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# SECURITY AND POLICING IN RIO DE JANEIRO

An ethnography of the pacifying police units



**Tomas Salem**

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## LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

**ADA** *Amigo dos Amigos* (Friend of Friends). One of three main drug cartels in Rio.

**ALERJ** *Assembleia Legislativa do Estado do Rio de Janeiro* (Legislative Assembly of the State of Rio de Janeiro).

**BOPE** *Batalhão de Operações Policiais Especiais* (Special Police Operations Battalion). Part of PMERJs special units.

**COE** *Commando de Operações Especiais* (Special Operations Command).

**CPP** *Cordenadoria da Polícia Pacificadora* (Coordinating offices of the Pacifying Police)

**CPX** *Complexo do Alemão*. Large compound of favelas located in northern Rio.

**CV** *Commando Vermelho* (Red Command). The largest drug cartel of Rio.

**GPAE** *Grupamento Policial em Áreas Especiais* (Special Areas Police Unit). Pilot project implemented in selected favelas between 2000 and 2002 based on the paradigm of community policing. Predecessor to the UPPs.

**GPP** *Grupamento de Polícia de Proximidade* (Proximity Police Unit). Unit that carried out patrol by foot at the UPPs.

**GTPP** *Grupamento Tático de Polícia de Proximidade* (Tactical Proximity Police Unit). Unit that carried out tactical patrol by foot at the UPPs.

**PMERJ** *Polícia Militar do Estado do Rio de Janeiro* (Military Police of Rio de Janeiro)

**SESEG** *Secretaria de Estado de Segurança* (State Secretary of Public Security). Public state authority responsible for PMERJ.

**TCP** *Terceiro Commando Puro* (Pure Third Command). One of three main drug cartels in Rio.

**UPP** *Unidade de Polícia Pacificadora* (Pacifying Police Unit).

## GLOSSARY

<i>Ala de serviço</i>	Lit. “shift wing”; group of patrol officers working the same 24-hour schedule and supervised by one or two Sergeants
<i>Arrego</i>	Lit. “agreement”; arrangements of weekly payments of bribes by the drug cartels to the police
<i>Asfalto</i>	Lit. “tarmac”; the <i>formal</i> city as opposed to the <i>informality</i> of the favelas
<i>Blindado</i>	Armored personnel carrier
<i>Boca de fumo</i>	Lit. “mouth of smoke”; place where regular sale and consumption of drugs take place in the favelas
<i>Caiverão</i>	Lit. “big skull”; armored personnel carrier
<i>Favelado</i>	Derogatory term for favela resident
<i>Favela</i>	Informal urban settlement characterized by the lack of state regulation and precarious provision of public services
<i>Ganso</i>	Lit. “goose”; criminal
<i>Lei do tráfico</i>	Lit. “law of trafficking”; laws and social order imposed by the drug cartels in the favelas.
<i>Morro</i>	Lit. “hill”; used interchangeably for <i>favela</i>
<i>O tráfico</i>	Lit. “the traffic”; the drug trafficking, the drug trade, or the drug cartels
<i>Oficial</i>	[High ranking military police] officer
<i>Pô</i>	Short form of <i>poxa</i> ; exclamation used in oral portuguese.
<i>Praça</i>	[Low ranking] patrol officer
<i>Marginal</i>	Lit. “marginal”; criminal, gang member
<i>Sacanada</i>	Indecency [with sexual connotations]
<i>Sacanagem</i>	Indecency (conjugation)
<i>Traficante</i>	Lit. “trafficker”; drug dealer, gang member
<i>Vagabundo</i>	Lit. “vagabond”; criminal, gang-member

## NOTE ON LANGUAGE

Brazilian military police forces are characterized by a strict hierarchical division between a small managerial staff called *oficiais* and a large group of patrol officers called *praças*. Throughout this thesis I have consequently chosen to distinguish between these groups by referring to the former as *officers* and the latter as *patrol officers*. While base commanders are generally of officer rank, most of the staff at the UPPs is composed of low-ranking patrol officers—mainly Soldiers and Corporals. When the hierarchical distinction is not of relevance to the meaning of the argument put forth, I use the term *police* or *police officers* as a general and encompassing concept. On some occasions I have chosen to specify the rank of the police officers—I have then chosen to capitalize their rank to make it explicit (see Appendix E for an overview of rank at PMERJ).



## Chapter 1 INTRODUCTION



Picture 1: The cable car at Complexo do Alemão

## AREA OF RESEARCH

In the decades following the return of democracy in Latin America, many national and local governments implemented hard-handed public security policies articulated through the discourse of war on drugs (see Pereira and Davis 2000; Wacquant 2003, 2008). As a result of these policies and of the high levels of socio-economic inequality and poverty in the region, crime and violence soared. According to a recent UNDP report, Latin American citizens express extremely high levels of insecurity and fear. The region suffers from epidemic violence, defined by national murder rates above 10 homicides per 100.000 inhabitants, and many Latin American cities exhibit civil war-like levels of violence (CDDRL 2014). Brazil is no exception: with an average murder rate of 25,7 homicides the country registered more violent deaths in five years (2011-2015) than the number of death in Syria's civil war in the same period (FBSP 2016).<sup>1</sup> Rather than being seen as the solution, the Brazilian police forces are often perceived as part of the problem. Between 2009 and 2015 aggressive and militarized forms of policing have produced the death of 17.688 victims on a national level, and a recent survey concludes that 59% of Brazilians fear becoming victims of the violence of the Brazilian Military Police (FBSP 2016).

In Rio de Janeiro, the local dynamics of urban violence have been characterized by armed battles in the city's streets between a multiplicity of rivaling armed groups, including drug cartels, paramilitary organizations called *milicias*, death squads, and state security forces. Poor, informal settlements, locally known as *favelas*, are the epicenter of the city's armed violence. After decades of abandonment and neglect by the state these communities fell in the hands of local gangs, including drug cartels and *milicias*, who established parallel state orders in the favelas in the 1980's and 1990's. Following the return of democracy in 1985, the favelas became important sites of drug commercialization, and rivaling cartels engaged in violent turf-wars over territory. State interventions took the form of frequent and militarized police operations, and became part of the everyday routine of local residents.

