy frustrated sigh Suárez asked him if he had

done his homework. The student exhaled and let out a slow yes. Suárez responded in an angry voice: 'Then don't read anything! If you did the homework it should be in your head.'

After waiting a few more seconds the professor called another name from the roll and asked who the 'bourgeoisie' was. The student hesitated and stumbled over his words. Attempting an answer he said: 'They…they…they are…delinquents…delinquents, people with few resources,' with a tone in his voice suggesting that he hoped Suárez would buy what he was selling. Without responding Suarez brought up the first slide on his presentation up on the wall which had a definition of capitalism as: A social, political, and economic system where the wealthy were the only ones who controlled and benefited the economy. He asked a student if she knew what this word meant and she laughed and said she had no idea.

Though professors emphasized ideological work, the "ideological policing" that was integral to the Soviet Socialist project (Glaeser 2011:63) was absent in the Venezuelan context. The education of police officers at the UNES was nothing like what officers experienced in the Soviet Bloc. Students and officers were not required to undergo "relentless self-objectification" or "party trials" (Glaeser 2011:61, 136) to prove their allegiance to socialism. Students openly criticized the socialist worldview that professors promoted; debates over capitalism, socialism, and the new model vs. the old model were common; and no students or professors I spoke with mentioned that officers-in-training were removed for failing to adopt a particular political position. In fact, it was difficult for the UNES to turn students away due to the pressure that was placed on them to produce as many officers as possible within a short period of time. Whether due to a need to put officers on the street, the democratic character of Venezuelan society, or the civilian and activist backgrounds of the administration and many professors, classes allowed for dissent to be voiced and did not operate as spaces of intensive modification or subjectification.

Lacking the rigidity, authoritarianism, and institutionalization of 20th century socialist governments, this education did not produce socialist soldiers. Between paltry wages and democratically implemented education, the reform most likely did very little to change students' attitudes towards policing and corruption, much less capitalism. Power in these spaces did not operate by monitoring schedules, space, and bodily movements down to the minutest of details (see Foucault 1977/1995). One only had to spend a day in class to observe students contesting professors' control over the classroom.

If socialist ideology did not produce new and compliant subjects, what did it accomplish? I argue that ideology qua discourse exercised power through avoidance and deflection, through the identification of problems and thus their solutions, i.e. by setting the parameters of the conversation. As the governor's secretary stated in the opening vignette, the solution was changing capitalist values – such as self-interest and the insatiable desire for money – with socialist ones. Ideology here is important here because it shaped government initiatives, not because it constituted subjects or imposed a worldview on them. Discourse allowed politicians and reformers to deflect question of salaries and material compensation. Focusing on the individual values and ethics of police officers, reformers diverted attention away from material realities, which put officers in situations where they may have little choice but to engage in corruption to survive (see Chapter 3). Though the assistant framed police misconduct as one caused by capitalist *structures*, the solution he put forward was about selecting officers that were socialist at heart; as he said, the state's police were to be congratulated on the fact that the police director weeded out officers that had the heart of a capitalist.

This emphasis on values and ethics also deflected attention away from accountability mechanisms created by the reform. For example, during an informal interview with a PNB

Commissioner, he told me: 'Right now the OCAP [the Office of Supervision of Police Conduct or *Oficina de Control de Actuación Policial*) has about 20,000 cases of denunciations against police officers. There is no way they can handle so many…The problem is that the UNES is just looking for "quantity instead of quality" and the officers they are putting out do not know how to handle policing in the barrios.' I replied that it seemed to me a major problem was the salaries being paid to the officers, to which he responded: 'This is a question of ethics, of personal morality because even the worst paid cop would not *matraquear* if he was an ethical person.'

The Commissioner here does not only avoid the topic of salaries, but absolves internal accountability mechanisms for failing to successfully deal with cases of corruption. In the Commissioner's formulation, the OCAP cannot be expected to take on all of the cases that have resulted from the UNES' poor screening of applicants, which placed unethical officers on the street. From this perspective oversight and control can do little if officers are amoral or, as the governor's secretary said in his speech, 'ego-centered.'

COMMUNITY POLICING

Community policing has been implemented across the globe by diverse governments. But in Venezuela government actors and police reformers framed this service as unique, an extension of the socialist project that it shared with only Cuba. The difference for reformers was that community policing was not only a means of reorganizing the police to be more responsive and efficient, but was also seen as a service that could contribute to and strengthen social transformation.

For some officers socialist policing was concomitant with the preventative approach of community policing. Igor, a community police supervisor, was the epitome of the "new" police

officer. When out of uniform, Igor wore a bright red Cuban-style shirt and often carried

philosophy books and a notepad. I always enjoyed the time I spent with Igor, since his approach

to policing and enthusiasm for reform was what I had optimistically hoped to find more of during

my fieldwork. Igor was in his mid-40s and had spent decades working in the Metropolitan Police

before matriculating into the PNB. He had the serious and imposing demeanor I usually associate

with the police during our first few interactions, I assume as he sized me up and tried to decipher

my intentions. After a few discussions about my support for and excitement about the reform and

once he found out that I volunteered in my neighborhood communal council he became a

completely different person. I discovered that his personality could light up an entire building

and his deep laugh was incredibly contagious.

On one of his days off, I was eating lunch with him at Xiomy's house, a community activist

in the neighborhood where Igor worked and with whom he had developed a warm relationship.

As we ate large plates of chicken and rice I asked him what it took to be a committed police

officer, a question he responded to with a story. He told me that when he was working in a

different sector, he had been assigned to work with an officer who spent all day making

disdainful and condescending remarks about people who lived in the popular sector. One of his

favorite ways to pass the time, according to Igor, was to complain about the way barrio residents

lived and the way in which they allowed their homes to deteriorate. 'This officer,' Igor said,

'refused to drink coffee with people in his sector because he did not want to touch his lips to the

glass.' One day on their patrol route, they stopped at the home of an old woman who came out of

her house and offered them some coffee. With a haughty expression on his face, Igor assumed

the role of the officer, who responded with a cold 'No gracias, no tomo café.' The woman then

offered him a glass of water or juice, which he declined, finally walking away to talk to some

other officers while Igor said he drank a 'delicious coffee' with her. 'These are not the values that the new police should have,' Igor told me. For police like Igor, it was essential for officers to identify with the poor, advocate for them, and participate in the development of their awareness of their rights. Work with marginalized communities was not just about extracting information from communities or increasing trust between these communities and the police. Igor and those like him saw their work as one particular expression of social outreach to poor communities that would provide these communities with the resources and education they needed to understand and utilize "poder popular" and create communities of "convivencia." In other words, they understood their work as an educative one, fulfilling the state's role of creating higher types of civilization (Gramsci 1971:242) and developing the revolutionary consciousness – among both police officers and citizens – advocated by Densmore (2007). In the following sections, I show that this educative function was the core component of community policing. I also argue that the intersection of socialist discourse and on the ground understandings targeted certain people – poor women and children – for "transformation" through community policing and other initiatives.

Raising Culture & Saving the Children

Igor spent much of his time cultivating relationships with community leaders, attending activities they organized, eating in their homes, and attending their meetings. But the majority of community police officers I observed focused on saving children before they fell onto a "bad path." For example, during a two-day conference of PNB community police officers from around the country, organized by the then head of the community police Jose Luis Pinto, officers proudly displayed the headway they had made in recuperating 'lost values' and preventing crime

through their work with children. The conference was held in the Bolivarian Museum, in a small auditorium with hardwood floors and comfortable seats with thick layers of padding. The two day conference, in a heavily air conditioned room and plush seating was a welcome break from the hard plastic chairs and sometimes stifling rooms I had grown accustomed to at community meetings. For these two days I sat in an auditorium full of uniformed officers, listening to reports from heads of community police services from different states.

***

After introductory remarks were made by Pinto, he introduced a supervisor from a Aragua, the first of many officers who would get up to present their work and progress to the room full of uniforms. A Powerpoint presentation was brought up behind the officer, who was standing at a podium in front of a large projector screen. After giving a rundown of the parishes the service worked in and showing us the zones with the highest crimes rates were, he turned to 'attention to those most vulnerable.' He put up a few pictures on the screen of Jesus a child they had 'rescued from the street.' The pictures showed a boy around seven years old, some with a police officer leaning over him in a caring and protective fashion. He explained that the officers and taught him to read and the 'values and principles that have been lost by families.' He talked about the recreational activities organized by the community police for children from vulnerable families, 'families that do not have the resources to take them to these kinds of activities.' As he spoke he showed pictures of around 90 kids at an event with a local baseball team. The photos showed wide shots of children on a professional looking field and a few children standing with a man in a white and orange baseball uniform.

Pinto next welcomed a supervisor from Carabobo. He began his presentation talking about the 'goal' of their community police service, to 'rescue the community values' that had

been 'lost by parents…parents where both the mother and father work.' He explained that they

had begun to accompany children home from school if their parents did not come to meet them,

and were available to escort the children around afterwards if necessary so that they were not left

alone in the street. He explained one of the major issues they had was 'public disorder' between

fathers and children and that the community police held formation and sports workshops with

those adolescents that had been detained for 'disorderly conduct.' He showed a picture of an

officer in a classroom giving what looked like a presentation about the problem and said that it

had been resolved. He then showed pictures of a dramatization that the group had done about

violence in schools, showing two officers in sweat pants and t-shirts with white face pant on,

with the second photo one of the officers on his knees and the female officer standing over him

wielding what looked to be a small knife. This excited a number of officers in the auditorium and

incited a bit of chatter and a few claps, with someone behind me saying this was a wonderful

idea.

The presentations largely followed this format over the course of two days. A supervisor

from Anzuategui went over the 'youth brigades,' groups of children who regularly participate in

community police events and wear some sort of uniform (sometimes only matching sweatpants

and t-shirts), and a 'guns for balls' program, saying that these programs were very important for

those children who lived in homes where the parents get addicted to crack and that they had

rescued 30 street children. A tall officer from Caracas gave a general presentation on the

initiation schools, saying the goal of these were to 'rescue values that had been lost in the

family.' He said these schools were important to give kids new goals and desires, since it was

more likely that what they desired was a motorcycle or a gun. He said that ideally officers would

'get close to the kid' [*casarnos al muchacho*] and teach children 'appropriate culture.' He also

showed pictures of sports activities they were putting together to 'get rid of the vulnerable part of kids with sports.'

The final presentation ended with a slide that contained an image of a police officer holding a young boy nestled in his arms. There was a foggy outline of wings coming out of the officer's back, giving the impression that he was an angel.

<p style="text-align:center">***</p>

Each presentation received a thunderous round of applause, and examples like the school dramatization elicited whispers and chatter about the innovation of the event. These stories and examples were not only given at official events like the conference. In informal interactions officers also explained that the community police was part of creating a new consciousness and culture. For example, after a community meeting at which community police officers had been present I made the bumpy ride back down to the police station in a PNB truck. During the ride a young male community police officer who had been at the meeting began chatting about his work in La Vega, explaining the talks and workshops they did with children, emphasizing that the main goal was to create a new understanding and culture for these children, pointing to the middle of his forehead with two fingers pinched together as if he was going to penetrate right into his brain. He emphasized that these projects were for children at risk so that they do not grow up into 'our enemies' for being neglected at home.

'Saving children' before they became 'the enemy' was one of the most frequent community policing successes that officers and citizens discussed. The community police were often framed as providing a safety net for children like Jesus, whose families did not care for them or bring them up correctly. Sometimes this 'rescuing' meant removing children from their families or rescuing kids living on the streets. Most often, it referred to organizing regular

activities for children in the barrios, after having identified those 'most at risk.' Sara, a young female community police officer who wore her hair in a tight bun and accentuated her eyes with bright pink and purple eye shadow, explained to me one day as I followed her on her rounds that the unit tried to make sure that children did not have a lot of unoccupied time [*ocio*] on their hands by organizing sports and recreational activities, which was a preventative measure that kept children off the streets where they could be influenced to engage in crime.

The community police service in Zamora, in the western sector of the city, attempted to fill children's time by organizing activities on the weekends at refugee sites, where people who had lost their homes (usually due to weather-related disasters) stayed. When attending one of these events on a bright and sunny Saturday, I met Simon, a community organizer who worked with the local community police to organize the youth brigade and weekend activities. Simon towered over me, had small facial features, but a large round belly. Though he was a large and physically intimidating figure, he had a warm and inviting personality. After spending time with him it seemed natural to me that he would work with children.

The youth brigade, he explained, were children that the service worked with regularly and were given different tasks during events. Apart from filling children's time, the idea of the brigades, Simon and many others told me, was to instill discipline in them from a young age. As we sat in a small concrete room in the police department, waiting to head to the camp, children and young adolescents began trickling into the room. Motioning towards them with a look, Simon explained to me that they were trying to teach these children to 'value the right to life.'

After chatting with Simon for a bit, Carla, a young PNB officer with braces and a bright smile, and the other community police officers, all wearing blue track suits issued by the UNES, came into the room and announced that we were ready to leave. Simon and I jumped into the

back of a white truck with eight or nine other as a few of the smaller kids crammed into the front cab with the officers. After a 15-minute ride we arrived at a large metal gate that was pushed open to reveal a concrete building, open and exposed at the front, with small rooms sectioned off inside. The activity for the day had been scheduled at a refugee camp with families that were awaiting housing. Once we arrived the officers began unloading and inflating the bouncy house they had in the back of the truck and took out jugs of water and coke and large thermoses of Nestea. There was a small yard to the left of the building where the officers set up the bouncy house, face painting stations, and other games.

The day started off with children trickling out into the yard. At first there were around 15 children, including the ones that the officers had brought with them in the truck who were easily identifiable due to their matching blue sweatpants and white t-shirts. As the day went on about 40 or more children came out into the yard from the refugee building or entered from the street; even adult women got into the face painting, sitting down patiently as and female officers painted their arms and faces.

A community police officer painting a child's face at a refugee camp

© Rebecca Hanson 2012

While the female officers painted faces, the male officers turned the concrete slab in front of the building into a soccer field and played soccer with the young boys.

Community police officers referee a soccer game at the camp

© Rebecca Hanson 2012

The atmosphere throughout the day was cheerful as the kids played soccer and ran around the small courtyard and adults sat around watching the games. Some young men, who looked to be between 15 and 20, hung around and smoked cigarettes and eventually got involved in the soccer game. As soon as the head of the unit showed up, two men from the camp walked right up to him and began chatting. He slapped one of them on the shoulder and seemed to be engaged in a serious conversation with them, as if they were discussing a matter that had been discussed before. The supervisor seemed to know a few of the people at the refugee building, while the rank and file officers told me that this was their first time at this particular center and would probably be their last since they usually visited different refugee buildings for the activities.

Later on in the day a wiry man who looked to be in his 60s arrived in athletic clothing with a stereo in hand and taught a dance exercise class to the adults. During the class some of the officers went out and bought *chicharrones* and bread and passed them out to the kids.

A community police officer joins in the dance aerobics class with women from the camp

© Rebecca Hanson 2012

The event ended with a ceremony, where officers passed out medals for participants and hung special medals around the necks of the children that had arrived with the officers, who were a part of the youth brigade.

While the officers packed up the drink containers, tables, and bouncy house I stood enjoying the last bit of sunlight and chatted with Rosalinda, Simon's wife who helped coordinate activities like the one we watched ending. I asked her what she felt the importance of these activities was. Her eyes grew large and in an emphatic voice she said that I 'could not imagine how important it is' that children learn the importance of discipline and have the opportunity to engage in different activities. She said that the community police was a part of El President's

(referring to Hugo Chávez) program, that is was part of his project, was part of his strategy for dealing with crime.

