Jordan Harris

**Argument**:

Simply put, the *City of God* does not wish for its people to succeed. Through corruption, the people in power stay in power, while the people at the bottom stay at the bottom.

One can look at the cycle of poverty and crime that happens in the film; however, just looking at that does not show who is truly accountable for these issues: those in power. There are several examples throughout the film demonstrating this. The first scene I chose was 19 minutes into the film. In this scene, a policeman shoots an innocent bystander. As this happens, Clipper, the actual hood, walks away. When the policeman’s partner mentions this, now dead, person is innocent, the policeman plants a gun on the bystander. This scene reveals the lack of care and dignity of those in power, but, more importantly, how those in power actively work against those trying to be honest and get by. Although, in the context of this particular scene, the policeman did not know whether the bystander or Clipper was the suspect they were pursuing (he should practice more precaution regardless). This scene does, however, show the man trying to get by being taken out by society while the hood continues to thrive. This is possible because the policeman, representing power, uses his position to further himself in staying in power.

**Description of scene(s) and time of appearance:**

(19:00-20:00) – The police shoot a worker as Clipper walks away.

(2:00:10-2:00:40) – The police take Lil Z’s money

**Thesis:**

In the *City of God*, the theme of corruption is present through many of its power figures and because of this it prevents society from being better.

**Movie Title:**

City of God

**Guiding Concept:**

Corruption

**Argument Continued:**

An even clearer example of corruption later in the film is the scene Lil Z is shot by the kids. It all starts with the policemen taking Lil Z’s money and allowing him to go free. A policeman, the person in that higher position, is not supposed to take bribes or indulge in those things, but they do and allow this cycle to directly continue. The policemen allow Lil Z to get by the whole movie by indulging in corruption. If Lil Z had been arrested in this scene, or previously, he would not have been killed by the runts. The cycle of crime is continuing with these kids, but until a higher power takes action, or provides opportunity, the kids stay at the bottom.

In conclusion, the cycle of crime is directly affected by corruption from the top. If the people at the top do not allow for people to grow or thrive doing the “right thing,” they look for other options. This is displayed in many scenes throughout the movie, the two I chose just being a few. I feel that this is a representation of not only this movie, or Brazilian society, but a representation of our own society. We can see that if people in power are corrupt, the people under them must do what they can to get by. Some even indulge in doing the wrong thing, but many just do it because they have to.