In an attempt to reduce the levels of armed violence in the city, the State of Rio introduced the pacification project in January 2009, and created the first of a total of 38 Pacifying Police Units (*Unidade de Policia Pacificadora*, UPPs) in selected favelas. The UPPs are the structural backbone of a public security strategy that seeks to reclaim state

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<sup>1</sup> Between January 2011 and December 2015 279.567 violent deaths were registered in Brazil, against the registered 256.124 violent deaths in Syria as a result of the war. In 2015 alone, 58.467 were killed throughout Brazil, a 2% reduction compared to the preceding year (FBSP 2016).

control of the favelas through a model of community policing called *proximity policing*, and involves the establishment of permanent police bases within the favelas. According to Rio de Janeiro's State Secretary of Security (*Secretaria de Estado de Segurança, SESEG*) the goals of the UPPs are a) to take back state control over communities currently under strong influence of ostensibly armed criminals; b) give back to the local population peace and public safety, which are necessary for the full development of citizenship; c) contribute to breaking the logic of war that now exists in Rio de Janeiro. However, they do not aim to a) end drug trafficking; b) end criminality; c) be a solution for all communities; or d) turn itself into the panacea for all socio-economic problems in the favelas (Henriques and Ramos 2011). The pacification project is also seen as an opportunity to reform the Military Police of the State of Rio de Janeiro (*Policia Militar do Estado de Rio de Janeiro, PMERJ*), and improve deteriorated relations between police and residents, which are characterized by mutual distrust after decades of repressive policing and pervasive practices of corruption.



Picture 2: UPP Patrol Officers chatting during patrol duty.

## RESEARCH PROBLEM AND OBJECTIVES

Scholars have suggested that public security challenges and high levels of armed violence in Latin America are among the key obstacles to the wellbeing of citizens and human development in the region (CDDRL 2014). In Rio, hard-handed and militarized public

security policies have gradually lost their credibility as effective solutions to the violence in the city. A broad academic consensus has signaled the need for democratic police reform as a necessary component of current attempts to reduce the levels of armed violence in the city. In this regard, community-policing models are believed to be effective in reducing levels of urban violence, and these models have been at the center of democratic reform attempts of police forces across the world as well as in Rio (see Albernaz, Caruso, and Patricio 2007).

The UPP project is heavily inspired in this paradigm, and was initially conceived of as a broad success and a dramatic rupture with traditional models of policing in the city. However, recent academic evaluations of the project conclude that while there has been a marked drop in homicide rates in the last decade, the UPP effect on the reduction of lethal violence in pacified favelas is minimal, and mostly limited to a reduction in the incidence of police killings (Magaloni, Franco, and Melo 2015). Furthermore, severe incidents of misconduct involving UPP police officers have challenged the assumption that the UPPs represent a new policing approach in the favelas.

Thus, in spite of exhibiting heterogeneous results, with some favelas showing a marked reduction in lethal violence after the establishment of the UPPs, the pacification is currently subject to increasing controversy, as it has not lived up to the expected outcomes at the onset of the project.

The failure of the pacification project raises important questions concerning the democratic legitimacy of militarized public security policies and calls for a reflection on contemporary dilemmas concerning the relation between security, democracy, and human rights. This thesis is a contribution to this debate, with a particular emphasis on contexts of high socio-economic inequalities and inter-group violence. In order to address these issues, I have formulated the following research problem:

*Why has the UPP project failed to bring peace and security to the favelas of Rio de Janeiro, and what are the lessons to be learned for future public security interventions in similar situations?*

This research problem is relatively broad in scope, and requires an understanding of the dynamics of urban violence in Rio de Janeiro, the institutional and political context of policing, as well as the implicit assumptions concerning public security and policing sustained through the UPP approach.

Oliveira (2010) has argued that in order to understand the dynamics of urban violence we need to understand the rationality of the groups that are involved in its production. Consequently, social scientists have carried out qualitative studies of the multiple armed groups involved in the conflict in Rio de Janeiro. There is a wealth of qualitative research that has focused on state and non-state subjectivities, and especially those of the favela-based drug cartels (see Zaular 2000, 2004, 2007, 2010; Cano and Duarte 2012a; Larkins 2015; Penglase 2008, 2009, 2010, 2014). However, there is an important academic gap when it comes to *ethnographic* studies of PMERJ. This thesis attempts to fill this gap through an ethnographic description of the pacification project from the perspective of the police officers in charge of putting it into life. To limit the scope of this thesis, and operationalize the research problem, I have developed a set of *descriptive research questions* (Blaikie 2000):

- 1) *What political processes conditioned the emergence of the UPPs?*
- 2) *What is the current situation at the UPPs and how does armed conflict affect the health of police officers?*
- 3) *What are the main objectives and key elements of proximity policing?*
- 4) *What patrol practices are employed at the UPPs, and what effect do they have on police-resident relations?*
- 5) *What strategies are being implemented by the leaders at PMERJ in response to the increase in violence in pacified areas and the crisis of legitimacy of the pacification project?*
- 6) *What are the effects of the institutional culture of PMERJ on the reform process?*

These questions are addressed an *ethnographic case study* of the everyday practices of policing at the UPPs in the favelas of Rio de Janeiro. Between January and July 2015 I lived in one of Rio's pacified favelas, and carried out ethnographic fieldwork with the police officers from three different UPPs across the city. Additionally, I have drawn extensively on the wealth of existing academic literature on PMERJ and the UPPs in order to triangulate my findings and identify the institutional and political dynamics that promote and hamper the reform.

## RELEVANCE TO THE FIELD OF PUBLIC SECURITY

There is an alarming academic silence concerning the threats that recent trends of securitization and militarization of policing pose to core democratic values and human rights within the field of public security. Rather, it seems that discourses of development, democratization, and social inclusion are increasingly used to justify and legitimize militarized public security policies and wars, i.e. through the rhetoric of *humanitarian wars* and its corollaries (see Lutz 2006; Fassin 2012). It is urgent that scholars from the field of public security engage in discussions concerning the challenges, dilemmas, and consequences of the security discourse and associated militarization of policing. Goldstein (2010: 487) argues that a critical anthropology of security can contribute to an understanding of contemporary local and global realities in a time which he defines as a *global security moment*—a moment in history characterized by increased surveillance, expansive government powers, armed intervention, and restrictions on individual freedoms, all in the name of protecting personal and national security. According to Goldstein (2010: 489):

...the clash between security and rights is not limited to these contexts or to the U.S. “war on terror” but is part of an emergent global phenomenon. Security and rights intersect in particularly troubling ways in Latin America today, as subordinated groups increasingly call into question the legitimacy of states caught up in the contradictions of neoliberal political economy and formerly hegemonic classes grasp for the instruments to maintain their traditional authority and privileges.