The community police was very popular with many barrio residents I spoke with. In fact, the service was the only aspect of reform that seemed to have complete support from barrio residents. A 2012 poll that was conducted in the Sucre Parish, where Catia is located and where the PNB was first deployed, showed largely positive evaluations of the service. Forty-three percent of respondents said that the service was either good or very good. The next most popular response, at 29%, was that the service did not exist or was not in operation in the respondent's neighborhood.
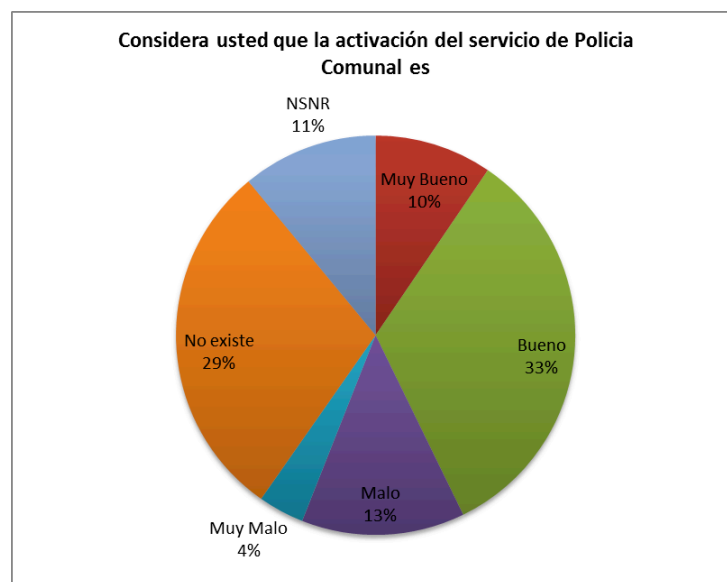
Figure 3

Opinions on the community police service of. Residents of the Sucre Parish, Caracas (Vice Rectorado de Creación Intelectual y Vinculación Social, UNES. 2012)
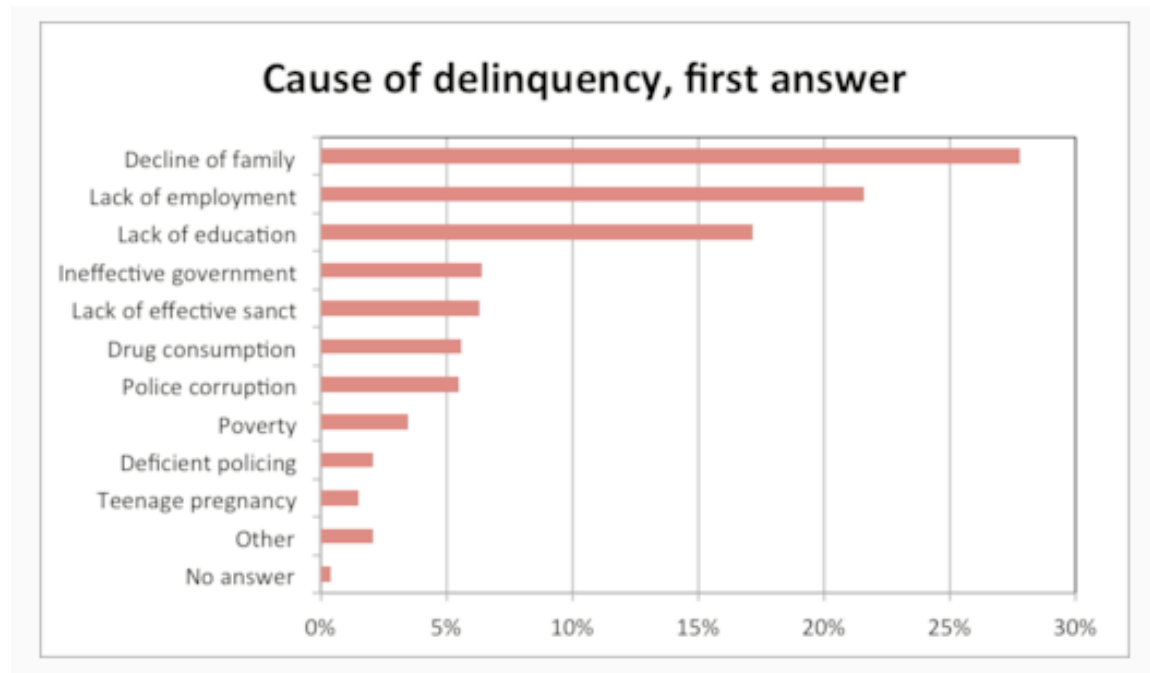
Why was this service so popular? Because it fit into preexisting understandings of the causes of and solutions to insecurity. One of the biggest obstacles that police reformers' faced in consolidating police reform was convincing people that criminal justice reforms mattered

(Hanson and Smilde 2013a). From the perspective of many, citizen security reforms are not the most obvious and convincing ways to address crime; rather, strengthening the family, culture and values are (Hanson and Smilde 2013a). But because state representatives and officers themselves framed the service as one that would improve children's values, filling a hole being left by supposedly disintegrating families, people were able to make sense of this aspect of reform in a positive way.

For example, once Igor brought a group of psychologists with him to a meeting with the commune in El Mirador to discuss organizing children's sports and why these activities were important. Community residents needed no convincing, however. A wiry man who had been standing at the edge of the meeting room walked closer inside and acknowledged that 'we haven't had the capacity to form the potential of the children.' He said that what the community wanted were '*ninos sanos*.' He asked us what that meant and then answered his own question by saying, 'It is a child that has his time occupied.' He talked about a project the commune had discussed building a 'little park, a green space down the street' with exercise equipment and space to walk, but they had not been able to accomplish it yet. He said they all recognized that engaging children in these ways was not easy but that, 'easy comes, easy goes' [*fácil viene, fácil se va*] and that they were willing to work towards these goals.

These ideas were not idiosyncratic to Zamora or El Mirador. When asked by survey pollsters asked what they believed was the primary cause of delinquency in the country, respondents' top pick was the lack of values in the home and family decomposition (28%) (Hanson and Smilde 2015). This is followed by a lack of employment (22%) and education (17%) (ibid). Together police corruption and

deficiencies in policing make up less than 10% of respondents' first choice explanation, and ineffective government only gets 6.4% (ibid).

Cause of delinquency, first answer

Category	Value
Decline of family	~28%
Lack of employment	~21%
Lack of education	~17%
Ineffective government	~6%
Lack of effective sanct	~6%
Drug consumption	~5.5%
Police corruption	~5.5%
Poverty	~3.5%
Deficient policing	~2%
Teenage pregnancy	~1.5%
Other	~2%
No answer	~0.5%

Figure 4
Opinions on causes of delinquency[57]

A question about how to best combat crime provided similar results, with 67% of respondents answering that improving the values taught by the family is that best way to combat crime, followed by reducing poverty (Hanson and Smilde 2013b). Before the police, the government, or the criminal justice system the family is the institution to which more people look to both explain and resolve crime. The widespread belief that criminals are "made in the home" allowed people to make sense of the community police and value the service, even if they did not believe that they police in general were an effective way of dealing with crime.

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[57] Hanson and Smilde 2013a

COMO CRIAR HIJOS DELINCUENTES:

1. Dele a su hijo todo lo que pida. Pensará que tiene derecho a obtener todo lo que desea.

2. Ríase cuando su hijo diga malas palabras. Crecerá pensando que el irrespeto es divertido.

3. Jamás reprenda a su hijo por su mal comportamiento. Crecerá pensando que no existen reglas en la sociedad.

4. Recoja todo lo que su hijo desordene. Crecerá creyendo que otros deben hacerse cargo de sus responsabilidades.

5. Permítale ver cualquier programa en la televisión. Crecerá creyendo que no hay diferencias entre ser niño y ser adulto.

6. Dé a su hijo todo el dinero que pida. Crecerá pensando que obtener dinero es fácil y no dudará en robar para conseguirlo.

7. Póngase siempre de parte de él, contra vecinos, maestros y policías. Creerá que lo que él hace siempre está bien y son los otros los que están mal.

"Siguiendo estas instrucciones le garantizamos que su hijo será un delincuente y nosotros tendremos una celda lista para él"

(Departamento de Policía de Houston, Texas)

One of Carla's Facebook posts, describing how

children are turned into "delinquents" in the home

While interviewing Carla and Sidys, both female community police officers who strongly identified with Chavismo, I asked them what they thought the main cause of crime was:

Carla: I think that it is part of the formation one receives in the house, I mean…Lots of values are being lost.

Sidys: lots of values being lost.

Carla: It is one of those fundamental steps, because now….I mean, it is egoism because, I mean, you don't care about anything because you have to defend what it yours, human beings here are very territorial.

Sidys: And it isn't just individualism that is prevalent, but "What matters to me is what benefits me but I don't care about the collective, it doesn't interest me." You know? "I want what is good for me and those that are somewhere else, wherever else, don't

interest me, I don't care about them. As they say vulgarly "They can fuck themselves."

Get it? That is how it is here.

It is important to note that the generality of the term "the family" conceals a specific gender and class bias (Zubillaga et al. 2015; Hanson and Smilde 2015). When people attribute crime and violence to deteriorating values within the family, they are not referring to all families; they are referring to poor families, principally ones headed up by a single mother. Many families in the barrios are headed up by a matriarch, either a mother or a grandmother.[58] And in everyday conversation insecurity is often blamed on these women, who I have heard described as lazy, supportive of their children's illegal activities, or as abandoning their children due to work.

At different points in time during my research, I heard women explaining the arrest of a youth in the neighborhood to the fact that his mother allowed him to sell drugs or steal. 'She took advantage of the situation too…' they would say. Take, for example, a conversation I observed when I was hanging out with Edmond in the barrio where many of his cousins, uncles, and aunts lived. The afternoon had been pleasant. I walked around with Edmond to parts of the barrio where his family lived (and, therefore, where he felt safe wandering) and talked to his cousin about her job, teaching elementary school. After sitting around his uncle's house – identical to the houses where I visited and lived in Catia – for a few hours, Edmond began fighting with his uncle and cousin about the source of crime and violence in the country and who should be held responsible for it. Edmond pointed out that 'insecurity' was getting worse every year. 'Do you

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[58] It is important to recognize that the increase in matriarch-led households is not only about "machista" culture or men leaving their partners. The number of young men killed each year also leaves many families without fathers, grandfathers, and uncles.

know how many people died last year?!,' he asked his cousin in an exasperated tone. She said

she knew there were thousands that had died last year, but asked Edmond where crime and

violence come from. Before he had the chance she answered by saying, 'From the family! This is

where children learn values and come out criminals depending on the values that the family

inculcates in them.' Taking her blackberry out and motioning towards me, as if she was showing

it off to me, she said that kids show up at home with a fancy telephone and mothers don't ask

where they get these things from, how they bought them. She became dramatically excited,

adopting the reaction of the mothers she was criticizing, saying over and over again 'How nice!

How beautiful!,' pretending to congratulate an imaginary son on his phone. Edmond did not give

up, however, but stood up and stated firmly: 'No. No! If I am president I am responsible for

everything that happens in my country. The government is responsible for fighting insecurity, for

protecting citizens…and I say that as a police officer.' His cousin shot back 'But the government

isn't responsible for teaching kids their values, this comes from the family and is not something

the government can do! As a teacher, I see this problem all of the time… mothers let their kids

do whatever they want and don't bother to teach them anything at home.'

GENDERED OUTREACH AND COMMUNITY WORKSHOPS

The community police was not the only service that offered workshops and community events.

The Servicio de Creación Intelectual y Vinculación Social, the social outreach department of the

UNES, was wholly devoted to these tasks. This department was "responsible for guiding

processes of intellectual creation and social outreach…from knowledgeable dialogue and the

construction of collective learning with communities and citizen security forces" (UNES n.d.).

While the community police largely focused on children, the events organized by the UNES were heavily focused on women. These workshops and programs encouraged women to work on themselves, build up their self-confidence, and be better mothers and community members. By engaging in self-transformation, they would also be promoting positive social change, according to event organizers.

Below, I provide two extended ethnographic vignettes from a community workshop I attended and a graduation ceremony for Laura, a neighbor and unemployed single mother of one, from a state sponsored job-training program. I describe these in length not only because they exemplify attempts by state actors to promote individualizing security strategies, but also because they evidence the gendered nature of these individualizing processes. Indeed, political subjectivities are differentiated by the bodies through which they are formed, as I show here. Though state actors failed to successfully "subjectify" women in the Foucaultian sense of the word, these attempts illustrate the different ways in which men and women become charged with and held responsible for security. These vignettes also highlight contradictions between the goals set by state actors and the structural environment in which people are embedded.

<p align="center">***</p>

The workshop began inside the Barrio Adentro building at 5:30 in the evening. Carmen, Briana, and Nora, the three social outreach coordinators from the UNES, pulled out two long pieces of white paper and broke us up into two groups. Each group was told to choose a woman to be the model for a silhouette that we were to draw on the piece of paper given to our group. Carmen suggested that we move outside, to the patio of the building, 'so that people will see us.' The Barrio Adentro sat at the top of a steep hill and faced the final bus stop in the neighborhood; to go further up one had to walk or transfer to a Jeep. Perhaps because it was the end of the line for

buses, there was always a heavy amount of foot traffic in front of the building. The building sat directly across the street from a small market where, given the time of day, a small group of men would gather and drink beer by the side of the store. Beside the Barrio Adentro building was a long metal garbage container – overflowing with bags of garbage, discarded furniture, and toys – and an empty concrete lot where a group of boys, who looked to be around 16 or 17, sat. Later on, the boys were joined by friends in two cars, which parked outside the lot and began pumping out reggaeton. As the activity continued throughout the afternoon and into early evening people getting off buses and those buying things at the store stopped to watch, some of them sticking around for the remainder of the exercise.

Once outside, we taped the long pieces of paper to the concrete walls of the building and Carmen, who was leading the group I was split into, asked who would be the model. Some of the women joked that I should do it, since they said I was the only one thin enough to fit inside. I tried to ignore their half-serious suggestion, awkwardly attempting to make sure that the women from the community were the participants in the event that had been organized for them. Carmen asked if there was anyone there that was not ashamed and one woman raised her hand and said 'I am not ashamed' and walked up to the paper. Once the woman's silhouette had been drawn on the paper, another participant standing beside me joked, 'They took some pounds of her!' causing a ripple of laughter throughout the small group.

After both groups were done Carmen put us all back together and asked us to tell her what we do with different parts of our bodies, pointing to them on the silhouettes we had drawn and writing down suggestions beside the body part we were discussing at the time.

'What do we do with our heads?' she asked. Some women said 'think' and others said 'dream.' She jumped on this word and said 'Yes, the head is where we dream about what we

want, what are our dreams, our goals as mothers, wives, women in our communities.' She emphasized these three roles throughout the workshop and as people listed each of their dreams, concerns, and pleasures she encouraged them to think about these according to these different rolls. She did this with the chest, stomach, arms, and legs.

When we started with dreams the women listed that they wanted their children to grow up and be professionals or have a good education, that they wanted a house. When we got to the stomach and Carmen asked what made them upset as women of the community one of them said 'Apathy' and everyone gave affirming 'Aha, Aha, Aha.' When they got to the arms the women listed that they could cook with them, the model's daughter said make *ponche crema* (a cream-based liqueur) and explained that she had just learned a recipe and was going to make it and sell it in December. Carmen responded 'Excellent! If we produce money, like she is making *ponche* in December, this is socio-productive, we don't have to go out and work in a business, we can develop our communities.' For dreams one woman who had joined the group after getting off the bus said 'Be a millionaire! Be a millionaire!' and laughed. Carmen said, "Ok, ok, but in what? Friendship, love, money? Does money make us rich?' Some people responded no and she said 'Aha, aha.'

Carmen turned to our model and asked her what gave her support, 'Your husband?' The woman laughed with a bit of a scoff and said that she did not have a husband and that all her strength came from her two daughters, which Carmen wrote down. When Carmen asked the same question to another woman, perhaps hoping to get a different answer, the woman pursed her face and waved her hand as if waving someone away and said that she didn't have a partner, that she had her daughter. 'My husband doesn't help me at all,' she said in a way that suggested the point should have been obvious. Carmen repeated the same questions to women who joined

the group. When one woman approached she asked her what her dreams were and she said she didn't know but that she wished her husband would 'stop drinking alcohol.'

As the women started approaching the silhouettes and writing down ideas Carmen explained to me that she had done this in the UNES with about 45 women and it was incredible because none of them had ever thought that these things were important or worth talking about.

When the women in the group had listed things that give them support (their children, their community, etc.) Carmen pointed back up to the body and asked what could be done to accomplish our dreams. When one of the women said 'Dedicate us to ourselves' Carmen's eyes got big and she said "AHA!!" as if she had just found something for had been searching for. She said that we often forget to do this and that if we do not think about ourselves, about dedicating us to ourselves and if we don't do that we cannot change anything. Carmen asked a question, probing what we were doing and the woman from Barrio Adentro said that she was glad to be 'sharing with people, not shutting yourself in your house, we learn from each other...' She said it was dangerous to shut yourself up in your home and not spend time with other people, people you don't know. She said, 'It isn't necessary to have a partner to relate to each other. We have to reflect, stop thinking only about ourselves, put ourselves in each other's shoes, we have to reflect on ourselves and our relations with others, on how we talk to and treat each other and our children.' She continually exhorted the group to reflect on ourselves, saying if we don't reflect we won't be able to change anything.

Thanks to the fact that the building sat at the end of a main bus route, the meeting attracted more women throughout the evening. At the same time however, the group was frequently assaulted by bursts of fumes from buses heading back down the hill, and some of the

men hanging outside of the market interrupted the workshop, thrusting the group out of the discussion that Carmen had drawn us into.

Towards the end of the workshop, two men standing beside of the Barrio Adentro building began shouting at each other. With beers in hand they yelled 'Long live Chávez' and 'Son of a bitch!' at each other. It was impossible to tell if they were arguing or if they were mutually supportive of the president. One of the men went up to the garbage container and started banging on it yelling in slurred speech 'Viva Chávez.' The noise made it difficult to pay attention to the activity, and the dedicated attention that Carmen held before the men had begun was broken as heads ping-ponged back and forth between Carmen and the men. Nevertheless, Carmen continued to talk about how we interact with our families, Carmen asked, 'Why don't we talk to our family like: "Son, why do you do this to do?" In a calm voice. We don't really communicate with each other, we don't express how we feel, we ought to talk to our children about what is bothering us so that they learn to treat others in their first school: the home, with their mother and father.'

By this point a man with pale skin reddened by what looked like years of drinking had been circling around the group. He had a pockmarked face and was wearing a Polar Ice t-shirt, hat, and jean shorts cut at the calf. With a beer in hand he eventually stopped behind a woman in the group and started muttering. When he got closer to me I could smell the alcohol on his breath and noticed that his eyes were glazed over. Carmen said something about how good it would be to share time like this again. A woman in the crowd asked when the group would be back and Carmen said 'What if we meet on Thursdays, talk, work together, a get together on Thursdays?' Carmen asked people in the crowd what they wanted for their neighborhood. Some women suggested dance classes, yoga, and meditation.

The drunken guy in the street had broken into the group and was standing below Carmen and said 'Exercises' with his head cocked to the side. One woman in the crowd suggested 'Not drinking so much alcohol! This hurts women.' The guy agreed seriously, shaking his head and saying 'Right, don't drink as much, it does damage to women, it is dangerous.' Another woman in the crowd said that drinking alcohol led to hitting women and the guy shook his head, saying "Bad, baaaaaad." Carmen asked what could be done about this and a woman said, 'Stop drinking.' Carmen asked again for proposals: 'What can we do? How can we do it?' The women suggested bringing a psychologist to the workshop. Carmen hesitated for a moment but the woman repeated the idea. Carmen looked at Briana and said with some hesitation that this was a good idea. She then shifted the conversation, saying that they were going to all as a community decide on a phrase for the mural against gender violence, 'involve the neighbors in this.' During this discussion, the man made his displeasure with the decision clear, saying, 'That's no good. It is dumb.'

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Workshops like these tried to get women to think about themselves differently. As Nora told me one day as we took a bus to a different workshop: 'The idea of the workshops, of yoga, of dance aerobics classes is that everyone has their own shine but they don't recognize it or know how to use it…Exercises like these make people reflect, the idea is to promote another form of thinking about things, to motivate other forms of communication. For example, instead of yelling at a neighbor for throwing trash on the street, starting to yell, throwing arms around, "Why do you do that, you fucker?!" [the UNES] wants to show them how to approach a neighbor and say (here her voice became soft and calm) "Look, neighbor, why do you throw trash on the street? You know that…"' allowing her voice to trail off and leave an inaudible explanation in the air.

Similar to classes at the UNES, outreach coordinators were committed to profound transformations "not by simply modifying the state of things, but through profound change from reflexive comprehension" (UNES course materials). Nora's assertion that community members had to be taught how to interact, relate with one another, and see their own "glow" assumes the "dualism" between the individual and the species, the public and the private, that Marx posited, a dualism that exists within the self (itself a product of capitalist ideology) that must be overcome through self-realization. Quite similar to Romanticism, which Marx set himself against, Marxism posits: "The conscious man…achieves his highest point when he recognizes his own life as an adequate, true expression of what he potentially is" (Halfin 2000:44).

The group remained committed to this self-formation process, even when community members brought up concrete security problems and solutions. For example, during one meeting in Las Flores Miranda, a community member and a nurse at the neighborhood Barrio Adentro, said that she wanted to discuss a complaint that she had against the mayor's office. She said that Jorge Rodriquez's office had announced that it would be moving the buses that were stationed at the base of the mountain and would be changing their route. She said that this new route required the buses pass through new neighborhoods before coming up to Las Flores. 'I do not feel safe with the change in the route and others don't either because these other neighborhoods are very dangerous…the police don't even watch the area.' She said that some community members had proposed going to the mayor and demanding that the buses remain in the same place with the same route. Miranda clearly articulated an immediate concern that she and other community members had, one that, if addressed could have helped with residents' perceptions of daily insecurity. However, the UNES team moved past this issue quickly and onto planning community events for the rest of the month.

During the workshop, it was painfully obvious that changing the neighborhood would require more than teaching women how to recognize their own "shine." The awkward moments of tension between Carmen trying to hold our attention as inebriated men shuffled in and out of the group and others drunkenly announced (or argued over?) their support for Chavismo spoke to the failed attempts by both police and legislation to regulate public drinking and shut down liquor sales in the evening. The stark contrast between Carmen's exuberant request for women to declare their dreams and women's pessimistic responses about partners' drinking habits suggested that women's dreams were not being suffocated by their inability to recognize them, but relationships structured by patriarchy and addiction that they had little control over. Even the immediate environment where the workshop took place, with its congested traffic and smoke bellowing out of departing buses, evidenced local problems that required collective action and concrete solutions, not reflection or yoga. But the narrow focus on self-transformation was never coupled with solutions for these problems. Though undoubtedly the goal of this personal reflection and self-formation was to affect change in the world, workshops never seemed to get beyond the "first step." Some of this certainly had to do with the fact that, like the community police, these social outreach groups were spread very thin and had limited resources; even getting things like tables and canopies from the UNES for community events they organized could be a struggle. Working from Catia to Petare (the massive conglomerations of barrios that bookend the eastern and western sides of the city) meant that many meetings with community residents ended up being updates on what residents had been doing in their absence and refreshers on what projects had been proposed at the last meeting. Nevertheless, I would argue that the ardent belief of Carmen that the ground zero of social change was formation and self-

transformation was one of the principal reasons (perhaps *the* principal reason) that workshops and activities never moved beyond this point.

There was a similar focus on self-work and transformation at the graduation that I attended for Laura, who had recently completed a government-sponsored cosmetology course. I met Laura years before I began my dissertation research; she lived in the same neighborhood and was one of the few regular participants in the local communal council. Like me, she stuck out in the neighborhood, not because of her skin color but her height – Laura was around six feet tall and towered over the women and many of the men in the area. Over the years that I had known her Laura had never been able to find employment in the formal economy. She lived with her son in her mother's house, a two bedroom apartment where Laura's mother and five other family members lived, and used her cooking skills to make cakes and other sweets for family celebrations, which provided her with a small and inconsistent source of income. Laura was always enrolled in some sort of education or training course offered by the government, hoping that she would be able to afford better living conditions for her and her son in the future. She worried about how regularly she and her son became sick due to the fact that one of the windows of the bedroom they slept in had been knocked out and was covered with cardboard and tape. Whenever it rained Laura and her son woke up drenched, lying on a wet mattress.

The cosmetology course was the latest program that Laura had enrolled in. During her training Laura began hanging out more regularly with a friend who worked in a local salon and thought that after graduating she might be able to get a job working at the same salon. Most of the women in the neighborhood knew she was taking the course since she required heads of hair to experiment with. Laura practiced her barber skills on me, since my hair was short "like a

man's" and practiced other techniques on the women who I lived with. Her graduation was held

at the Teatro Catia, which had been recently restored by the Chavista Mayor of Caracas.

When I walked into the theater I was shocked to see members of the government's

disarmament initiative and representatives of Venezuela Full of Life on the stage where

graduates would eventually be handed their diplomas. State representatives stood on the stage,

dressed up with potted plants and decorative strings of light, giving interviews to government

affiliated news channels and community media groups. The back of the stage was taken up by a

huge backdrop with Chávez's face covering most of it. On the backdrop he had a wide smile and

was looking up at a quote about how mothers were the driving force behind peace. Laura's

family and I settled into the theater's plush seats, covered in a soft maroon clothe, and around 11,

when the interview cameras had been taken off stage, the event started.

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Pablo Fernández, then head of the government's disarmament initiative, walked over to the

microphone on stage and began by speaking about the importance of women in driving peace

and political transformation. 'We are living in a historic moment!' he announced, 'When women

are fighting inequality and violence. Women, he said, 'are our promoters of peace' in the barrios

and spoke of the fundamental roll they played in dealing with guns and violence in their

communities. He said 'Women have always played an important role in disarmament' because

young people will hand their guns over to the women of their communities. He said that women

'drive peace and tranquility' through projects like these, formation schools for women.

After Fernández finished his opening remarks, Guadalupe, Laura's friend that I had met

at the hair salon a few weeks before, was called up to speak. She wore black slacks and a black

business jacket with a white button up shirt underneath and black high heels. She said 'This is all

thanks to *El Presidente*!' and pushed her fist in the air. Some people in the crowd hooted and clapped in support. She thanked the professors of the school and said 'We are all mothers here, we are all here to seek a better future for our children.' She talked for less than a minute about how they were there for their children before she got chocked up and could no longer speak clearly. She was able to get out the words, 'I can't, I can't, I am so touched' before she left the stage. Later her emotional reaction became clearer as one of the men from the Venezuela Full of Life initiative used her as an example for why they were all there. She had lost her two sons to violence, he explained. 'This,' he said, 'is why we form ourselves why these schools of formation are so important.'

Once the women had their diplomas in hand, a woman from the disarmament initiative got up and asked the women to raise their right hands. When the theater was full of arms stretched towards the sky she read off an oath about defending peace. After the oath was over a core group of women in the middle of the seats went crazy, throwing their hands in the air and shouting.

Closing off the event, the Vice-minister of the Venezuela Full of Life initiative, wearing the typical Chavista track suit (blue with colors from the Venezuelan flag), got up, thanked the representatives for being there, then 'the women,' and then *El Presidente*. After reviewing the advances women had made during the revolution he said 'Security is not just about more police and more patrols. Police do not teach children how to orient themselves…They don't want the police to situate them in the world.' Here a child in the audience began making noise and the speaker laughed and said 'See! Children aren't formed by the police. They want their parents to form them, to teach them their place in the world.' He said that it was parents and mothers that would teach children to be children of the homeland and of peace. But, he said, with the

revolution women were not only housewives, 'They don't only make arepas, they don't just make food, they also work, they are social leaders, they don't just make food…women are forming themselves with this government, they aren't just at home.'

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This discourse presents the "new socialist woman": She not only cooks and takes care of a house, but engages in political and community work, has a job, and promotes peace in her neighborhood (primarily by being a "good" mother). On the one hand, this discourse could be empowering, since it recognizes women as multi-dimensional beings. On the other, it places a heavy responsibility on the "new socialist woman": to solve crime and violence by being politically active, nurturing parents, and economically productive.

Laura's job-training course came closest to providing women with a material solution to economic problems by enhancing their potential to be economically productive; but the course did not help them with locating jobs or even organizing worker cooperatives where their labor could be put to use. In other words, the program made the women "employable" but did not provide them with employment. In Marx's terms, these workshops allowed women to cultivate labor skills, but did not provide any mechanism by which this could be transformed into labor power.

The government sponsored a number of initiatives similar to the job-training program that Laura participated in. Educational and technical training programs provided access to education that people in the barrios did not have before. However, the government's attempts to make room for these newly educated citizens in the labor market were unsuccessful. Small cooperatives and some state-owned companies exist, but most experiments like the *Misión Vuelvan Caras* (Program About-Face) disappeared after a few years. And government

redistribution of resources through these kinds of programs did not provide sustainable answers to the problem of survival. Laura herself had been part of a cooperative to make shoes a few years before she enrolled in this training program, a cooperative that was never able to get off of the ground.

There are a few reasons why these workshops and programs were targeted at women. Domestic violence was recognized by the UNES as a widespread problem in poor communities, a problem that activists knew had largely been overlooked by previous security initiatives. Women have also been the core participants in Chavista programs in the country since the government began supporting educational and participatory programs. However, it most likely also made sense to state actors and police reformers to target women for education and transformation because women, as mentioned above, are commonly understood to be key actors in explaining and solving crime and violence. As one woman said at a UNES workshop to settle a debate about who the most important figure was in a child's life: 'The mother is always more important, that mother is the one who is responsible, it is the mother.'

DEFLECTION

The interventions and initiatives that I have discussed here were neither consistent nor encompassing enough to be considered successful subjectification processes in the Foucauldian sense. They were not meticulous observations of detail, compiling "knowledge, descriptions, plans and data" for "the control and use of [wo]men" (Foucault 1977/1995:140). Nevertheless, these interventions were important to the degree in which the discourse used in and around them operated as a terministic screen, turning attention to certain approaches and answers to crime while pushing others to the periphery. This discourse diverted attention away from programs and

initiatives that were essential to successful security reform – such as improved police pay, strengthening accountability mechanisms, and reducing access to guns and ammunition – and awarded primacy to culture, values, and morals.

Unlike Soviet socialism, where the Secret Police were paid four to five times what a skilled worker was paid (Verdery 1991), by the time devaluations and inflation had set in officers were back to making around minimum wage. And in contrast to the revolutionary discussions at UNES conferences, rank and file police officers felt extremely exploited and undervalued. During my interview with Nico he suggested that he might quit the police and start to work in a restaurant, where he thought he would make more money (and have the added benefit of reducing work stress). According to Nico, "I have been thinking about getting a job in a café, I think I would earn more and there wouldn't be as much pressure…besides, they would respect my hours off." Poor pay for Nico was not the only issue; he felt that poor compensation, combined with long hours and the abuse of his time was denigrating and took a physical and psychological toll on him. In other words, it was not just poor pay that made Nico consider leaving the "socialist-humanist" police to go and work in a privately owned business. It was also the exploitation and abuse that he experienced as an officer in the "socialist" police institution.

The focus on culture and values by the community police did have some positive results: Local governments and community police officers helped schools obtain musical instruments for children and officers provided activities for children that they probably would not have had access to otherwise. But this focus also deflected attention away from various community policing activities – creating information networks, mediating conflicts between families and neighbors, and coordinating public services with communities to address infrastructural problems (CGP 2010:96). A lack of resources also made it difficult to follow through with most

of these responsibilities. This was evident at the community police conference, where every presenter included a section on "weaknesses," all noting that they lacked essential resources and infrastructure. Following up each presentation, Pinto congratulated the officers on the work they were accomplishing in their communities, but reminded them again and again that building up networks and gathering information was an important aspect of the job that 'cannot be overlooked' (but could be underfunded). Though supervisors observed that following up with victims after a crime was key to decreasing violence, slides on weaknesses demonstrated that they had few resources with which to do this work.

The events that the Zamora group was able to hold depended on officers' own investment or community money. The supervisor at the refuge event explained to me that they raised money in different ways and sometimes received funds from communal councils, and in some cases used their own money to buy water and snacks. Neither did these services have the resources to consistently engage with the communities and children they were "saving." The service in Zamora was too understaffed to return to the refugee camps and neighborhoods they visited, making it difficult to build relationships with marginalized populations and follow up with victims of crime and violence (of course, there is an important debate to be had on whether or not poor communities benefit from their relationships with police). During the event at the refugee center, uniformed officers walked around with note pads, asking residents questions and gathering information about crime and gangs in the area. As the female police officers painted children's faces, they talked to them about whom they were scared of in the neighborhood and how often they heard gunshots. However, the community police service was not set up to systematize and utilize this information, a problem also brought up during presentations at the museum. This deflection is of particular importance, since research suggests that improved data

collection, systematization, and utilization have substantially decreased crime in parts of Latin America.

Though explicitly set against neoliberal ideology, social outreach coordinators' focus on self-transformation through individual reflection and community participation mirrored neoliberal gendered subjectification processes studied by Sutton (2010) in Argentina. Distinct from neoliberal projects to "secure the soul" that can be seen in other Latin American contexts (O'Neill 2015), workshops still encouraged women to *secure the self* by developing certain understandings of themselves.

Like neoliberal economic restructuring – which "intensified many social needs while simultaneously restricting the ability or will of the state to satisfy them" resulting in "a corresponding focus on compelling civil society to perform what were once state responsibilities" (Richards 2004:8; see also Goldstein 2012) – socialist ideology deflected attention from structural and institutional causes of insecurity and made women responsible for their own existential and physical security, as well as the security of their communities.

Work by Richards (2004) and Lind (2002, 2003) has shown that neoliberalism makes women responsible for a whole host of social services that the state previously provided. As Richards (2004:4) has noted, "the de-emphasis on state provision of social services characteristic of neoliberal reform carries with it a corresponding focus on compelling civil society – and in particular women's organizations – to perform what were once state responsibilities. The result is a model of citizenship in which women, particularly in poor sectors, provide care oriented services for free." In the vignette above, we see a similar process of "responsibilization;" official and everyday discourse presented women as both the agents of cultural decay as well as social change.

Additionally, the ideal socialist woman crafted by state representatives created a contradiction for women: The expectations of the new socialist woman are precisely the reasons why women are blamed for crime. Being a new socialist woman looked very much like being a bad mother (i.e. being away from home to engage in community leadership or work at a job) even though discourse suggests that women could and should strive to do all of these things well. Calls for women to be not only homemakers but also peacemakers were not supported by state policies. State representatives called on women to disarm their neighborhoods at the same time that the state the government continued to import guns in increasingly high numbers[59] and the disarmament committee and law – years in the making – flailed. Rather than regulating the production of bullets by Cavim, the military-run ammunition company, the government left the regulation of violence to mothers, regulation that was fashioned as part of their revolutionary responsibility.[60] And state actors told women to seize guns from the young at the same time that this same revolutionary discourse was used by state actors to justify support for armed *colectivos*.

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[59] Since 2009 the government has increased the number of guns imported, many of which are eventually sold on the black market (Zubillaga 2017). Only Puerto Rico has more murders by gun in the region (Zubillaga 2017). Since 2006 90% of the homicides registered in the country were committed with a gun, in comparison to the global average of 42% and a regional average of 60-70% (Zubillaga 2016).

[60] Ammunition made by Cavim accounts for about 70 percent of all gun murders in the country (Kurmanaev 2015).

Increasing insecurity had different impacts on men and women and charged them with different responsibilities. As I show in Chapter 3, the failure of the state to guarantee security has important implications for men's identity formation. If some men take on the responsibility of protecting themselves and their loved ones through acts of violence and aggression (see Chapter 3), women become responsible for putting an end to that aggression.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I have looked at how police reform and citizen security initiatives were reconfigured through socialist ideology and everyday understandings of insecurity, both of which individualized and moralized issues of police corruption and crime and violence. UNES faculty tried to make students aware of Venezuela's repressive policing past so that they would not repeat it, while social outreach initiatives and workshops tried to construct peace through the construction of new (female) subjects. But the transformation that reformers hoped to actualize missed Marx's principle insight: Social transformation is achieved through material transformation.