In this regard, a case study of the UPP project in Rio de Janeiro holds the potential of offering useful theoretical insight on how militarized public security policies, human rights, neoliberal politics, and state violence intersect. These insights are of broad interest to security experts, and not limited to scholars that focus on the global south.

## PREVIOUS FINDINGS

There is a wealth of literature on urban violence, policing, public security, and police reform in Rio de Janeiro. In particular, the UPPs have received significant academic attention, partly as the result of PMERJs attempt to include local and international scholars in the implementation and evaluation of the project. While I draw on a wealth of academic publications throughout this thesis, I have limited this review to scholars who have focused

on impact evaluations of the UPPs and of the reform of PMERJ. In this regard, the works of Alves and Evans (2013 [2011]), Henriques and Ramos (2011), Borges, Ribeiro, and Cano (2012), and of Menezes (2013) are informative and offer comprehensive analyses of the early years and implementation of the project. These studies generally signal the change in paradigm in relation to traditional models of policing in Rio de Janeiro, an apparent reduction of lethal violence in pacified areas, and a significant reduction in police killings.

Some scholars have focused specifically on the potential of the reform to challenge prevailing notions of masculinity in the favelas and within the police that are believed to encourage violent behavior. The works of Oliveira (2010), Murão (2013, 2015), Jaffa (2014), Rodrigues (2014), as well as my own work (Salem 2016), have all signaled how the prevalence of militarized models of masculinity within PMERJ and at the UPPs contributes to the perpetuation of armed violence in the favelas. Others, including but not limited to Freeman (2012), Saborio (2013), and Steinbrick (2013) have shown how the UPPs are adapted to the needs of global capital, local business strategies, and the city's preparations to host the World Cup and Olympics, essentially challenging the idea of the UPPs as a project aimed at improving the lives of the residents living in the favelas.

More recently, academics have turned their gaze towards the police officers working at the UPPs, and their evaluation and support of the pacification strategy (see Saborio 2014a, 2014b, 2015; Savell 2014; Magaloni, Franco, and Melo 2015; Musumeci 2015a; Salem 2016). Generally speaking, these studies have revealed a strong discrediting of the paradigm of proximity policing and generalized suspicion against favela residents among patrol officers, which is contrasted with a general support of the project among officers and base commanders. These studies have also signaled the poor training, miserable work conditions, and persistence of repressive models of policing at the UPPs, and the detrimental effects that these conditions have on the mental health of police officers.

In sum, the academic debate surrounding the UPP project is often polarized in what could be defined as a *radical critique* of the project on the one hand, and *critical support* on the other. Scholars of the first current question the legitimacy of the the pacification project, which they argue represents a militarization of the favelas, and is tailored to the needs of neoliberalism and global capital (see Fleury 2012; Freeman 2012; Saborio 2013, 2014b, 2015; Steinbrick 2014; Oliveira 2014; Salem 2016). Scholars of the second current signal the flaws of the project (lack of dialogue, poor training of patrol officers, abuses of force, etc.), but still see it as an improvement compared to the policing of the favelas prior to pacification, and tend to place emphasis on how the UPPs initially seemed to reduce the prevalence of

lethal violence in the favelas, and especially the number of police killings (see Borges, Ribeiro, and Cano 2012; Robson 2014; Ramos 2016). This perspective has increasingly been challenged by recent increases in police killings and the rising tensions within pacified communities, and by suggestions that the decrease in lethal violence is possibly attributed to other policy initiatives (HRW 2016; Misse, D.G. 2014).

## STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS

In Chapter 2 I present a brief overview of the philosophical perspectives on security and policing that informs my analysis, as well as recent theoretical debates concerning the relation between policing and warfare. Chapter 3 focuses on the socio-economic inequalities of Rio de Janeiro, the geography of violence, and the history of policing in the favelas. In Chapter 4 I briefly account for the methods that I've used to collect the empirical data presented in this thesis, and address the validity and reliability of my findings through the concept of reflexivity. Chapter 5 is where I present the main empirical findings of my research. The chapter is structured into six sub-chapters, each centered on one of the research questions. Then, in Chapter 6, I discuss my empirical findings against the literature presented in Chapter 2. I relate my findings to a broader theoretical debate on the role of the state in the provision of security, arguing that the pacification project can fruitfully be analyzed through recent approaches to warfare. Finally, I sum up my findings and relate them to previous literature in the field in Chapter 7, signaling some of the implications of my findings for the area of public security.

## Chapter 2

### THEORY



Picture 3: Police officers from Rio's riot-police during a public protest in the center of Rio, January 2015.

## CHAPTER OUTLINE

In line with the multi-disciplinary approach of the field of public security and societal safety, the approaches to security, war, policing, and violence that I draw upon in this thesis span across a number of scientific disciplines, including philosophy, sociology, social anthropology, and political science. However, in this chapter I have chosen to focus mainly on the post-structuralist, philosophical approaches to security, policing, and violent state power in order to orient the reader on the implicit assumptions that inform the subsequent presentation and analysis of my empirical findings.

## SECURITY AND POLICING

Prior to embarking on a study of the police institution it might be helpful to clarify the different meanings and practices associated with certain concepts that are central to the analysis, such as *security* and *policing*. The first concept, security, carries a wealth of different meanings. In *Leviathan* (1969 [1651]) Hobbes argues that the constitution and legitimacy of the state rests on a *social contract* between an absolute *sovereign* and the people under his rule. According to Hobbes, the people grant the sovereign absolute power to rule in order to avoid the *state of nature*, which he claims is characterized by a war of all against all. Hobbes' work is the foundation of western liberal thought, where the main responsibility of the state is seen as the creation of security. His ideas lay the grounds for the monopoly of violence of modern states.