Previous work on 20th century socialism has largely focused on intellectuals, producers of culture, or state actors deeply embedded in the socialist project (see, for example, Verdery 1991; Halfin 2000; Glaeser 2011; but see Burawoy and Lukács. 1992), ignoring the ways in which everyday people and peripheral state actors understand socialist ideology. In this chapter, I have tried to document this process and show how ideas about crime and violence operate on the ground and from the ground up. Contra Bendix's (2001) portrayal of socialist ideology as omnipotent and imposing, it is important to keep in mind that moral and cultural understandings

of insecurity were not imposed from the top down. Instead, they were powerful because these understandings already existed on the ground.

In the next chapter, I show how the socialist humanist model ended up complementing and bolstering mano dura tactics and extralegal violence. I argue that the existence of the socialist humanist model did not delegitimize police repression and violence, but further justified its necessity. I show that the preventative "mano suave" model of policing and the moralistic discourse of the government did not mean that repressive security forces did not have a role to play in the new socialist society. Rather than waning in importance (as Marx, Lenin, and Gramsci predicted) security forces become key to enforcing divisions in society and reproducing the divisions that democracy in the country has long been dependent on.

From Mano Dura to Mano Blandengue and Back Again[61]

At the same accountability ceremony where the governor's assistant spoke in length about
socialism and security, Supervisor Jefe Lenny, a high-ranking officer in the state police, began
the ceremony with a " state of affairs" report, summarizing the work that the police had done
over the past year. He started his speech by talking about the new police. 'This new model is
about prevention, not repression. It is a socialist model to replace the bourgeois institution that
we had before, that criminalized the poor. In this new model the police promote participation,
they promote the community's self-administration, they do not criminalize the poor, they
prioritize popular sectors, and they *believe* in being accountable to communities.'

During the report the supervisor went over resources (i.e. how many vehicles the police
had) officer education (like how many officers had gone through retraining), and other
"housekeeping" issues. He emphasized that the community police had done 177 workshops and
activities with children and had been a part of organizing the summer camp for children from the
barrios. He also congratulated the police on taking guns and drugs off the streets and showed a
graph of the number of citizens that had been arrested. He proudly announced that their arrest
rate had increased by 24% within the past year. Next he wen through various slides of pictures of

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[61] Mano dura refers to heavy-handed repressive security practices. Mano blandengue was a term
used by officers and citizens to refer to what they believed was a "wimpy" or "soft" approach to
security.

thin brown male bodies in handcuffs, with their shirts off and bags over their heads and praised the police for 'dismantling' 69 gangs that year. He said that people had warned the community police about challenging or getting involved with gangs and, lifting his fist in the air while gesturing in the direction of a group of officers in the audience, he said '*Bienvenidos a la muerte en el nombre de la policia comunal*!' (The community police welcomes death!).

At the end of his presentation a video was put up on the screen entitled "Revolutionary Maximum Operation: Zero Tolerance Policing" and a soundtrack better suited for a chase scene in a blockbuster action flick came blasting out of loudspeakers in each corner of the room. The video showed a slew of newspaper headlines and pictures of gangs that had been arrested, drugs captured, and the destruction of illegal beer and liquor being sold. He ended his presentation by referring to the socialist transformation of the police and thanking this transformation for their successes.

Police and citizen security scholars often place the democratic community-oriented model that Lenny refers to above on one end of the policing spectrum and zero-tolerance militarized policing, seen at the end of the vignette, on the other. While recognizing that these models can co-exist, scholars and policy makers tend to view these approaches as antithetical to one another. In this chapter, I problematize the assumption that authoritarian policing and democratic policing are contradictory and the belief that authoritarian policing is anathema to democracy in general – an assumption that underlies the juxtaposition of the two models of policing that Lenny seamlessly draws upon in his speech. I also question the assumed correlation between democracy, inclusion and peace in police studies, arguing that this assumption overlooks the ways in which violence and exclusion constitute democratic systems and the role the police play in maintaining lines of inclusion and exclusion.

First, I problematize these assumptions by showing that democratic mechanisms of participation do not necessarily lead to democratic outcomes. A growing body of research has called into question the "automatic association between civil participation and democratic deepening" (Smilde 2011:16). In this chapter I show that barrio residents used participatory spaces to challenge the rule of law, proposing that not all people deserved equal treatment under the law.

Second, I show that on the ground some believe that authoritarian policing and the repression associated with it is not antithetical to democracy, but is necessary for the protection of citizens' rights (to the detriment of others, largely poor young men of color). And third, in contrast to the contradictory way in which police scholars have tended to think about democratic and authoritarian policing, I show that these two approaches operated in a complementary fashion on the ground in Caracas. Rather than talking about the mano dura and mano suave of the state, I show that this bifurcation can be applied to the police as well. As Edmond put it in his interview, the police's mano suave could "hug communities" [*abrazar a las comunidades*] while the mano dura could "attack the delinquents."

President Nicolás Maduro's speech at a march for peace in Caracas clearly demonstrated the logic of a complementary policing model that developed out of the 2009 police reform. Emphasizing the need for dialogue in constructing peace, Maduro said that he was willing to "go up into the most dangerous barrio in Petare (a poor grouping of neighborhoods with some of the highest homicide rates in the city) without guns and on foot…without fear, to talk to the youth and tell them to stop the killing…to knock on the doors of the hideouts of the criminals" and engage them in a dialogue of peace. However, in the same speech Maduro warned that his administration would "tighten the mano dura to protect the decent people [*el pueblo decente*] that

have not been penetrated by the evil of violence. I extend my hand and if [the criminals] do not take it…we will go up [into the barrios] with the police and the National Guard because this has to end… The state says: For those who step outside of these rules, here is the law, here is authority." In this speech, Maduro offers two forms of policing – the preventative soft hand of the police (most often represented by the PNB) and the repressive heavy hand of the state (represented by the National Guard and the CICPC) – to deal with two "kinds" of people: those who live inside the law and those who live outside of it.

Though Chávez utilized this discourse less often, he also supported a complementary model of democratic and authoritarian security, calling for *malandros* to become a part of the government's political project while at the same time supporting multiple militarized initiatives that targeted poor young men of color. For example, the same year that the PNB, the UNES, and the CGP were legally created, the government launched the Dispositivo Bicentenario de Seguridad, a security initiative led by the National Guard.
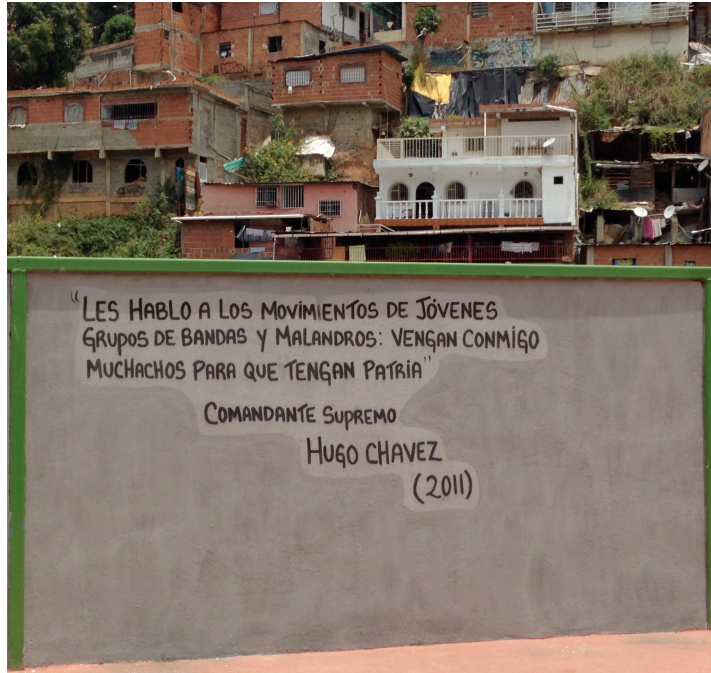
A quote from Hugo Chávez painted on the wall of a community center in western Caracas. The quote reads: "I am talking to youth movements, gangs, and thugs: Boys come with me so that you have a homeland."

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Throughout the chapter I use the term authoritarian policing to refer to the zero-tolerance militarized approach that Lenny presented in the video. Authoritarian policing can refer to numerous practices that are associated with security under authoritarian and military governments: repressive tactics, militarization, extralegal violence, and impunity. Democratic policing covers security practices from accountability mechanisms, decentralization, community-based approaches, responsiveness rule of law, and the protection of human rights (see Chapter 2).

6.1 A HOW-TO GUIDE FOR DEMOCRATIZING THE POLICE

The transition from authoritarian to democratic security is considered one of the most important steps in consolidating democracy (Pereira and Ungar 2004). According to scholars, authoritarian security "undermine[s] the fabric of emerging democracies" (Schneider and Amar 2016). One of the reasons why scholars emphasize replacing authoritarian policing with democratic policing is the history of close military-police relationships in the region, which resulted in the police viewing citizens as enemies to be subdued, controlled, and contained by any means necessary (Hinton 2006; Hernandez 1986). Mani (2000:17-18) has written that successful democratic transition depends upon keeping the military out of internal security, which requires that the police "assume the obligation to safeguard justice and protect lives, rights, and dignity of citizens." According to Bayley (1985) even in countries with democratic political systems, if the police are repressive, the government will continue to be recognized as authoritarian.

Like the literature on democratic transitions, much of the work on police reform is built on an evolutionary vision of government institutions. As Candina (2006:78) notes, "This is apparent in the supposition (often implicit but easily deducible in the texts) that police forces can evolve from being traditional or even backward (purely repressive, authoritarian in character, isolated from society, and unprofessional) to being modern or more advanced (preventive, professionalized, democratic, and transparent)." Consistent with this evolutionary vision, police scholars and reformers as well as policy makers have tended to expect that democratic policing can and must *replace* the militarized policing that has characterized much of Latin America.

Much scholarship on reform assumes that the tenets covered under the rubric of democratic policing exist on one end of a spectrum, while those under the umbrella of authoritarian policing exist on the other. The "paradox" that Glebbeek (2004) takes up in her book on police reform in Guatemala depends on the juxtaposition of democratic and authoritarian policing, as she recounts how these two models competed with one another for dominance. According to Dammert and Malone (2006:37-38):

> On one end of the spectrum are zero tolerance strategies, which stress comprehensive, aggressive law enforcement with "no holds barred"…Community-based approaches to fighting crime lie at the other end of the spectrum. In simple terms, community approaches are based on the view that it takes a whole village, or a neighborhood, to fight crime.

Community-based models of policing are often singled out as important to police "evolution" because, according to scholars, these models mirror liberal democracy (Einstein and Amir 2001; Blausten 2015; Marx 2001; Van den Broeck 2001; Lum 2009) by strengthening citizen participation, transparency, and accountability. Community-based models are contrasted with militarized policing, which leaves "little space for the kinds of citizen participation and transparency" necessary in a democracy (Ungar 2011:29). Democratic policing is also thought to best protect citizens' human rights, largely because they remain accountable to citizens who, it is assumed, will hold police accountable for human rights violations. Blaustein (2015:205) writes that community policing can be defined as "a mode of policing that aspires to exercise control through consent and consultation" which is "arguably preferable to…a 'crime attack model' of policing that relies primarily on coercive authority."

From the perspective of police reformers, the socialist humanist model of policing –

civilian community-based and human rights oriented – was intended to replace the militarized,

repressive, and "capitalist" model of policing that came before the reform (Fermin 2011). This

hope was built into the architecture and aesthetics of the UNES. As mentioned in the Chapter 1,

the university's locations in Caracas were chosen to symbolize the transition from the repressive

and violent national security of the previous governments to the socialist humanist model of

policing proposed by reformers. A large mural on the campus in Catia serves as a reminder of

this goal. The left side of the mural is covered by three distorted, haunting figures draped in

black robes.

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The right side of the mural contains the words of Raquel Aristimuño, whose son was killed by the police in 1992. Under her name, she is described as "Mother of Ramón Parra Aristimuño: Victim of the Police Model that We Want to Overcome."
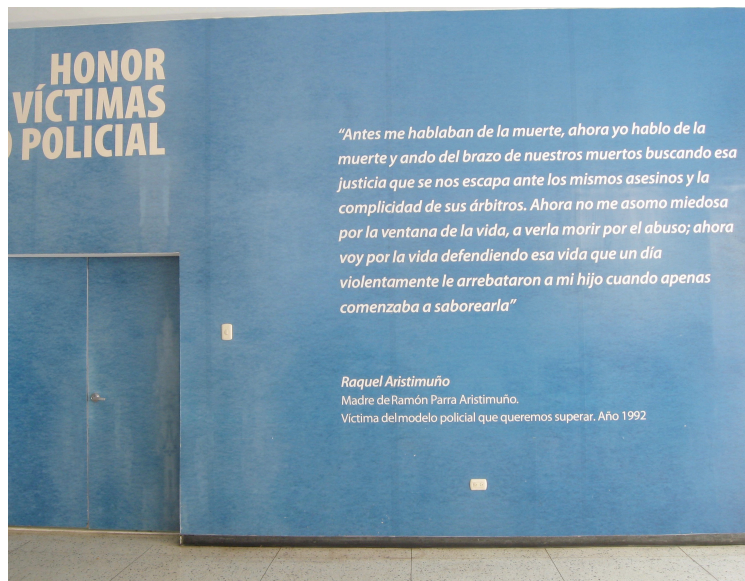
Police scholars and reformers have clearly delineated between authoritarian policing and democratic policing. But it is much less clear how people on the ground think about these approaches, their relationship to each other, and to democracy in general. Like police scholars, police reformers viewed the new police model as a replacement of repressive policing. However, many politicians, security forces, and citizens did not believe that it was necessary to replace repressive policing, but supplement it with the new model. In fact, in this chapter I will show that many people believe that policing works best where both models exist. My research shows that many officers and barrio residents perceive repressive and "humanist" policing models as separate pillars, both necessary to secure a democratic society. While many agreed that the old

model was overly repressive, they also felt that the new model had shifted policing too far in the other direction. From this perspective, a complementary approach to policing was needed in order to deal with those citizens that respected the law and had "acclimated" to humanist policing as well as those who did not respect the rule of law and required a police force that was not restrained by the rule of law.

POLICING, VIOLENCE, AND DEMOCRACY

According to Bittner (1970), a founding father of modern police studies, the police are the way in which modern democratic societies deal with the "problem of violence," and were integral to our "quest for peace through peaceful means." The task of the police from this perspective is to monopolize coercion by regulating and restricting non-state actors' use of violence. Implicit in this understanding is that 1). Violence is anathema to democracy and 2). Governments have an interest in controlling and regulating both citizens and the police.

Within the literature on policing, democracy, to the degree that it is discussed, is often understood through a liberal tradition, and is considered "a non-violent means of equally apportioning and publicly monitoring power within and among overlapping communities of people" (Keane 2004:1). Like studies of democratic transitions, police scholars have tended to focus on the police as an institution in order to evaluate the implementation and outcomes of reform. Violence, from this perspective, feeds off " the weaknesses of democracy," (Ungar 2011: 69) and destroys a key principle of it: the rule of law (Koonings and Kruijt 2004:5). According to O'Donnell (1999:305), without the rule of law there is no certainty of "equality among individuals who are posited not just as individuals, but as *legal persons*, and consequently as citizens."

However, rather than thinking about democracy as concomitant with non-violence some scholars have suggested that democracy can be constituted in different ways by violence. Protests and lootings, for example, are ways in which people can express discontent with a government and its actions. In Caracas, Velasco (2015:163) has documented different "uncivil" tactics that poor people used throughout the 70s and 80s to place demands on the state. Discussing the kidnapping of state equipment and vehicles, Velasco writes that these "events affirmed residents' democratic values as they combined long-standing support for representative democracy with tactics forged in the fray of contentious protest to pursue a basic principle of liberal citizenship accountability." More recently, in 2008 communal councils in the western part of the city mobilized and "kidnapped" the then vice-president of Caracas's Mercal system when their neighborhood Mercal had been closed for over six months, explaining that the kidnapping was a (successful) effort to force the government to protect their rights to food security (Hanson and Lapegna 2017:25).[62] From this perspective, democracy is less about institutions and how they operate and is more akin to a constant negotiation about who gets to be included in the body politic and who does not (Richards 2002).

Violence does not only allow citizens to contest governments, but can also play a part in propping up democratic governments themselves (Arias and Goldstein 2010). One of the functions that violence can serve is to reproduce social categories, classifications and divisions. This process of dividing and classifying according to Ranciere (1998, 2010) is not antithetical to democracy, but is the basis of democratic society. Like the prison system, the police are a mechanism for dealing with "groups that remain excluded and marginalized and that are resistant

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[62] The Mercal system is the chain of government subsidized food markets that were opened in the barrios under Chávez.

to strategies of social inclusion" (Antillano et al. 2015). Coercive state institutions create, maintain, and naturalize these divisions; they shape democratic subjectivities and identities; and can promote self-regulation. For example, in his ethnography of the French police, Fassin (2013) has shown how excessive use of power and coercion by the police create new categories of subjects and maintain boundaries between whole and partial citizens.

As Foucault and Scott have argued, all states categorize, classify, and partition populations. However, Contra Foucault's notion that the modern state is defined by the state's regulation of life and its power to "let live" (1976), I suggest that it might be more useful to think about state power as expressed through its ability to "let die" (Giroux 2006:180), or to exterminate en masse.