In liberal democratic states, the monopoly of violence is exercised through the *repressive apparatuses of the state*, such as the military, the police, the judiciary, and the prison system (see Althusser 2006 [1971]). Within this liberal tradition, security is strictly defined as the *national security* of sovereign states, and threats to national security are narrowly conceived as threats with the potential to undercut the sovereign exercise of coercive power by the state (see Wæver 1995). Such understandings of the provision of security by the state as a *social good* have later been challenged by Marxian approaches. The latter tend to see the state as the result of the conflicts that are produced by the competition for private property and individual wealth in capitalist societies, and as the guarantor of the security and interests of the elites in control of the state apparatuses and institutions (Goldstein 2010). This has given way to critical analyses of the state (and the police) as a partisan, and defender of particular class interests (see Loader and Walker 2006).

Recently, broader concepts of security has emerged: through the concept of *human security*, the UN Commission for Human Security has defined security as “freedom from want and freedom from fear”, stressing the many interacting dimensions of security, such as its economic, political, existential, and environmental dimensions (Eriksen, Bal, and Salemink 2010: 4; Goldstein 2010). However, while encompassing conceptualizations of security are generally framed as progressive critiques of the traditional definition of the concept, scholars from the *Copenhagen School* have stressed the potential of these emergent definitions to elicit militarized solutions to social problems, increasingly framed as *security problems*. Rather than seeing security as a *thing to be had*, proponents of this school understand security as a process or performative *speech act* that creates a sense of urgency and authorizes the extraordinary use of state power in order to address what has now been defined as a security problem (Wæver 1995). These processes are called processes of *securitization*. Similarly, Agamben (2014) has argued that in modern states, *security* has become an *authoritative argument* that quells political discussion and enables perspectives and measures that would never have been accepted otherwise. Coupled with a rhetoric of war—against crime, drugs, or terror—the invocation of security has become an effective tool for the state’s exercise of extended powers that are no longer restricted to a temporary state of emergency or exception, but perpetuated as a permanent governmental technique.

Foucault (1977, 2003, 2007) has examined the foundations of the legitimate exercise of political power, and identified different historical technologies of power: sovereign-, disciplinary-, and biopower. Sovereign power is characterized by the obedience towards a central authority figure that claims a good-given right to rule, is positioned outside of the law, and exercises his power in a spectacular fashion, through his right to kill. It is the main technology of power operating in medieval states. Modern, liberal-democratic states, however, draw their legitimacy on the bio-political framework of *governmentality*, which rests on the state’s capacity to defend the *social good* through the regulation and control of entire populations. In other words, the state gains its legitimacy based on its ability to defend the society of the state against perceived (or constructed) threats rather than on its ability to *command the greatest power*—as is the case with sovereign power.

It is in this context of governmentality that the modern meaning of *policing* develops. Jones and Newburn (1998: 18f in Grieve et. al. 2007: 20) define policing as:

Those organized forms of order-maintenance, peacekeeping, rule or law enforcements and other forms of investigation and information-brokering—which may involve a conscious exercise of coercive power—undertaken by individuals or organizations, where such activities are viewed by them and/or others as a central defining part of their purpose.

In this definition of policing, its constituting element is the organized exercise of coercive power to establish and secure a certain social order—i.e. a liberal democratic order. Two of the founding ideas of liberal democracies are the respect for the *rule of law* and the *equal* protection of civil and human rights—which are considered basic and inviolable rights of the individual in relation to the state. Thus, in liberal democracies (such as Brazil) the police should ideally be charged with the task of securing the rule of law while guaranteeing those rights.

However, rather than acting as guarantors of the rule of law and the egalitarian principles that the human rights are founded upon, Agamben argues that the police represents a return to the figure of the *sovereign*. He sees the police as “the place where the proximity and the almost constitutive exchange between violence and right that characterizes the figure of the sovereign is shown more nakedly and clearly than anywhere else” (Agamben 2000: 104). As such, when the police exercise its legitimate right to use violence it is not operating within the law, but in a *state of exception* where the rule of law is temporarily replaced by the rule of the sovereign: the rule of violence, of the ability to command the greatest power. Agamben (2014) claims that instead of being a temporary suspension of the rule of law, the *state of exception* has become the central paradigm of government in modern democracies. Furthermore, he argues that one of the corollaries of the investiture of the sovereign as a policeman makes it necessary to criminalize the adversary: “The enemy is first of all excluded from civil humanity and branded as a criminal; only in a second moment does it become possible and licit to eliminate the enemy by a ‘police operation’” Agamben (2000: 106). These critical approaches to security and police alert us to the violent potential of modern, democratic states, and challenge *a priori* assumption of liberal democracies as less violent than that other state forms. Rather, these approaches suggest that the violent potential of democratic states is contextually defined and must be analyzed empirically.

Kapferer and Bertelsen (2009: 2) argue that the kinds of violence that a particular state formation is likely to generate, is contingent on the “methods and procedures whereby states achieve and legitimate the domains of their control and power.” In this regard, recent

global trends of *securitization* and the associated *militarization* of society are paradigmatic examples of the exercise of violent state power within the bio-political framework of governmentality.<sup>2</sup> Specifically, these trends are intimately associated with the neoliberal paradigm of government, as violent solutions to the panoply of social problems brought on by neoliberal policies (Goldstein 2010; Wacquant 2003, 2008). Accordingly, there has been an intensification of militarized policing throughout the last decades, especially in large urban areas (Davis 1992; Graham 2011; Saborio 2014b). In contexts of high socio-economic inequality, the security discourse can often contribute to, rather than appease, violent dynamics (see Magaloni, Franco, and Melo 2015).

The insights of these critical approaches to security and policing have lead scholars argue that one of the biggest challenges of policing in the future will be how to ensure that policing is democratically controlled and organized (Newburn 2009). The implementation of the philosophy and principles of community policing have been at the heart of police reform attempts. The community-policing paradigm was emerged in the United States and Great Britain in the 70's as a strategy to solve problems related to crime, fear of crime, urban and social disorder, and neighborhood desegregation, especially in contexts characterized by strained police-resident relations (see Saborio 2014a). The approach aims to build positive and collaborative relations between the police and the local communities they are set to patrol, through a focus on preventive rather than repressive policing techniques, citizen involvement, problem solving, and decentralization (Saborio 2014a; Skogan 2006). It aims at developing increased trust in police through an organizational reform that increases local patrol officers' decision-making authority and accountability, and focuses on long-term assignment of officers to specific neighborhoods or areas, based on the idea that the police should know the people that live and work in the communities they serve, and vice versa (COPS n.d.).

However, critics have signaled that the concept of community policing represent a discursive shift directed at concealing, mystifying and legitimating police distribution of non-negotiably coercive force. Klockars (2009) harsh critique of community policing is funded on an understanding of the police as an institution with "a virtually unrestricted right to use violent and, when necessary, lethal means to bring certain types of situations under control." The concept of community policing, he argues, "wraps the police in the powerful and

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<sup>2</sup> The concept of *militarization* can broadly be defined as the expansion of military practices and doctrine into civilian institutions (Saborio 2014b).

unquestionably good images of community, cooperation and crime prevention”, but rather than increased security, the effect is rhetorical immunity, which makes it all the more difficult to criticize an institution that he believes to be fundamentally offensive to core values of modern institutions (2009: 591).

## PACIFICATION

Securitization processes imply a blurring of the boundaries between war and crime, and the subsequent militarization of society brought on by these processes tends to cast policing activities as a war against a vaguely defined *criminal-enemy*. The war on drugs is a paradigmatic example in this regard, and can fruitfully be analyzed through the lens of securitization. It is a clear example of how a complex problem with many interacting dimensions—poverty, unemployment, inequality, health, education, and violence—is reconfigured as an urgent threat to national security that calls for a militarized response by the state.

The concept of *pacification* is intimately associated with the discourse of war on drugs. Recently, Neocleous (2013) has argued that the concept of pacification can offer critical scholars an opportunity to analyze the connections between policing and warfare. The discursive proximity between the concepts of pacification, policing, and warfare suggests that combining analytical approaches to policing and warfare can offer useful new insights on how these practices diverge and intersect.

Generally, scholars studying the urban violence of Rio de Janeiro have refrained from collapsing the analytical categories of warfare and policing, noting the lack of a legally codified, declared state of war. Rather, they have analyzed the effects of the “metaphor of war” on the exercise of violent state power (see Leite 2012). While the absence of a declared state of war holds some important consequences for the legal framework that policing in Rio is set within—basically, martial law does not apply—this does not necessarily imply that the situation in Rio can not be analytically approached as a war. According to Lessing (2015: 3):

...if what we care about is understanding—and thus perhaps minimizing—cartel violence, the relevant question for classification is neither intensity nor the crassness of belligerents’ motives per se, but how its dynamics resemble or differ from those of other sorts of wars. A useful conceptualization of criminal war should be based on observable

characteristics that illuminate differences in underlying logics of violence. Failure to appreciate such fundamental differences can make states' efforts to curb cartel violence, often counterinsurgency inspired, disastrously counterproductive.

Approaching the conflict in Rio as a war encourage us to draw on recent theorizations of contemporary wars and trends in late-modern warfare in order to understand the dynamics of violence in the favelas of Rio de Janeiro. Furthermore, it suggests that new empirically based insights concerning the nature of war and violent conflict can be drawn from the Rio-case.

Within the area of conflict studies, scholars have signaled a global trend towards a shift from interstate to intrastate wars. Many of the current conflicts are not conflicts between state actors, but between armed groups and between these groups and national states (Shaw 2005). Consequently, critical scholars have signaled a conceptual blurring between war and policing, as well as a spatial and temporal blurring of war which leads some to suggest that contemporary wars are characterized by diffuse and dispersed *states of violence* with no clear beginning nor end, where we are no longer able to determine whether or not we are actually at war (see Zizek 2002; Mbembe 2003; Chandler 2009; Gilmore 2011; Gregory 2011). This means that even in peacetime, the *logic of war* is operating through the law and the policing of the law by the state, or, as Mbembe (2003) suggests, that war is often not legally codified as such. Furthermore, it is argued that the conceptual blurring of war implies a blurring of the boundaries between crime and war, war and peace, and combatants and civilians (Mbembe 2003; Gregory 2011). On the other hand, contemporary wars are said to be characterized by a profound "loss of meaning" following the collapse of the Soviet Union. According to this perspective, the disappearance of the communist threat meant that national states needed to find new and powerful enemy images that would legitimize and give meaning to the state's exercise of violent power (Laidi 1998; see also Shaw 2005).



## Chapter 3 CONTEXT



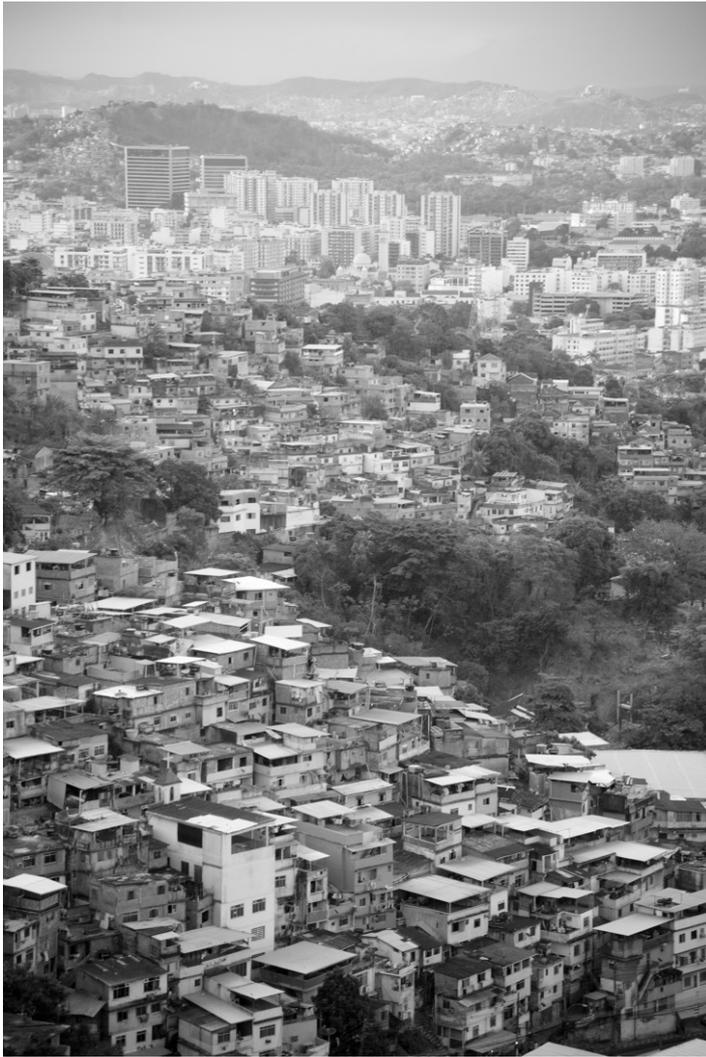
Picture 4: The favelas of Babilonia and Chapeu-Mangureira perched on the hills above the affluent neighborhoods of Leme and Copacabana