A comment made by Miguel Rodríguez Torres, the then Minister of Justice, in 2014 about homicide rates in Venezuela communicated the state's capacity to "let die." In an interview Torres explained that there were types of violent groups that the state could not control. These, he concluded, are not directly attributable to a problem of citizen security in the country, but are the result of "differences between gangs that have developed a culture of violence, arms and such, [believing] that the only solution to their differences is to kill each other. Even if you contain it today, at some point they will look for and kill each other." The solution, he implied, was to leave these groups alone to let them kill each other off (Hanson 2014). This perspective frees the state of having to intervene in violent disputes and regulate violent actors. By placing certain groups outside of the realm of security, Torres justifies the state's withdrawal from regulating their deaths and protecting their lives.

I argue that where states do not regulate violence or seek to regulate life, human rights discourse may be incompatible with people's lived realities. It is not only state security forces

who reject universal human rights in these contexts, but civilians as well. Indeed, rather than demanding equal protection of human rights for all, people may view citizenship rights as a more appropriate way to allocate protections and liberties. In contrast to human rights, one can lose citizenship and the rights it affords by failing to follow a nation-state's regulations, rules, and norms. This means that one can lose their right to the rule of law and that a citizen can be stripped of all rights, even the right to life.

DEMOCRATIC MEANS, AUTHORITARIAN ENDS

After a police oversight committee meeting in a city in the southwest region of Venezuela, I began chatting with two of the members about their work with the police. Miguel, the group's promoter, had told me on the trip from Caracas that the group had submitted two reports to the mayor, so I asked them if they felt these reports had resulted in any changes. Juan, a stocky man in his 40s wearing a windbreaker with the Chavista party symbol, shrugged. His fellow member, Elias, also in his 40s and wearing a hat with a Chavista slogan, concentrated on the floor as he considered the question. After a few moments, Elias answered that the municipal police had 40 more guns since the time the CCCP had been organized. Juan said that this was great but added: 'What the police really need and what the committee should ask for is large guns. These pistols they carry are pretty, but the police are facing other groups with large guns and better weapons, these guys are walking around with uzis and the police cannot compete with the equipment they have.' Elias nodded his head in agreement as Juan talked. In CCCP meetings in Caracas members also often commented on the inability of officers to protect themselves, due to the better arms and lack of restrictions *colectivos* and "thugs" enjoyed.

The CCCPs were created during the first few years of the reform, and were intended to exercise external oversight over police forces by monitoring police duties and functions, as well as the degree to which they adhered to the new model. One of their duties was to review the types of weapons officers had access to, making sure they were only issued the 9mm pistols allowed under the new police laws. Yet, one of the principle suggestions made by the committees I observed was to put military-grade weapons back in the hands of the police; people often used CCCP meetings to demand a rolling back of the reform they were charged with protecting.

Members of all the CCCPs I worked with and participants in all of the community meetings I attended came from poor and working-class neighborhoods. Thus, they represented sectors that bare the brunt of police brutality. Yet most of them asked for a rearming of the police and supported the idea that the military and militarized policing served important functions. Why would people from areas most impacted by police violence support empowering the police by giving them military grade weapons and demand a rolling back of regulations?

First, it is crucial to take into account who attended CCCP and community meetings. The content of citizens' demands depends on "the context in which they are made and the actors involved," which determine what "citizenship claims are taken up by the state" and, thus, "how citizenship is likely to be expanded and for whom" (Richards 2004:196). CCCPs were made up of women and men, all over the age of thirty but most in their 40s and 50s; members had to have clean criminal records, and had to demonstrate that they had some level of "professional" training or job experience. Though they were all from lower-class sectors, those who were allowed to and interested in joining the CCCPs would be considered what Goffman (2014) refers to as "clean people." Community meetings were open to any community members, but were also

heavily dominated by older men and women. Over the two-year period of my fieldwork I never saw a young man at any of the meetings I attended; the youngest men at the meetings were police officers themselves.

Older populations and those with "professional" work may be more likely to be concerned with "cleaning up the streets," regardless of the tactics. Community-police relations in these cases may enhance inner community stratification and discrimination. As Goffman's (2014) work demonstrates, information networks between community members and police officers can reproduce the criminalization of poor young men of color. Police officers who tap into, in Elijah Anderson's (2000) terms, the "decents" in order to control the "streets" run the risk of reinforcing fractions between those community residents deemed respectable by officers and those considered deserving of repression and violent techniques.

Furthermore, people who have experienced police brutality or are close to those who have might be less likely to be involved in accountability groups and community-police meetings. In other words, those people who might advocate for regulations and limited use of force might also opt out of these forms of participation. Ana, who had been elected as one of the CCCP representatives, ended up attended only one meeting. Shortly after this meeting, her daughter was mistreated by a PNB officer, which made her conclude that the police 'will never change' so there was no reason to continue participating in a group that sought this change.

Community members also supported a rolling back of the reform due to the fact that the PNB came to be seen as impotent and weak. For many, the regulations placed on the PNB made them incapable of protecting, in the words of Maduro, "the decent people." The discourse that grew up around the PNB can be distilled more or less as: "Police officers, worried about being reported for human rights abuses, are no longer permitted to respond to citizens with force,

regardless of the situation. Both citizens and criminals, realizing that officers have their 'hands tied,' take advantage of this." In contrast to people's accounts of the Metropolitan Police, stories about the PNB were dominated not by accounts of brutality but restraint in the extreme. The reform, in the minds of many, made the police incapable of protecting themselves, much less citizens.

PNB officers were frequently referred to as children, young boys, and recently hatched chickens. Recent PNB recruits and the majority of PNB officers were in fact quite young. Indeed, the youthful almost childlike sea of faces I encountered in the first policing classes I attended unsettled me, causing the same skeptical thoughts I had heard from my neighbors in Catia to pass through my head: Were this children capable of "enforcing order"? The faces reminded me of my youngest brother; he had just starting community college but his face could have still easily passed in a high school classroom.

This youthfulness was linked to various deficiencies, such as a lack of maturity, a lack of patience, and laziness. Most importantly, youthfulness was emasculating, suggesting that officers were not yet men and not yet ready to take on the reality of the streets. For example, during a CCCP meeting in western Caracas Deisy, a woman in her 30s (by far the youngest member of the committee) with platinum blonde hair who always showed up wearing skillfully applied makeup and flattering fashionable clothes, exclaimed 'The new model is great, non-repression, ok but these new guys are scared of their own guns and do not know how to carry themselves…When they come up against a gun they don't know what to do, they all get scared.' A third member from the same sector chimed in, saying that she understood the need to not 'repress people…but what about delinquents? What happens to them? What happens when they take out their gun? What is an officer to do then?' Yanilda, the CCCP's promoter, responded by

saying that this is what the UPDFP was for, that 'if someone's life was in danger than officers are supposed to use their weapons.' Luciana, a thin woman with jet black hair who had a way of making conversations go her way, shot back coolly, 'Do you know when the police started losing respect? When they started talking about human rights' with a slight smirk on her face.

In this conversation, CCCP members articulate two critiques of the new police model. The first is that the non-repressive nature of the reform turned men into passive actors, not "men of action." According to Deisy, non-repressive policing is 'great,' but not when it makes officers weak and scared. Linked to this complaint is Deisy's suggestion that there is a connection between non-repressive policing and a lack of technical proficiency; in her words, the men trained under this model didn't even know how to use their guns. Police officers had similar opinions, believing that too much time was spent talking about human rights with little time left for technical training. The second issue that the conversation makes clear is that CCCP members interpret the reform as prohibiting *any* use of force by police officers. This is implicit in the question about what an officer is supposed to do when a gun is pulled on him (since members assume that the officer is not allowed to take out his weapon to protect himself). The UPDFP does allow officers to respond to force in a progressive manner, depending on a civilian's actions and demeanor (see Chapter 2). But in this conversation gradation is replaced by prohibition.

The perception that PNB officers were too young, inexperienced, and scared to act concerned community residents, who linked these characteristics to increasing crime in their neighborhoods. During one CCCP meeting Deisy was enraged, talking about the apathy and lack of action that she saw among the PNB around her neighborhood. She chalked much of this up to a change in police supervisors that the communities did not agree with, but also said that police officers were too scared to do anything about the crimes and infractions that they saw 'in broad

daylight.' According to Desiy, just the other day she had seen a group of gang kids outside of a market yelling 'Pass me the *bicha* [gun]! Take out the *bicha!*' cussing and swearing like she had never heard before, 'as if it was nothing.' Passionate, almost to the point of yelling, she said, 'There were 16 deaths in February…are we going to end February with 30? With how many? Where are the police?' She said, 'I don't know about these other sectors, but where I live criminals walk around with their pistols in their hand. Why,' she asked, 'do the police not stop the kids zooming by on motos with guns out in plain sight? They will stop a guy with his helmet hanging around his wrist but not the guy with the pistol because they are afraid.'[63]

Officers also had interactions with citizens that confirmed for them that people expected to see a violent response to insecurity. For example, one day after his shift I was standing with José on the concrete patio of his father's house near the coast, where he lived. After José's father greeted me with the two or three words that he knew in English (which he always did) he returned to his room to watch TV. José began telling me about his day while I took in the pleasant breeze drifting onto the porch. He said he had almost been killed while patrolling a main pedestrian strip in the center of the city. On patrol alone (this is against police regulations, which require patrol teams have two officers, but is a regular practice) he was walking down the main strip when 'two criminals with pistols stole a motorcycle from a guy and took off. The motorcycle passed by me before I knew what was happening…they came so close that they brushed up against my jacket!' He stood silent for a few minutes and then admitted, 'They could have grabbed my gun or shot me before I realized it.' As soon as they sped by he said he went to take his gun out and fire at them but then he realized there were too many people around, that he

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[63] Riding a motorcycle without a helmet is against the law and is supposed to require that the person receive a fine.

could accidentally hit a child or a woman and did not want to take the risk. But he said when he did not take his gun out those around him began yelling, saying that the police do not do anything, that 'they aren't worth anything' and that they did not understand why he hadn't used his gun. He said one kid got in his face and began screaming at him for not shooting the guys, saying that he was a coward and that the PNB 'don't have balls.' José identified this as a contradiction in the population, where people said that the PNB were good but weren't happy 'because the police is passive…They disrespect the police that they demanded.'

It is difficult to find a text on police reform that does not tout the benefits of citizen participation in democratizing the police; scholars and reformers across the political spectrum agree that increased citizen participation is a sine qua non of successful police reform (Fruhling 2003; Ungar 2011). According to Sabet (2012:214), citizen oversight and participation is important because: "Without question citizens are angry at the status quo, dissatisfied with the police, and frustrated by the police misconduct and abuse. Moreover, while administrations come and go, citizens remain."

But what if consistent violence constitutes the status quo? What if people become more dissatisfied and frustrated with lateral violence than with police misconduct? What if the fact that "citizens remain" in neighborhoods means that they are embedded in threat-filled environments? In this context the regulations that barrio resident saw as prohibiting coercion made little sense in a world where, from their perspectives, neither citizens nor malandros followed a formal or informal code.

Proponents of community-based models rarely struggle with the complications of participation that can arise, particularly in violent urban environments. While some work mentions that "civil society" can sometimes mobilize to support mano dura tactics (Ungar 2011;

Seligson 2003; Azpuru 2003; Dammert and Malone 2006), this issue is usually mentioned as a side note, and when discussed is chalked up to publics acting irrationally due to a short term societal panic. But the ways in which violence has fundamentally altered people's experiences as well as their identities is rarely integrated into scholarship or policies on citizen participation. Indeed, numerous terms have sprung up to refer to these new identities and subjectivities but they have yet to be included in studies of participation in any substantial way. The literature on citizen participation has yet to take into account the "chronic form" that violence can take in marginalized communities (Brennan, Molnar, and Earls 2007) or seriously confront the ways in which chronic exposure to violence at the urban margins can alter perception, interpretations, worldviews, and survival strategies (Kilanski and Auyero 2015; Bourgois and Schonenberg 2009; Contreras 2013). Instead, it is taken for granted that people will use participatory and accountability mechanisms to make "democratic" peaceful demands. However, as my data show, this is not always the case. Rather than anticipating that people will put democratic mechanisms to use towards peaceful, non-repressive, and inclusive ends, we need to document and anticipate the "undemocratic" content of the demands people make using these mechanisms.

6.4 AUTHORITARIAN POLICING AS DEMOCRATIC

Democratic policing is usually characterized as responsive to citizens, respectful of the rule of law, protective of human rights, accountable to citizens, and civilian (as opposed to militarized) (see Chapter 2). In this section, I show that people interpreted authoritarian and militarized forms of security as either meeting these standards or as better suited for protecting citizens' rights than non-repressive policing.

Rule of Law

The Chávez government recognized historically marginalized communities (Smilde and Hellinger 2011; Hanson and Lapegna 2017) and extended and deepened democracy in poor sectors by funding social programs, sponsoring participatory democratic experiments, and supporting the rewriting of the Venezuelan constitution. However, some saw the extension of rights in the constitution, other forms of legislation, or even Chávez speeches as extending too much power and control to "the people," leaving the police to reign in those who abused new rights and freedoms. During a CCCP accountability meeting, a police director explained to me that he had faith that the reform was going to have an impact but that he thought that Venezuela had 'lost a huge opportunity' when they rewrote the constitution and 'refounded the republic.' He said that he agreed with the constitution and all of the rights that it covered but that 'apart from all the rights there should be a constitution of responsibilities. All Venezuelans, we all know our rights but do not recognize that there are duties that come along with them…we are overflowing with rights but have little respect for the responsibilities that come along with it.' During Johan's interview, he told me, "Venezuela has always been a country in Latin America with many laws, many laws…we have more laws than any other country. Unfortunately, though, it is also the country where people obey laws the least, we obey the least, and this is something we haven't been able to change yet." Johan suggests that more laws and more rights do not lead to a more civil, regulated, or peaceful society.

Of course, the idea that people knew their rights but shirked their responsibilities is a complaint that existed in Venezuela before the constitution was rewritten and has been

documented in other countries as well. But some officers believed that the political project of the government had exacerbated this problem. Some officers reported that the Bolivarian Revolution had made the streets harder to police. One day in a retraining class at the UNES a police officer commented that with all of the talk about citizen power and how 'the street belongs to the people' that citizens do not respect the police, 'because citizens have much more power now and they think that they can attack officers because they believe that they have the right to.' Another officer, with striking silver hair, responded by saying that he had seen an episode of *Aló Presidente* where Hugo Chávez told people, 'The street belongs to the people, not to the police!' and that they did not have to be scared of the police. 'Whether he had good or bad intentions, what Chávez said made people respect the police less, now they feel that they own the streets.' Another officer in the class said no president had ever warned, 'If you touch an officer…' allowing his voice to trail off to indicate that there would be repercussions. In other words, from their perspective, the "popular power" that the government had cultivated put the police at a disadvantage, one they were not allowed to do anything about. This would not be the first time that progressive changes in legislation have contributed to violence in Venezuela. Recent research suggests that a new criminal procedure code passed in 1998 that regulated the police and extended rights produced an uptick in police violence (Kronick 2017). Similarly, I argue that the regulations put in place by the reform justified extralegal and excessive violence in response to what seemed to many to be a completely unregulated and chaotic world.

The fact that the aggressor in stories was often a woman suggests that people saw the PNB, and the model they represented, as impotent and emasculated, incapable of controlling anyone. As one woman asked in a meetings with community police officers in Santa Cruz, a neighborhood of Catia located close to Alí Primera Park, 'Am I supposed to trust the PNB? No

way! I trusted the Metropolitan Police!' She said that the supervisors didn't do anything and that the officers couldn't even protect themselves in the street. She said just the other day she saw a woman, 'A WOMAN!' she emphasized, slapping an officer in the face. 'No one would have dared do that to a Metro police officer…they knew what would happen to them if they did.' A younger woman agreed and said she too had seen an officer being abused the other day, but in her story a female officer was being hit by a man. She said that the officer couldn't do anything because she would be sanctioned for violating 'this guy's human rights but nothing is going to happen to the guy.'

While some individuals might 'shirk their responsibilities as a citizen,' others were believed to live completely outside of the law. For example, at one CCCP meeting in Caracas, members told the state representative working with the group that the disarmament initiative, like the reform, was a 'beautiful idea' but had to be rolled back if police officers were to feel safe on the streets. Cristina, one member of the CCCP, said that a PNB officer lived right beside her, and couldn't leave his house in uniform out of fear of being killed right outside his door. 'How are police officers going to do their jobs if they are more scared of criminals and *colectivos* than these people are of them?' She continued, 'So police officers, [according to disarmament plans] have to leave their guns at home when they go out in public with their families….but what happens is that criminals are not police….and they [law-makers] are the ones that dictate the laws. I mean, here I am, a politician and I have my 25 bodyguards and nothing is going to happen to me. But a police officer, who has put 10, 11, 12, 20 criminals in jail and he doesn't remember any of their faces but the guys they have put in jail don't forget the face of a police that put them there. So they go to this mall with their family, unarmed, and criminals show up and recognize them. Because they are armed they can kill them all. So who do these laws

disarm? The police? They disarm officers!!....You think that criminals pay attention to these laws?....No, they have their own laws, their own rules.' It was these groups in particular that community residents, CCCP members, and police officers identified as needing a different kind of response than the new police model allowed. What people demand here is not equal treatment by the law, but different responses to those who respected the law, who shirked their responsibilities, and who lived outside of the law completely. Instead of a gradation of force based on people's actions, like the UPDFP, people demanded a gradation based on the "type" of citizen or quality of person that an officer was dealing with.