## CHAPTER OUTLINE

This chapter is meant as a brief contextualization of the fieldwork setting, and the empirical findings that will inform my analysis. First, I offer a short introduction to the history and geography of violence and socioeconomic inequality in Rio de Janeiro and Brazil. I trace the origins and development of Rio de Janeiro's police forces, drug-cartels, and paramilitary groups called *milicias*. I also offer a brief account of the public security policies of Rio, and their relation to the transnational discourse on the *war on drugs*. Specifically, I address some of the challenges that have characterized policing in Rio since the return to democracy, and relate them to the particularities of Brazilian democracy through Arias and Goldstein's (2010) concept of *violent pluralism* as an idiosyncratic, Latin American democratic tradition, in opposition to the *failed state paradigm* common within political science, which tends to overlook the contribution of state agencies and subjectivities to the configuration of current violent dynamics.

## COLONIALISM

The historical roots of the inequality and violence characteristic of Rio de Janeiro date back to the colonial era, when Brazil was a colony under the Portuguese Crown. Rio de Janeiro quickly became a mayor port of export of the gold and minerals of Mina Gerais, and one of the most important slave-ports in Latin America. At the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, roughly half the population in Rio were black slaves. In 1808, during the napoleonic war in Europe, the Portuguese royal family and their court fled from Lisboa and founded the new imperial capital of the Portuguese empire in Rio de Janeiro. The precursor of PMERJ, the Military Division of the Royal Police Guard was founded a year later, to protect the european elite from the danger of slave revolts, such as those that had expelled the French from Haiti a few years earlier. Thus, from its establishment, the police forces of Rio were attributed with the responsibility of protecting the interests of the wealthy and powerful and upholding a hierarchical colonial order founded on slavery and racism (Ashcroft 2014a). Through the 19<sup>th</sup> century the police was almost exclusively dedicated to the repression of slave revolts, and while Brazil abolished slavery in 1888 as the last country on the continent, the police continued to be charged with the task of guaranteeing the privileges of the elites well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century, repressing public protests and keeping the dispossessed in check (Mingardi 2015).



Picture 5: View of the favelas and middle class neighborhoods of central and northern Rio.

## FAVELA

The high levels of socioeconomic inequality inherent in the colonial social order prevailed as Brazil gained its independence, and was soon crystallized in the urban landscape as Rio's impoverished population started settling down on the steep *morros* [hills] that surrounded the city center, where state regulation and public services were non-existent. The expanding informal settlements were soon known as *favelas* and were home to a heterogeneous population of former slaves, unemployed war veterans, and poor immigrants that could not afford the cost of life in the formal city, or *asfalto* [lit. asphalt]. Favela residents became a source of cheap labor power for the growing city's middle and upper classes. Through the 20<sup>th</sup> century the formerly peripheral favelas became engulfed by the growing city, creating the landscape of large pockets of extreme poverty in the midst of stupendous wealth that characterizes Rio and Brazil (Meirelles and Athayde 2014). According to the IBGE 2010 census there are 763 favelas in Rio de Janeiro, which are home to almost 1.4 million

residents, equivalent to 22% of the city's population (IGBE 2010). Indeed, the city boasts some of the largest income inequalities in the world, with neighborhoods exhibiting western living standards and consumption patterns next to areas where living standards are akin to many african countries. This has earned Brazil the nickname of *Belindia*—in reference to the contrast between Belgium and India. Gradually, the favelas became the targets of state interventions: first in way of forced removals, and later through policies of urbanization and so-called public security policies (Meirelles and Athayde 2014).

## POLICING IN BRAZIL

During the Cold war Latin American elites, with the support of the United States and their national militaries, established authoritarian governments throughout the continent and adopted the *national security doctrine* to fight the guerrillas and popular movements that sought to install socialist governments in the region. In Brazil PMERJ became a key player in the country's *dirty war* against political opponents and *subversives* between 1964 and 1985. The police became heavily influenced by the national security doctrine and adopted many of its authoritarian practices of counterinsurgency, such as torture and assassinations (see Pereira 2015). Off-duty police formed death-squads that meted out private justice for local businesses and killed alleged criminals - primarily in the suburbs and favelas of Rio (Ashcroft 2014b; Zaular 2007; Misse 2010; Cano and Duarte 2012b). These years, as well as Brazil's colonial past, lay the foundation for the militarized style of policing carried out by PMERJ at the return of democracy.

Among other things, the coexistence of a multiplicity of police forces with different areas of responsibility and jurisdictions that characterize policing in Brazil is a legacy of the years of military rule: on a national level, the Federal Police is in charge of investigating federal crimes. On a state level, each state has its own Civil Police force, in charge of criminal investigations and prosecutions, and a Military Police force in charge of patrolling, crime repression and prevention. The Military Police on the other hand, is organized in *batalhões* [battalions], and follow the same hierarchical division as the Brazilian Armed forces, with a strict separation between a large body of low ranking *praças* [patrol officers] and a small group of high-ranking *oficiais* [officers] in charge of management and supervision. Patrol officers and officers are trained separately, and while the main principle of rank is seniority, the highest-ranking patrol officers (Sub-Lieutenant) are still hierarchically inferior to the lowest ranking officers (Lieutenant). The internal and external

fragmentation of the police creates a climate of competition and mutual distrust between the different police forces, as well as within the force, that often hampers effective collaboration (Kucinski et.al. 2015).

## DRUG CARTELS AND MILICIAS

Another significant aspect of the current situation of urban violence in Rio inherited from the years of military rule was the dynamics of criminal gangs and drug factions that came to dominate the favelas in the decades following the return to democracy. During the military regime, common criminals were influenced by the political prisoners that they were sentenced to serve with in jail. Rio's largest and most influential drug cartel, *Commando Vermelho* (CV) was born in the confluence of the experience of prisoners at the Cândido Mendes prison on Ilha Grande, and the proliferation of drug production and trafficking in the region towards the end of the dictatorship. The economic potential of the illegal drug trade, and the relative absence of the state in the favelas paved the way for early gang leaders, whom initially presented themselves as a kind of welfare state for the poor. CV established what has often been called a *parallel state* in the favelas, and imposed their own laws—*a lei do trafico* [lit. 'the law of traffic']—meting out local justice through spectacular punishments of transgressors (Penglase 2008; Larkins 2015). In addition to CV, two other large drug cartels—*Terceiro Commando (Puro)* (TCP), and *Amigo dos Amigos* (ADA) - competed for the territorial control of the illicit drug trade (centered on the trade of cocaine and marijuana) in the favelas, with weapons acquired from corrupt members of the state security forces, or through the international illegal weapons trade (Misse 2010).