Demilitarized/Civilian

Others believed that the militarized training that existed before the reform better prepared officers for stressful situations. From this perspective, officers trained under a militarized model were more likely to respect people's rights because they were less likely to lash out or act impetuously. Hard training, in other words, produces hard men who were clear headed and knew when (and when not) to use repression, unlike the soft, young, rash and careless officers that people believed came out of the UNES.

One day while sitting in the lobby of the CGP waiting to meet with the new head of the CCCPs (who never arrived for our scheduled meeting), I spoke with one of his assistants, who previously had worked as a supervisor in the community police in Caracas. This was a few weeks after opposition protests had begun (more on this below) and, in an effort to strike up conversation, I brought up the protests and asked her what she thought about the police actions so far. Without skipping a beat she asked me if I had seen the videos of police officers hitting people with their batons and their fists. Before I could answer she told me that she had seen a

video the other day of a PNB officer dragging a girl by her hair. 'There is no need to punch people in the ribs or grab their hair, this was why officers are trained according to the UPDFP. They should know how to take down and control a citizen without having to hit them. Why else do we teach them where pressure points are, places you can use to make a person go limp?' She talked for a few minutes about this training but then said that when she had received her 'little course' in the UNES that they did not even practice the UPDFP techniques. 'What good does it do to demonstrate it if students don't learn how to perform the procedures? These professors in charge of teaching the material are real idiots, this is why these cases of abuse are happening, because officers don't know the tactics they should. They don't receive training that would allow them to take standing all day in a protests being yelled at with things thrown at you.'

Throughout the conversation she referred to the students coming out of the UNES as 'these kids' who were not prepared to be cops when they graduated. 'Of course, there was I time when I was ashamed to admit that I was part of the Metropolitan Police, because they made the same mistake that the PNB are making now: quantity rather than quality. A big difference between the two, though, was the training. You can see the four years that officers had studied in the Metropolitan Police University,[64] you don't undergo this kind of training and formation without it marking your character. Being enclosed, beaten, shot at, this prepares you for anything, it prepares you to be in a march all day long or to be called on at one in the morning

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[64] Not all Metropolitan Police officers spent four years at the academy. Most Metropolitan Police officers received between three to six months of training. Technically officers had to take additional classes in order to ascend in rank, but many officers ascended due to cronyism.

when you were acuartelado.[65] Even I eventually had to hit my classmates, hit them with a baton, we all did this to each other during training.' She laughed as she nostalgically reminisced and emphasized that this was why they were prepared to deal with people spitting their faces all day without responding as PNB officers were in the protests.

Officers also critiqued the UNES and the new model for 'painting a pretty picture' of what policing would be like once students graduated, which left them unprepared for the harsh reality that they had to contend with on the street. After finishing an interview with a community police officer in his mid-40s, with short salt and pepper hair and a wide face, we continued talking for a bit about how different the image is that UNES gives the cadets about policing. He said that the UNES gives students the idea that all citizens are going to be respectful towards them and listen to their rights being read to them and listen while you explain to them what laws they are breaking. 'But that is only true in about 40% of the cases,' he said. He said that most of the time that you have to handcuff someone first and make them pay attention to you before you can let them know what part of the law they were breaking. 'It is a lie that people will calmly listen to you explaining these things; you have to settle them down and force them to listen. Have you ever seen those little books Evangelicals hand out about paradise?' he asked me, with a broad smile on his face. 'Well, the version of reality that the UNES gives to students is the "Atalaya" version [referring to the books]. There is a little lake over here, a rainbow over there, sun in the sky and everything is perfect. But when these kids actually get into the streets they

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[65] Acuartelado refers to the practice of keeping officers at police departments instead of allowing them to go home at night, in case they need to be called upon to show up at a location or event quickly. At that time, PNB officers were sleeping in police headquarters for three to four nights at a time in case they needed to be called on during the protests.

enter into hell and realize that things are different.' According to some officers, it was this difference between training and reality that resulted in officers cracking under pressure.

Responsive to Citizens

If responsiveness and accountability are aspects of democratic policing, some people perceived the military performing these better than the PNB. Take the success Johan felt when he was able to get (or at least believed that he had gotten) the National Guard deployed in his barrio for a few days. One evening after I got back from a long trip Miguel, Johan and I sat down to eat together. One of my favorite things about living with Johan was that, because he was a practicing Jew and did not have a female partner to fulfill this traditional task, he always made a large meal on Friday nights in order to have meals for the next day without having to cook (in observance of the Sabbath). One of the few regular meals that I ate during the week was on Friday night with Johan, filling up on fish and rice and, on a rare occasion, beer. As we sat at the dining room table that took up almost all of the main room, I and asked how things were going with the CCCP in Caracas. Johan told me that, as usual, they were getting nothing done and that the Minister of Justice was "wiping his ass with our reports." But, he said, perking up and speaking with a sense of pride, he said he had been able to convince the ministry to deploy National Guard troops to the neighborhood for a few nights after calling and putting pressure on people he knew through the CCCP. According to Blaustein (2015:9-10) "[A] key determinant of whether a police force is democratically responsive involves the qualified question of whether its governance and activities are primarily responsive to the interests of the demos" (9-10). If the response of state institutions to citizens' demands is a marker of democracy, to the degree that militarized institutions were more responsive to demands (or more immediately responsive) and, in this

instance, the presence of the National Guard made Johan feel empowered and recognized by the state. In the same way that seeing state institutions respond to demands made by civil society can be empowering, "uncivil" demands can empower citizens and give them a sense of recognition that is key to political belonging.

Protecting Officers' Rights

If the guarantee of human rights means that "everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person…no one shall be subjected to inhuman or degrading treatment…[and] all are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law," (UDHR 1948) some saw the reform's regulations as violating these rights by regulating the actions officers' could take. Barrio residents and police officers pointed out that police were citizens too, and should enjoy equal protection of their rights. Some interpreted the regulations that the reform implemented (though misinterpreted) as restraining officers' ability to protect their own rights. For example, a few days before the highly anticipated presidential elections of 2012 I ducked into a small store in Catia to buy some soap. While waiting in line, I overheard the cashier telling the woman in front of me that all of the National Police officers she knew were voting against Hugo Chávez because they no longer supported his government. Why? Because 'they are tired of having their rights violated.' Her customer agreed, saying that the new laws left officers too vulnerable. She went on to remark in an indignant voice that just the day before she had seen a woman hitting a police officer. What did the officer do? 'He stood there and took it.' According to the woman, if he had responded he could have been accused of 'violating a citizen's human rights.' (Notice a theme anyone?)

The fact that the implementation of the model coincided with an uptick in officer deaths convinced many that it made the police, particularly the PNB, incapable of protecting their citizens and themselves. While there are no official figures on the number of police killed each year in Venezuela, the numbers that are available show that police homicides are on the rise (though, as I discuss below, most officers are not killed on the job). The opposition linked NGO *Fundación para el Debido Proceso* (FUNDEPRO) claims to have counted 295-security officers killed in 2013, 251 in 2014, and 332 in 2015 (this number includes police and military officers as well as private security) (Hanson 2016). According to the PanAm post, 59 police officers were killed in Caracas in 2010; by 2014 this unofficial count had risen to 132 (Hanson 2016).

At a CCCP meeting at a communal council in western Caracas, while discussing the disarmament law, Luciana said that she felt that the law was contradictory since the police could not enter a space with their gun 'criminals aren't going to pay attention to it…even less when you take away the police's guns.' Three other members of the committee joined in agreement, all talking over each other about how the law made little sense. Luciana said, 'Do you know how many officers have died this year?' The man responded with no hesitation and without thinking '84.' Luciana said, 'That is right, 84 dead!' The man in front of me said it was now up to 86, as two had died the week before. Luciana said 'Thugs are just waiting to shoot a cop.' For Luciana, the regulation of police offices was discriminatory and put officers' lives at increasing risk.

A COMPLEMENTARY MODEL OF POLICING

According to many citizens and police officers the reform, along with other changes like the disarmament law, had resulted in a *mano blandengue* or *mano blanda* (wimpy hand) of the state.

However, these concerns with the democratic model did not mean that people wanted a complete

return to the old model. If people did not want to return to the previous model of policing, what

did they want? In this section, I argue that what people demanded (though demands were often

contradictory and vague) was something more akin to a complementary co-existence of the two.

Citizens had an appreciation for civilian control over certain aspects of policing, as well as

keeping the military out of those aspects. One afternoon when I had lunch with Lucrecia, a

CCCP member who was highly critical of the regulations on use of force, our conversation

started out with her wrinkling up her nose and complaining about the militarization of the CGP.

She said that since the replacement of Soraya and others, CGP representatives did not want to

meet with the CCCP. She worried that military officers would start to take over policing

functions that the PNB should be in control of, and noted that the National Guard was not

prepared to interact with communities the way that the PNB was.

One justification for a complementary approach to policing was that people in Venezuela

were not ready for a police that was 100% soft-handed. This perspective suggests that

regulations on all police officers needed to be loosened, not to the degree they were before the

reform, but to allow officers to deal with a bellicose citizenry. For some, officers needed to be

able to use more repression than the new model allowed until citizens adapted to a new kind of

policing. Eventually, repressive policing would be phased out, as citizens became used to the

new model. According to Alexis, the problem was that officers and citizens were caught in a

cycle: Citizens anticipate aggressive tactics due to previous police repression, so they respond

aggressively in kind, requiring that the officer be aggressive whether they intended to be

aggressive with a citizen or not. Alexis sometimes commented that a complementary model

would have to exist until people's understandings of and attitude towards the police changed.[66]

Or, as Supervisor Torres told me during our interview: "Police violence is a topic that is talked about a lot, police repression, violation of human rights, all the things that aren't wanted, but in order to achieve this there has to be an awareness among citizens, which is not happening, I mean, if I am going to submit to change…". Though set up as a slow process of change, this perspective simply justifies the actions that keep the cycle Alexis talks about going, resulting in a never-ending cycle of repression.

Others explained that different kinds of police bodies existed to serve different purposes. Sergio, a crime reported who worked for one of the widest read newspapers in Venezuela, was quite forthcoming in explaining the need for 'soft' forces like the PNB and other security forces that could deal with the 'realities' the country was facing. When I asked Sergio about the perception of the PNB that he had gathered from covering crime and violence in the barrios he told me: 'In order to understand the PNB you have to understand what came before them, the kind of police that existed here for forty years before them. This was a police that massively repressed social movements and protests when people took to the streets…So the government, when they decided to create a new police, the closest reference they had was the Metropolitan Police and that "We don't want a police like the Metropolitan." The PNB was the negation of the Metropolitan Police. In fact, the law saws that the PNB is a *preventative* police. This was the

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[66] Police scholars themselves have made similar observations. According to Glebbeek (2004:46) citizens must "learn how to act in this newly established system. They must learn how to demand their rights of citizenship, but also embrace beliefs and practices suitable to a democracy, i.e. abandon practices such as taking the law into their own hands."

conception of the 2008 police. That was the conception…so what happens? The PNB was created as a preventative police that respects human rights, and to a large degree this has been accomplished, in fact there have been few big scandals in the PNB and human rights violations are not on the same scale, are not massive like they were with the Metropolitan Police. They do happen but they are not as common, it is not a pattern. But what happens? Because the police is distinguished by is preventative character, this is a police that cannot handle and is not prepared for the type of violence that exists in Venezuela. We have a number of well-organized well-armed gangs in the country that this police, because of their model, is not prepared to combat…So they cannot contain these gangs and it is true that they have their hands tied. They are not trained to confront these kinds of groups that we have in the country.'

Taking out a copy of the most recent CICPC law from 2012, he explained that this was why the CICPC had a specially trained force to deal with these groups because the PNB could not, were never meant to. He opening up the copy and flipped to Article 58 which designates a special body within the CICPC to deal with these groups (refer to law) and said, 'This is because the state recognizes that the PNB isn't prepared to confront these groups, so there is a force that exists that yes, that can, this is why the CICPC and other security bodies exist.'

When I asked him if the PNB needed new training or a new model, however, he responded enthusiastically: 'No, you have to leave the PNB as it is. The PNB already has 6 years and has created its own culture, has trained all of their officers in a particular way there is no turning back. So it is better to leave the PNB as is with their culture and training and let them work in a preventative manner and leave the mano dura to other forces. Because the mano dura has to be applied but the PNB cannot do this so we have others like the CICPC and the National Guard for this. The PNB is as it is, and since they are preventative it would be a drastic change

for them, it wouldn't be understood. That is what the CICPC is for: to eliminate delinquents, the elimination of delinquents. And the CICPC has been very successful with this recently, last year alone there were 200 delinquents taken out by the CICPC. The CICPC is capable of carrying out this type of elimination. They have put strategies into place in the past few years that have been very successful in this…in fact if you look at the papers there is a take down every day, every day. So leave the PNB to play the role they were given, not to combat delinquents, because sooner or later you have to create a police like [the PNB]…sooner or later you have to create it.'

While talking to Simon before we left for the community police event in Zamora (see Chapter 5), he also explained the need to approach insecurity in a complementary manner. Like Sergio, he explained that there were certain problems that you 'have to attack with force, you have to apply the mano dura to some, you can't let delinquents get away with everything.' This was particularly true in the current context he said, because before 'people stole to eat, to survive,' whereas now the 'delinquents' they were dealing with had no conscience, no respect for others' rights or lives. He clarified that every delinquent at some point was an 'abandoned child' and the goal now, with the Chávez government, was to teach these children to 'value the right to life.' Nevertheless, there must be a consistent response, according to Simon, who did not learn at a young age to value life.

During his interview, Ramón described the new generation of "delinquents" in a similar way. When I asked him if there was too much of an emphasis on human rights in the UNES he replied:

> Yes, that is how it is, that is exactly the problem. Because what happens? Say there is an irregularity in a sector in a barrio, wherever, when the officer enters to pacify the situation he is received with bullets…these [new] delinquents, they kill

in cold blood…for this person *human rights do not exist*. You know what I mean? On the other hand, an officer has to respect this guy and the next guy…regardless, you always try to preserve life, despite everything, but there are moments when, *cónchale*, things just get out of hand…and you have to do something.

The way in which Ramón and others talk about this 'new generation of delinquents' well illustrates the partitioning that police reproduce. Describing this new generation as incapable of respecting human rights and human life justified officers' stripping them of their rights, even their lives. These partitions divided people into categories of salvageable and unsalvageable, each of which required different responses by the police.

2014 Guarimbas

What are societies to do with those who act outside of the law? Who should respond to those groups and actors that do not respect rights of others (particularly the right to life)?

Protests that began in 2014, referred to as *guarimbas* in Venezuela, brought these questions to the fore, though not applied to the kinds of "criminals" Ramón, Sergio, and Simon were discussing. The protests erupted in Caracas and other urban areas (see Cooper, Samet, and Schiller's [2015] collected essays for more information on the protests), seeking to force *La Salida* [The Exit] of Maduro. In this case the groups people were concerned about acting outside of the law were not the usual "delinquents": they were middle and upper-class protestors from the eastern side of Caracas. The protests began in early February in the Andean region of Venezuela, starting as student-led demonstrations against insecurity. The protests made their way to Caracas and were "latched on to and fueled by radical elements of the opposition who were

not in agreement with their coalition's more moderate line" (Smilde 2014). The more radical side of the opposition upset about have lost yet another presidential election to Chavismo in 2013 followed the more radical leaders of Venezuela's Right wing coalition, like Leopoldo López into the streets, burning trash and tires in the street, erecting barricades, and destroying public buildings.

According to Lucrecia, a member of the CCCP in Caracas, the police needed to apply the mano dura to those who were abusing their right to protest. At lunch one day, a few months after the protests had taken off, she told me 'If all this had happened when the Metropolitan Police was still around they would have already put an end to them months ago. This approach Maduro is using is too soft and is allowing the protests to keep going. It is just adding fuel to the fire. We need to end these protests. Now.' According to Lucrecia, all the new regulations had kept the police from being able to respond to the protests and finish them off once and for all, and that was why there were still people in the streets blocking traffic, destroying streets, and causing violence. For Lucrecia, being able to respond 'with force' or apply a mano dura against those who did not respect the law or authority was necessary to protect non-protestors' rights.

Because the PNB had a general reputation of being too "soft," some believed that the existence of other "hard" police forces had to continue to deal with these kinds of problems. Despite the fact that the PNB did not have the personnel to control the protests on their own, the deployment of the National Guard was most often chalked up to the fact that the PNB's regulations and preventative nature would not allow them to police the protests. The narrative of a defenseless police justified the presence of a security force that *can* use repression at the protests: the National Guard. Take, for example, a conversation that I had in a class with students. Given that the protests were ongoing at the time, I was interested in hearing students'

suggestions for how to control them or put an end to them. Professor Suáerz gave me the first half of his class to discuss the issue with the students (who were atypically attentive). I explained to the students that I knew the PNB had a service of public order and I wanted to know why they thought the National Guard was in the streets working the protests if the PNB was prepared and formed to do this. A number of male students raised their hands and seemed eager to give their opinion so I began calling on them one after another. One student explained that the protests had become very violent, that protestors were burning buses and throwing Molotov cocktails and the National Guard was more prepared to deal with this violence since the PNB 'can't repress.' One of the most talkative students said that the National Guard was more experienced and the PNB was still very new and not ready to control these marches and that 'actually, the police is there as support for the National Guard…all of the security forces have to unite to combat violent protests, but the National Guard has the principal role because of their preparation.' He said that the PNB's preparation did not teach them to repress and that was why the National Guard had to be present. The student sitting beside him took issue with the word repress saying that it was no longer appropriate to use when talking about the police or citizen security, that this was the police from the fourth republic. He said that police were not supposed to repress 'because of human rights.' Another cadet chimed in, saying: 'We, the PNB, we cannot use force.'