In some favelas, off-duty and ex-members of state security forces (mainly the military police) and the death squads that emerged during the dictatorship, formed paramilitary groups locally known as *milicias*. These groups formed protection-rackets, charging protection money from local businesses and imposing a strict and authoritarian social order on residents of the favelas, which was upheld through the constant threat of physical violence: transgressors were punished with beatings, expulsions from the community, or torture and death (Zaular 2007; Misse 2010; Cano and Duarte 2012b). Gradually, they expanded their area of influence, to include most of the vast area of western Rio. While they allegedly formed to impede the drug cartels from entering the favelas, their main drive is the control and monopolization of the informal economies of the favelas, such as the provision of public services to local residents—i.e. gas distribution and public transport, but also illegal

activities, such as the *jogo do bico* [illegal lottery] and recently there have also been reports of *milicianos* [milicia members] involved in drug trafficking. During the early 2000's the milicia developed close ties with local politicians, using the electoral base of the favelas they controlled to push their own candidates for the state legislative assembly (Zaular 2007).

## WAR ON DRUGS

The growth of the cocaine trade in Rio from the late 70's to late 90's had a profound impact on the daily lives of Rio's favela residents, and on the city's social and political structures. Penglase (2008) associates the emergence of the drug cartels with the wave of violence that has characterized Brazil's transition to democracy, while recognizing the shared role of a economic inequality, the proliferation of handguns, the growth of petty crime, and also the violent and militarized policing carried out by Brazil's police forces. Post-dictatorship violence has not been limited to Rio: while the national murder rate in 1979, at the height of the military regime, was 11.5 murders per 100,000 inhabitants, it had more than doubled by 1997, reaching an alarming 25.4 murders per 100,000 inhabitants (Penglase 2008: 119). Brazilian homicide rates have remained consistently high, as has the rates of police killings. At the turn of the century, the police in Sao Paulo killed more people every two years than the people killed by the military dictatorship during its 22-year long span (Arias and Goldstein 2010).

Thus, rather than abandoning the warfare model of policing that had been normalized during the years of military rule, the return of democracy in 1985 saw an intensification in repressive and militarized policing techniques, as the military police was quickly reconfigured into the state's spearhead in the war against drugs. The drug dealer was configured as the main threat to the social order, turning the young, black men from the favelas into *bare life*: disposable, killable subjects that the full force of the state's violent capacities could be exercised upon (see Agamben 1998). By means of association, all other favela residents were also considered enemies of the state, in a process that Misse (2010) refers to as *criminal subjection*. The rhetoric of war created a state of exception that extended police authority and power, and allowed them to operate with relative impunity in the favelas, which were the symbolical battlefields of the war (see Kucinski et.al. 2015).

In the decades that followed, the city's public security policies went through several cycles, alternating between democratic reform attempts, and the hard hand, confrontational approaches of the war on drugs. Within the police, the practice of forming death squads and

protection rackets that had been established during military rule was continued, and elements of the police carried out a series of massacres against the poor. In 1993 a group of police officers executed 21 favela resident in the favela of Vigarão Geral in retribution for the murder of 4 military police officers by local gang members.<sup>3</sup> A few months later, police officers killed 8 homeless children sleeping in front of the Candelaria cathedral, in the center of Rio (Rodrigues 2014), bringing international attention to the growing levels of urban violence in Brazil. Similarly, the revelation that members of the kidnapping division of the Civil Police had been involved in a series of kidnappings in the mid 90's in order to claim ransom also illustrate the depth of Rio's growing public security crisis (Alves and Evanson 2011).

During the course of the decade, the militarized and aggressive police operations of PMERJs Special Operations Battalion (*Batalhão de Operações Especiais*, BOPE) to apprehend drug dealers, weapons, and drugs in the favelas became routinized. During these operations suspected drug dealers were frequently killed, many of them exhibiting signs of torture and summary executions. Torture techniques were taught to BOPE recruits as late as 2006 (Barros 2015). One of the most dramatic examples of how the hard hand policies contributed to the spiral of violence is the *premiação faroeste* [lit. 'wild-west reward'] implemented by Governor Alencar between 1995 and 1998. It was a system of rewards that added permanent and accumulative monetary bonuses to the salaries of police officers for *acts of bravery*—including shootouts that resulted in the death of alleged criminals (Leite 2000; Mena 2015). The most visible result of this so-called “public security policy” was a dramatic increase in the number of people killed by the police. Officers that I spoke to during my fieldwork told that some police officers would kill by the dozens, or target homeless people who they would then incriminate with false evidence in order to cash in the monetary reward. Furthermore, Penglase (2014) argues that a less acknowledged consequence of this policy was that it translated into less financial incentives for the police to take bribes from drug dealers. As bribery relations collapsed, and veteran drug dealers were killed or apprehended, younger drug dealers gained prominence within the cartels, further destabilizing the situation.

As a result of the turf wars between the cartels, and the war on drugs of the police, lethal violence soared to unprecedented heights. Between December 1987 and November

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<sup>3</sup> The investigation that followed suggested that the motive was the breach of a pact of corruption between the police and local traffickers (Rodrigues 2014: 4).

2001 the number of adolescents killed by firearms in Rio de Janeiro was around 8.5 times higher than those killed in the Israel-Palestine conflict (Dowdney 2003: 116). The police contributed significantly to the death toll, but police officers were also increasingly targeted by the cartels, and suffered important losses in attacks against on- and off-duty officers.



Picture 6: The families of police officers protest against the high death tolls in Rio's police forces. Each cross represents a police officer killed on or off duty in Rio in 2014. Copacabana, December 2014.