The narrative of restraint and regulation that surrounded the PNB did not only work to justify the intervention of the National Guard, but armed community groups as well. Take, for example, a conversation I had with Laura, a community police officer, and Jorge, a Chavista grassroots organizer at a local community radio station that Jorge ran. Jorge and Laura agreed that the police action in Caracas had been quite restrained given the violence being employed by protestors, who were 'erecting barricades and burning buildings.' Jorge argued that the National

Police were not allowed to respond to protests with repression, and thus would not be able to put an end to them. Because the police had their 'hands tied,' he argued, his community would have to provide the armed response to protests. The belief that the Bolivarian Revolution (the political project supported by the Chavista governments) can only be protected if armed pro-government community groups are allowed to use coercion predates both the reform and the protests. But the narrative about police impotency provides a new justification for some communities to organize and execute extra-legal security strategies.

Jorge's commentary succinctly sums up one of the unanticipated backlashes against human rights oriented police reform. Rather than demonstrating that force does not equal security, it has convinced many Venezuelans that those groups exempt from the reform's restrictions are the ones best equipped to police the streets. Ironically, the human rights discourse that surrounds the National Police operates to support both militarized and extra-legal responses to security crises. National Police officers, who take an oath to serve, protect, and defend el pueblo, became viewed as the security body least capable of doing just this.

Of course, it is not the case that National Police officers are not allowed to use force against citizens. In fact, numerous videos during the months of protests were posted on YouTube, showing PNB officers violently abusing protestors. But a narrative suggesting that the PNB could not use necessary (and excessive) force (and should be kept that way) legitimized not only the military's participation in the protest, but also other armed groups (Hanson 2015).

People's reactions to violent protests and what they perceived to be a new generation of delinquents get to the heart of the dilemma of implementing police reform respectful of human rights, and human rights legislation more generally. In spaces where the state does not monopolize violence and those with power appear to live outside of the law, convincing people

that all lives matter equally, that everyone should enjoy the same rights, protections, and treatment by the police is quite difficult. The complementary model of policing that Sergio and others envisioned helps to ease the tension between rights and repression within a democratic context. People can support the 'soft hand' of the police, believing that this hand is most appropriate for dealing with "communities," as Lucrecia put it, and citizens who are respectful of rights. And, they can support the 'hard hand' of the police that can deal with "delinquents" in the language that Torres said they understand: violence.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I have tried to challenge the normative assumptions regarding democracy, policing, and rights that are often taken for granted in studies of policing. While some scholars have argued that democratic and community-based approaches become "warped into *mano dura* or 'iron fist' strategies" in Latin America (Dammert and Malone 2006: 37) I have shown that democratic policing does not have to become warped to fit into mano dura strategies. I have argued that democratic channels can be used to demand and strengthen militarized security, that authoritarian policing does not appear to be antithetical to democracy to some on the ground, and that a complementary model of authoritarian and democratic policing is not necessarily undemocratic, as these different forces can serve to maintain divisions and inequalities that exist in democratic societies.

If we agree that democracy is a "regime that structures and channels citizens' control over their government" (Ungar 2011:69) allowing groups to "realize civil, political, social and cultural participation" (Koonings and Kruijt 2004:5), how do we categorize participatory spaces wherein people make "uncivil" demands? Ungar and others might argue that this participation

speaks to the deficit of citizenship that has been created by violence. However, this response assumes that violence only destroys, ignoring that violent environments might produce different forms of citizenship, forms that might not be recognized as such because they do not fit neatly into our theories of civil society. Indeed, changes to the quality and quantity of violence in Latin America may not represent "so much a deficit of citizenship rights as the proliferation of multiple sets of violent orders that impose different notions of political subjectivity on the population" (Arias and Goldstein 2010:243).

While resistance to democratic reforms is most often discussed in relation to the police, my research suggests that this is not just about police officers resisting reform. Citizens repurposed mechanisms created by the reform to demand a scaling back of the reform itself. Scholars have argued that "community involvement would lessen the occurrence of human rights abuses and encourage reform in policing practices" (Dammert and Malone 2006:46); but communities do not always demand the protection of human rights. Where community residents and CCCP members use local meetings to demand deregulating use of force and a return of the military, democratic spaces prop up extralegal and excessive responses to insecurity. This might be particularly true in urban areas with high rates of crime and violence, which both present different risks to democracy, ones that community residents may perceive to be more pernicious or problematic than authoritarian policing. And perhaps it is too much for us to expect that they do, that they be the ones to champion long-term solutions to crime and violence. Police scholars and policy makers have identified those living at the urban margins, living in areas most affected by crime and violence, to fight for progressive long-term solutions to insecurity when they are the ones more to suffer from lateral violence.

Interestingly, the CONAREPOL (2007:105) report that preceded the 2009 reform recognized that citizens tolerate the use of excessive or abusive force, labeling this a "perverse process of 'negotiation' where citizens are open to ceding an amount of fundamental rights in exchange for more security. However, none of the reports or literature on citizen participation produced by the CGP or the UNES nor the discussions had within participatory spaces engaged this as a problem. It is as if once recognized it ceases to be a concern.

Second, authoritarian policing was also perceived to be good for democratic society in a number of ways. To some, repressive policing was needed to balance out the Chávez government's' extension of rights and empowerment of the people. More importantly, increasing levels of violence, and the perception that this increase was driven by a different kind of criminal – one who lived outside of the law – convinced some that certain security forces also had to be able to act outside of the law. Furthermore, military forces and training were described as better fulfilling expectations set by democratic policing, such as responsiveness and the protection of (some) people's rights.

Third, I have suggested that a bifurcated model of policing may be productive for democratic society. Drawing on the work of Foucault, Seri (2012) argues that the police in Argentina, and security reform more broadly, represent the governmental dispotif (or apparatus) that divides Argentinean society into two antagonistic groups: *gente* vs. *delincuente* [people vs. delinquents]. It is through police practices that these divisions are created, realized, and maintained. However, my findings suggest that this is not a process that is driven only by the police and state actors. In other words, this is not a simply top down process. In community and CCCP meetings barrio residents voiced support for unrule of law, proposing that not all people deserved equal treatment under the law. In other words, not everyone deserved a "socialist

humanist" model of policing, with its regulations on use of force and respect for universal rights. Rather than human rights, people advocated for laws and police actions based in a system of citizenship rights, which allows for the exclusion certain groups and people. Rights in this system are not a foregone conclusion nor do they exist in the abstract, but must be affirmed by the broader political community (Arendt 1951).

Both state and lateral violence may serve different functions within a democratic society. If divisions, classifications, and exclusion are not antithetical to democracy, but are the basis of democratic society (Ranciere 1998, 2010), coercion deployed by state actors can create, maintain, and naturalize these divisions. Democracy here is not predicated on complete inclusion, as democratic theorists have suggested, but exclusion of these "threats." Rather than thinking about democracy as a process of getting closer and closer to a "community of equals," it, like other political systems, excludes certain portions of society from holding and exercising rights. Violence, from this perspective, could be an important partitioning practice, a resource used to keep the excluded out of the democratic sphere.[67]

In Venezuela, repressive policing of the poor and the protection of the liberal democratic state have gone hand in hand. Similar to neighboring authoritarian regimes, the stabilization of Venezuela's democracy rested upon generating fear of internal enemies (for which poor populations were the referent) and their elimination by the police and military (Skurski and Coronil 2006). Events like the *Caracazo* in 1989 evidenced that long after its transition

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[67] We need look no further than histories of racism and racialization in the U.S. to see that democracies too are constructed on discourses of internal enemies and their removal and elimination.

Venezuelan democracy depended upon force rather than the rule of law to remain stable.[68]

Velasco (2015:197) writes that the Caracazo evoked parallels, "but not one that authorities likely cared to admit. It was the violence that thirty years earlier Pérez Jiménez had unleashed as the last gasp of a dying regime, leading to its ouster and 'democratic revolution.'" More recently the Chávez government has made various moves to deepen and extend democracy while at the same time supporting militarized policing and the pluralization of violence. In fact, police violence (which is largely inflicted on poor people of color) has increased under the Chavista governments. In other words, state institutions and laws were created to extend economic and social rights at the same time that lateral and police violence increased exponentially, putting citizens' most basic right – the right to life – at risk.

On the face of it demands for mano dura responses would seem only to affect "hardened criminals." However, repressive responses to crime are not only aimed at "hardened criminals" but end up targeting stigmatized groups that are routinely associated with criminality, due to their class, race, and nationality. This logic ends up being attached to whole groups, not individual citizens. The bodies of young poor men of color end up being equated with this new generation of criminal, one that has no respect for law or life. Thus, their bodies are equated with culpability and guilt.

Because state power has not operated in the way that Foucault predicted – seeking to regulate and control all aspects of life – we need different ways to think about the state and its relationship to life (and death). Power in much of Latin America has historically operated in a more blunt manner than theorists of the modern state have thought. Rather than discipline and regulation, "problematic" populations have most often been dealt with through blanket

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[68] See Chapter 1 for a summary of these events.

repression, extermination or marginalization "to the point of death" (Ojakangas 2005:6). The complementary approach that I have discussed here provides a new justification for these measures (as do the social programs supported by the government), because it provides the illusion of a choice. In the Venezuelan case, these tactics of removal are not aimed at those who stand in the ways of market freedoms (Giroux 2006), but those who refuse to take the "helping hand" of the state, those that represent a drain on the redistributive system.

Lateral violence might also provide the basis for popular consent and legitimization of militarized policing. Police legitimacy does not only depend upon state capacity and support, but also "the level of 'consent to policing' or 'compliance with police' that occurs in practice" (Vagg 1996:107). By ignoring marginal city sectors as lateral violence increases and *sentimientos de inseguridad* develop, support for harsh policing may develop organically. If hegemony is most successfully constructed from below rather than coercively opposed from above (Gramsci 1935/1971), the vignettes in this chapter suggest that consent to repressive security policies can be generated due to a lack of action and intervention on the part of state actors.The democratization of violence that has taken place under the Chavista governments as well as the perception of a *mano suave* version of policing generates consent from below for police violence.

In a darkly ironic twist, this violence is principally directed at those sectors that the Chavista governments have always depended upon for support and who Chavista politicians pledge to prioritize and protect: the poor urban margins. Indeed, though the Left turn in the region has brought governments to power that are willing to look beyond institutions of "law and order" to combat insecurity, Venezuela social welfare policies have been increasingly

complemented by punitive policies that target the poor, particularly poor men (Antillano et al.

2015).

The 2009 reform had been largely rolled back by the time I was ending my fieldwork in 2014 (Smilde and Hanson 2014). The military assumed control of many of the security institutions that had been created by the reform: Soraya El Achkar was replaced as director of the UNES by Ronald Blanco la Cruz, a retired army general; Luis Karabín, the civilian director of the National Bolivarian Police, was replaced with retired army general Manuel Eduardo Pérez Urdaneta; and Pablo Fernández, head of the Full Life Venezuela Plan was replaced by retired National Guard official Ildemar Soto. In 2016 the National Assembly proposed reforming the 2009 police legislation to "ensure" that the police are provided the "guns and equipment that allow them to effectively protect citizens from delinquency." The proposed changes deregulate the types of guns that can be carried by police forces, which the LOSPCPNB had limited to 9mm pistols. Furthermore, all police forces would be allowed to create special tactical units and special operation teams – armed with military grade weapons – whereas under the LOSPCPNB only the PNB were allowed to organize these units.

Nevertheless, the reform did not "fail" to have impacts in the country's capital. In this dissertation I have attempted to trace these impacts, explain unintended outcomes, and suggest overlooked obstacles to democratizing the police. While the government had incredible success in reducing poverty and inequality, here I have shown that young men's continued economic and social marginalization poses perhaps the gravest challenges to reducing police misconduct. In Chapter 3 I explain why young police officers rejected the UPDFP and other regulations on use

of force by showing that social and economic marginalization make violence and use of force important resources for some. Though social initiatives and welfare programs extended certain social and economic rights, the Chávez government has failed to protect the right to life at the urban margins, leaving many young men to experience threat and violence in their day-to-day lives. The state's failure to protect the right to life produces police officers whose resistance to the kind of reform the government implemented. Without issuing any formal social cleansing policy or training officers to view citizens as threats the state can continue produce an endless supply of coercive laborers willing to manage the "problematic populations" produced by state withdrawal.

In Chapter 4 I show how state actors' (inconsistent) support for non-state armed groups exacerbates the sense of insecurity that structure young men's original habitus. While much previous research on policing in Latin America has focused on the strong ties between the state and the police, I have shown that the fracturing of these ties must be taken into account in order to accurately explain police violence and brutality.

In Chapter 5 I argue that socialist policing deflected attention away from these concrete and core issues of security. Socialist discourse deflected attention away from concrete material changes that had the potential to improve policing and reduce police misconduct and directed attention to culture, values, and morals as both the cause of and solution to crime, violence, and police corruption, deflecting attention away from material and institutional issues. Though Marx's variant of socialism is a theory of "the real" (rather than "the ideal"), the case of police reform in Venezuela produces a paradox that has been found in other studies of actually existing socialism in the 20th century. Furthermore, I have shown that socialist discourse failed to critique individualizing practices of security; instead the government's discourse promoted make

individuals responsible for security in ways distinct from neoliberal governments. Contra the popular notion that Latin American societies are characterized by paternalism and high levels of dependence on the state (Wiarda and Kline 2014), in Chapter 5 I show that people understand the state and security as quite independent from one another and hold society (principally poor families headed by single mothers) responsible for insecurity and fighting it.

In Chapter 6 I show how the implementation of reform helped to justify the continuation of mano dura policing. Though Chavista politicians railed against criminalization of the poor and characterized police repression as a hangover of the fourth republic, both state actors and some barrio residents demanded and justified militarized approaches to crime and violence. I problematize the assumption that violence and democracy are antithetical, showing that democratic channels can be used to demand and strengthen militarized security, that authoritarian policing does not appear to be antithetical to democracy on the ground, and that a complementary model of authoritarian and democratic policing can serve to maintain divisions and inequalities that exist in democratic societies.

Implications for Reform

Scholars and activists have long argued that the police-military history has contributed to a hypertrophic relationship between citizens and police, with the police viewing themselves as set apart from society with no need for outside control and supervision. However, much of what barrio residents expressed in these pages overlaps with officers' perspectives, suggesting that there is less of a gap between officers and civilians than scholarship on policing suggests. The shrinking of this gap makes sense, if we consider that both police officers and barrio residents are embedded in violent neighborhoods at the urban margins. My research suggests that studies

of police reform must look outside of the police department in order to capture how officers'

relationships, networks, and social locations can motivate and legitimize police misconduct.

These findings provide insight into why officers resisted and rejected two key aspects of

the reform: the UPDFP and accountability mechanisms. They suggest that changing a culture of

violence and corruption is not just an institutional issue. While we like to think that these

problems will be solved if we get institutional reform and training right, my findings indicate that

these are only two aspects of a much larger and multifaceted problem. These findings call

attention to the potential limits of police reform within a violent context where most security

officers are economically and socially marginalized. These findings do not negate the power that

police officers wield over citizens. But they do show that police violence and corruption can be

incentivized by insecurity and vulnerability also. While commonsense understandings and

scholarly work on police misconduct has tended to assume that misconduct is driven by officers'

feelings that they are untouchable, invincible, and empowered, I show that in certain contexts

this is the result of officers' experiences of vulnerability and their feelings of insecurity. It is

likely that reducing police misconduct that emerges from this position might require different

strategies than those used to reduce misconduct that emerges from feelings of dominance.

The explanatory framework might be useful in studying the police and reform outside of

Latin America. In the case of the U.S., Moskos (2009:2) has written: "Being police is working-

class and not particularly intellectual. This is much more a matter of selection than one of

initiation. Much of what is perceived as police identity – socially conservative values, a rejection

of lower-class culture, a resentment and envy of the professional class – is present before officers

enter the police department." Though Moskos recognizes the importance of socialization and

culture outside of the police department for understanding officers' understandings and actions, little to no work has researcher officers' lives outside of the force.

The killings of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Freddie Gray in Baltimore, Tamir Rice in Cleveland and numerous others provides ample evidence that police violence and brutality have ties and explanations outside of the police force. While research has suggested that it is police culture and training that produces officers' proclivity towards violence, it is most likely the case that in any context officers' backgrounds inform their understandings of violence and coercion. Bent (1974) has observed that police culture arises from the fact that policing attracts similar kinds of people: generally lower middle class white men that like action and hold conservative values. Research on the police should turn to these class backgrounds and political beliefs – how they are formed, how they are sustained, how they influence officers' actions outside of the department – to better understand how they contribute to police culture.

The Ferguson case is a perfect example of why we need more research on the police to be conducted outside of the department. Though Darren Wilson's description of Michael Brown as superhuman and "Hulk-like" in his testimony might seem extravagant, recent research has shown that white people often attribute superhuman abilities to African Americans, particularly African American males (Waytz et al. 2014). Wilson's racial socialization did not begin when he entered the academy, nor did he need to be embedded in police culture to perceive Michael Brown as a superhuman threat. Dealing with police violence requires dealing with the systematic racism that structures U.S. society, which is not a problem that can be dealt with through training alone. Instead, we need to understand how this systematic racism shapes officers' perceptions of

violence and the embodied dispositions they learn to rely upon in certain interactions before they enter the force.[69]

Theoretical Implications

Beyond providing an analysis of reform in Caracas, Venezuela, I have tried to use this analysis to challenge theories of the state and democracy that undergird much of the scholarship of policing in Latin America. Despite the social changes that I have focused on in my dissertation, scholars continue to evaluate police reform against impossible standards based on the assumption that coercion, regulations, and legitimacy principally emanate from the state and that state actors have an interest in regulating and controlling violent actors.

While admitting the historical development of the state and the police in Latin America are barriers to consolidating reform, their expectations presuppose that state capacity and state interests are similar to those in the Western European and U.S. context. Indeed, the model of the state and state formation put forth by theorists from Hobbes to Bourdieu seem to set the standards for what academics expect out of reform. Conversely, people on the ground are intimately aware of limited state capacity and factor this into their expectations of state security.

Narrowly focused on the police and their role within the state, these evaluations rarely embed reforms within the broader political and social changes that have swept across Latin America in the past thirty years – neoliberalization, the rise of the Left in response to it, and quantitative and qualitative changes in violence – and how these changes have altered

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[69] Of course, in the case of the U.S., officers most often come from backgrounds different from the marginalized populations they police. Still, these backgrounds inform how they interact with these populations.

relationships between states, institutions, and society. Thus, one of the main implications of this research is that we need to update ideas about these relationships if we are to accurately understand what police reform does (or does not do) and what current challenges exist to reducing police violence and make societies more secure. The Venezuelan case, and others like it, requires that we turn to different theorizations of how power operates in the modern context.

Appendix I

Table 1: Security Plans Implemented

National Plans	Caracas Plans
Operación Liberación del Pueblo (2015)	Plan Autopista Segura (2009)
Revolución Policial (2014)	Plan Ruta Segura (2008)
Patrullaje Inteligente (2014)	The Plan Caracas Segura/ Plan Noche Segura (2008/9)
Plan Patria Segura (2013)	Plan Integral de Seguridad Misión Caracas (2003)
Gran Misión a Todo Vida Venezuela (2012)	Plan Bratton
Dispositivo Bicentenario de Seguridad/ Guardia del Pueblo/ Madrugonazo al hampa/ La Operación Cangrejo (2009)[70]	**Disarmament plans[71]**
Ley Orgánica del Servicio de Policía y del Cuerpo de Policía Nacional (2009)	Plan Nacional de desarme (2014)
Sistema Socialista Penitenciario (2008)	Plan Nacional de Control de Armas/Plan de Desarme Nacional (2004-5)
Plan Estratégico Nacional de Convivencia y Seguridad Ciudadana (2006)	Plan Nacional de Control de Armas (2002)
Plan Piloto de Seguridad (2003)	
Plan de coordinación policial y control de vigilantes privados (2002)	
Plan Confianza (2001)	
Plan Estratégico de Prevención de la Violencia (2001)	
Plan Nacional de Seguridad Ciudadana (1999)	

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[70] The latter three are often separated from the DIBISE, but were part of it.

[71] These plans in reality were not distinct or separate. They are better characterized as a

development or evolution

Methods

My data collection was triangulated by relying on three data sources: ethnographic observation, interviews, and a survey, all of which will seek to understand the implementation of socialist security reform from the perspectives of the diverse actors involved. Triangulation allowed me to understand reform from various perspectives. As Auyero (2007:26) has suggested with the concept of "cubist fieldwork," while an empirical reality does exist, our best *attempts* to capture this reality emerge when grasping it from multiple points of view.

Rationale for Ethnography and Interviews

Ethnography is the in on-the-ground observation of people and intuitions in real time and space where we embed ourselves in a context to understand and try to explain why actors think, feel, and act in different ways. For my dissertation I sought to document and analyze how state and non-state actors embedded in certain social, economic and political environments interpret, resist, and repurpose state security policies and how these interpretations and actions altered those policies on the ground.

Because I was interested in people's interpretations, actions and reactions, ethnographic methods and interviews were the most appropriate methodological tools for gathering data (Singleton and Straits 2005; Wedeen 2009). According to Singleton and Straits (2005), field research lends itself to obtaining an insider's view of reality and methodological empathy, goals

that cannot be met with quantitative methods. While much research on the police has focused on state institutions, I was interested in the "invisible encounters between actors and political institutions and the 'lived experience of the political'" (Baiocchi and Connor 2008: 140). I believe that phenomenon such as violence, policing, and security should be analyzed in such a way that the researcher grasps what these concepts mean to actors "who invoke or consume them and how these perceptions might affect political outcomes" (Wedeen 2009:714). If realities and meanings are constructed out of the practices and discourse of actors, then a qualitative approach is the most appropriate method to grasp these processes, capture participants "in their own terms," and learn their "categories as a means to render explicable and coherent the flux of their 'raw reality'" (Lofland, 1971: 7). Because qualitative methodologies allow researchers to adapt concepts to the diverse ways in which participants utilize them, they provide a high level of content validity (Singleton and Straits 2005: 99).

I also used ethnographic and interview methods because the topics involved in my research – violence, crime, and police corruption – are not only sensitive but in some cases dangerous. Thus, prolonged time in the field was important in establishing connections and trust with participants, not only to improve the quality of my data but also to ensure my own safety. A final reason I have opted for ethnography and interviews is due to the high degree of flexibility these methodological tools offer. Because I conducted research in a highly contested political context where the phenomenon of interest (police reform) was continually being changed and altered in different ways, an inflexible methodology would not be appropriate. The flexibility offered by ethnography and interviews provides a high level of construct validity as well.

Rationale for Survey Data

Writing survey questions for nationally representative surveys a year into my field research allowed me to confirm the generalizability of my some of my findings. Survey data is best at establishing a relationship between variables. Thus, I was able to use survey data to show that there was a non-idiosyncratic relationship between variables of interest and use my ethnographic and interview data to flesh out how these relationships worked on the ground.

DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

Participant Observation and Interviews

During my time in the field I carried a small notebook with me at all times. In informal interviews and meetings I was able to jot down key words and phrases. During other interactions I made mental "headnotes" (Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw 1995:19), made short notes on my phone, and, in rare instances, wrote notes down. As often as possible I used these words, phrases, and headnotes to write extensive fieldnotes each night. However, late meetings, traveling with research participants, or beers after shifts often meant that I would spend a few intensive days in the field without typing any fieldnotes and then spend days turning short words, phrases, and reminders from phones and notebooks into extended fieldnotes. While writing fieldnotes, I attempted to write down as much of the what, where, who, when, and how as well as capturing my sensory experiences, the "feel" of interactions, as well as how interactions made me feel. As I spent more time in the field, I began paying attention to emergent themes and also events,

episodes, conversations, and activities that addressed, complicated, or challenged my research questions.

I conducted 70 formal semi-structured interviews and 35 open-ended informal interviews with police officers, reformers working at the police university, state representatives engaged in efforts to curb police violence, residents in Catia, and citizens participating in police oversight committees (see Table 1 for interviewee demographics). Interviews lasted between 60-150 minutes. Over the period in which I conducted interviews I analyzed data as I collected it and altered protocols in order to fit my interview questions and research questions to the social reality I observed. (Emerson, Fretz and Shaw 1995; Lofland et al. 2005). Interviews were conducted in homes, parks, the police university, restaurants, basically anywhere that was as convenient as possible for research participants, making it less likely that they would fail to shop up or reschedule plans we had made to meet.

I paid a graduate student and a professional transcriber (both from and living in Caracas) to transcribe recorded interviews. Transcribed interviews resulted in over 1,700 pages of interview data.

I performed line-by-line coding of my interview transcription and fieldnotes utilizing ATLAS. ti. software. During my first round of coding I identified patterns, commonalities, and irregularities or divergent cases. Codes were developed categories, which "are classifications of concepts, and are discovered when codes are compared against one another and pertain to similar phenomenon" (Eaves 2001: 658).

Survey Data

Nationally representative random surveys were conducted between August 2013 and January 2014 by the Venezuelan polling firm Datanalisis. Four national surveys were conducted over this time period, each of which included questions written by me and David Smilde. Some questions were based on findings that arose from fieldwork I was conducting at the time. Surveys randomly polled 1300 households and asked respondents about police reform, their preferred security body (the police, the military, or neither), police use of force, and whether limiting that force constrained officers' ability to fight crime. Survey data was analyzed in SPSS.

Populations

The populations that I hope to be able to speak to with my data include:

- Urban residents living in poor high crime neighborhoods in Caracas
- National Bolivarian police officers working in poor high crime communities
- Individuals involved in implementing police reform, including UNES faculty, (many of who were former or current police officers), CCCP promoters, and CGP employees
- Citizen members of police oversight committees in urban cities

Sampling Strategies

Because I was interested in the ways in which violence and marginalization have altered relationships between state and society I used theory-based sampling in choosing where to live

and conduct research. Theory-based sampling can be defined as "finding manifestations of a theoretical construct of interest so as to elaborate and examine the construct and its variations" (Patton 2002:243). The identification of poor high crime neighborhoods allowed me to sample information-rich areas that would regularly manifest phenomena of interest. I also used theory-based sampling in choosing the CCCPs to understand how citizen participation might influence policing and police reform. I used snowball and convenience sampling to identify and select police officers and representatives of state institutions.

Sample Characteristics

As can be seen in Table 1, most of my interviews were conducted with men. All of the police officers that I conducted ethnographic research with were men in their 20s and 30s. The neighborhood residents that I spent the most time with were women between the ages of 30 and 60. The CCCP members and CGP promoters that I conducted ethnographic work with were males in their early 20s to late 50s. Though I did not ask questions about racial identity, all but four of my interviewees would most likely be considered "non-white." Most participants I conducted ethnographic research with referred to themselves or were referred to by others as *moreno* [brown] or *negro* [black] (sometimes the same person was referred to as both by different speakers).

Table 2: Sample Characteristics of Interviewees

Citizens	CGP	CCCP
Female = 7	Female = 0	Female = 20
Male =10	Male = 3	Male = 24
Total: 17	Total: 3	Total: 44

UNES	Police, Supervisor Jefe	Police, Supervisor
Female = 1	Male = 6	Male = 1
Men = 3	Female = 0	Female = 0
Total: 4	Total = 6	Total = 1

Police, Oficial Agregado	Police, Oficial Jefe	Police, Oficial
Male = 10	Male = 0	Male = 15
Female = 0	Female = 2	Female = 3
Total = 10	Total = 2	Total = 18

Total: 105

GAINING AND MAINTAINING ACCESS

After being propositioned by most of the police officers I worked with studying for, however, I realized that many of my research relationships were defined by their punctuated or short-term nature. Of course, this approach falls short of the type of ethnography that Wacquant (2015) and others have advocated for. According to Wacquant (2015), the most illuminating data comes from what he calls "carnal ethnography," which emphasizes the need for researchers to become as intimate with and integrated into social worlds as possible. Nevertheless, by limiting my time with some research participants, I was sometimes able to extend these relationships beyond a short window of time. Though I did not spend as much time as possible with many of my participants, choosing key moments to drop in on them or touch base with them allowed me to gather insightful data and also maintain a level of trust with participants. These kinds of tactics suggest that being "sufficiently close" or "close enough" can produce just as illuminating data as being "as close as possible" to our participants (Hanson and Richards 2017).

Neighborhoods

I began working with a communal council in Calle Bolívar, a neighborhood in Catia, in 2009, and began living in this neighborhood off and on from 2010 until I began my dissertation research in 2012. During this time period, I began attending meetings of other communal councils in the area which allowed me to gain contacts throughout Catia. By the time I began my dissertation research in 2012, I had a strong network of contacts in different networks in Catia.

Conducting research with other groups and organizations during my dissertation fieldwork allowed me to build contacts in popular sectors of La Vega and Antímano.

National Bolivarian Police

Bayley (1997) has written that a whether or not a foreigner is granted access to study the police is a good indication of how democratic a police force is. According to this standard, the PNB would have to be considered an extremely undemocratic police force (despite reformers' best intentions). During my first six months in the field I submitted research proposals, recommendation letters, and letters from the communal council in the neighborhood where I lived to low-ranking police officers, the head of the PNB's community police service, and the UNES in an attempt to gain official permission to conduct research with the community police (my original focus). Most of the time these requests were ignored. In one case, I received full approval only to find out the next day that things had become "complicated" and that I would have to wait until further notice that never arrived. In another instance I was told by a potential gatekeeper that my research came at a "politically sensitive time" and, furthermore, was "uninteresting" and "unimportant."

The fact that I am a citizen of the U.S., a country that Venezuela has had a tense relationship with since the early 2000s, certainly did not help with my requests to gain access to the PNB. However, I believe that the larger issue was that the PNB was a relatively new police and reformers had set high expectations for how distinct this police would be from what had come before. Allowing external oversight and data gathering was a very large risk that police directors were not willing to take. Even UNES faculty and affiliated researchers were denied access to do sustained research with PNB officers during the time I was in the field.

As I waited (and waited, and waited) to hear back from PNB officials, I began experimenting with more informal mechanisms to meet police officers. I met police officers at community meetings and on the street in the neighborhoods where I lived and was conducting research. These meetings led to my initial interviews. The informal nature of my relationship with officers undoubtedly contributed to the sexual harassment and unwanted sexual attention I received. Edmond and José, two young PNB officers, eventually became my main PNB informants, though José ended our research relationship a few weeks before I left the field because of his "romantic" interests in me that he said he could no longer control.

After a few months of meeting officers informally, I was introduced to Alexis, a PNB officer and a professor at the UNES. Without Alexis' support, I would not have been able to collect the number of interviews that I did, nor would I have been able to attend UNES classes or spend time with UNES faculty. In short, my project would have looked very different (and would have been much more difficult) without his support.

CCCPs

My request for access to the CCCPs, which went through the CGP, was much easier…at first. After a few months of phone calls and submitting materials, I was able to meet with former Red de Apoyo activists who granted me access to CCCP meetings and introduced me to active promoters from different states during a national conference held by the CGP in 2012. I never received any documentation of this approval, however, which caused problems later when Soraya El Achkar and her team within the CGP were removed during a "restructuring" and were replaced. By 2013 I could sense a thawing of my relationships with CGP heads, which meant that my access to the CCCPs was completely dependent on the personal relationships I had built

with promoters. Thus, halfway through my time in the field my research with the CCCPs became informal as well.

By the middle of 2013, almost all of my important my access in the field depended on me maintaining relationships with men like Miguel (see Chapter 1), who had interests in pursuing a relationship with me beyond research purposes. This meant that maintaining access often required caring for male egos above and beyond research relationships; above and beyond what I was normally willing to do in my relationships with men out of the field as well.

CONFIDENTIALITY AND PROTECTION OF SUBJECTS

All research participants in my study were aware of my research and consented to participating in my project. Most of my time with police officers was spent outside of work and was not observed by superior officers, which allowed me to protect my main informants' identities. When I did accompany officers to official activities and meetings,
I explained to their supervisors that I was interested in observing the relationships being developed between communities and entire police units, keeping the focus off of the individual officers that participated in my study. In my dissertation and future publications, names and identifying characteristics will be changed to protect the identity of all research participants.

All names have been changed to pseudonyms, except in the cases of Ileana Ruíz and Luis Izquiel, both of who are public figures and allowed me to use their names. Because there were very few members of the citizen police oversight committees in Caracas and few officers in the community police services in Catia, La Vega, and Antímano, naming the neighborhoods they represented or worked in would make individuals easily identifiable. Thus, when referring to members of citizen police oversight committees or officers from community police services, I

change the names of the neighborhoods where they were from or were working or obscure this information completely to increase confidentiality.

DATA QUALITY

In an attempt to move away from research standards grounded in positivistic theory, Lincoln and Guba (1986) advocate for a number of standards by which to measure qualitative research. I rely on their suggested standards below to assess the quality of my data. The first criteria Lincoln and Guba outline is that of credibility. While in the field, I established credibility through prolonged engagement and persistent observation. Because of my prolonged engagement, I was also able to rely on community members' interpretations and perspectives against which I could check my own interpretations and observations. By relying on more than one method of data collection I increased the credibility of my research. Credibility is also enhance by my inclusion of lengthy interview excerpts and ethnographic vignettes, as this allows readers to see, interpret, and possibly challenge my own interpretation of the data; numerous quotes and evidentiary statements from fieldnotes and interviews to back up my interpretations and claims; and a clear explanation of how I gathered my data and established relationships with participants.

The second standard Lincoln and Guba suggest is that of transferability. In order to create transferability, I describe in detail both the setting in which I carried out my research and the relationships I had with key research participants. I also rely on thick description to promote transferability within my work. In other words, I provide the context and rich description of a setting and its actors which researchers use to justify one interpretation over another. By providing a thick description before and alongside my interpretations, readers are given a basis for how I came to my conclusions and interpretations.

The last standard Lincoln and Guba advocate is that of dependability and confirmability. These require an external audit by a competent and disinterested auditor. In order to achieve dependability and confirmabilty I will rely on members of my academic committee and individuals from my community of peers to check my interpretations and the validity of my claims based on my data. I will also share findings with some of my research participants in Caracas.

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