## DYNAMICS OF VIOLENCE

Now, the [real] question: who is it that put those weapons, that ammunition in the hands of the [...] *traficante favelado*, right? (Pauses to see if I can answer) The corrupt military [officer], the corrupt police [officer]! There are no weapons nor ammunition that gets in the hands of a *traficante* in the *favela*, or of a car thief from the *favela*, or of a kidnapper from the *favela*, [...] that [hasn't gotten there] by the hand of the military—I am talking about the armed forces as well—or from a corrupt police officer. Are you getting why I'm saying what I'm saying? If we don't invent war, we don't need to pacify, right? It's better not to invent. [...] So we arm the *traficante* from the *favela*, we provide [him] with ammunition regularly, sometimes we go there to wage war with him, against him. Isn't it better not to arm [him], not to munition him? (Laughs) “Ahh, but the *traficante* is the

*dono (owner) of the favela!*” Is he the owner of the *favela*? The owner of the *favela*? He lives until he’s 24 at the most, dies or is imprisoned. There you have *Nêm, Nêm* from *Rocinha*, then it’s *Dem*, then comes *Zem*, and then comes *Dum, Lum, Gum*, right? Pieces of easy repossession. He is the owner. Short life: [...] either he dies at the hand of the police, or he dies at the hand of the *traficante*, or he goes to jail. [...] He is the owner, ok, he is the owner, and he is obliged to pay *arrego*, right? You already know what *arrego* is, corruption [money] for the police, weekly, every other week, right? Primarily for the MP (Military Police), right? If I am the owner of something, do I have to pay someone else to stay in my place? How does that work? [He] isn’t the owner of anything! That’s a lie, that’s an invention of the police, of the media, of the politicians, to valorize. Valorize the *arrego*. Corruption valorizes the news, valorizes the “we are confronting, combating”, right? [He] isn’t the owner of anything, he is the lessee of the moment, he rented that little spot, the tenant, right?

Vinicius George, Civil Police and Public Security expert at ALERJ

Scholars analyzing the war on drugs in Rio have noted how violence is an effect of the complex interaction between state security forces who often act in collusion with criminal groups; a multiplicity of rivaling drug cartels; and death squads and paramilitary organizations who engage in violent disputes for territorial control of the favelas, where informal and illicit economies have prospered, in the absence of comprehensive state policies towards the poor. Situations where violent groups establish competing state orders, and face state security forces in armed battle are often analyzed through the *failed-state paradigm*. However, this approach tends to ignore the processes through which the state is implicated in the production of disorder and insecurity.

As George’s account shows, the drug cartels in the favelas often rely on the complaisance of state representatives in order to exercise their authority. Predatory forms of accumulation, such as the drug and weapons trade and its corollaries (i.e. the formation of protection rackets and the charging of bribes), are generally pursued through violence and in contexts of war (Grossman and Kim 1996). Thus, Rio’s violence can be seen as an idiosyncratic form of violent negotiations between state security forces and drug cartels (Penglase 2008, 2014). Lessing (2015) has similarly argued that the conflict in Rio is what he calls a *war of constrain*, where the final objective (of the violent actors) is not to conquer, but to constrain the actions of their adversary. The underlying logic is that of violent corruption: cartels might target law enforcement agents in order to intimidate them to reduce costly

bribes, or, as George argues, corrupt state forces can target the cartels to increase the price of bribes.

But the state's war against the drug cartels is not exclusively fueled by these predatory forms of accumulation. They also serve a political purpose. According to Larkins (2013, 2015) the actions of the special units in the favelas are spectacular enactments of state power, whereby an otherwise beleaguered state is represented as powerful and efficient. In other words, the war on drugs diverts the attention from the corruption and inefficiency of self-serving Brazilian politicians. Rio's corrupt political elites thrive in contexts of insecurity, and as they are often the final recipients of the bribes of the cartels, they have both political and economic incentives to perpetuate the state of war.

These dynamics have been noted by Arias and Goldstein (2010) who argue that violence has become an integral element to the exercise of political agency in Latin American democracies. They write that:

...rather than understanding Latin America's endemic violence as simply a failure of democratic governance and institutions, we call attention to violence as an element integral to the configuration of those institutions, as a necessary component of their maintenance, and as an instrument for popular challenges to their legitimacy. In this sense Latin American democratic society can be conceptualized as 'violently plural', with states, social elites, and subalterns employing violence on the quest to establish or contest regimes of citizenship, justice, rights, and a democratic social order (Arias and Goldstein 2010: 4f).

Thus, violence is seen 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 a way of coping with the myriad problems that neoliberal democracies have generated" (Arias and Goldstein 2010: 5). The authors offer a critique of democratization theory that only takes into consideration the managerial aspects of democratization, and fail to account for the structural (social, political, and economic) conditions that have given rise to the types of violent groups and hard hand policies that contribute to the violence and political instability in "developing" societies. Their argument carries important implications for our understanding of the results one may expect from managerial public security reform attempts, such as the pacification project.

## Chapter 4 METHOD



Picture 7: "Hanging out" with patrol officers at one of the advanced container bases at UPP Alemão during my ethnographic fieldwork.

## CHAPTER OUTLINE

The empirical data presented in this thesis were mainly collected during my ethnographic fieldwork with the military police officers working at the UPPs. In this chapter I argue that ethnographic studies of the police can offer important insights that other qualitative approaches cannot. I briefly account for some of the defining features of the ethnographic approach, before I embark on a discussion concerning the validity and reliability of ethnographic research in general, and of my findings in particular, through the concept of *reflexivity*.

## ETHNOGRAPHY

Public security and societal safety is heavily influenced by organizational theory, and generally oriented towards the production of normative theory that can guide policy-making and interventions (although this is not to ignore the significance of descriptive theories within the field). The proximity policing paradigm of the UPPs is an example of how normative academic literature on policing and police reform is currently being put to use to address the challenges of urban violence, organized crime, and strained police-resident relations. However, its apparent failure to bring peace and security to local communities calls for an examination of the theoretical assumptions that the project is founded on, and the way these are currently being implemented. Among other things, this requires in-depth knowledge of the objectives and rationale of the subjects in charge of putting the reform into action—namely the police officers at PMERJ. In this regard, the *ethnographic approach*, characterized by its holism, its focus on complexity, and its tendency towards multi-causal models of explanation, might offer valuable insights. This approach has been considered “particularly appropriate for studying the deeper levels of assumptions of police officers” (Van Maanen 1973 in Loftus 2009: 201).

In spite of these recognitions, academics have signaled a pervasive gap in the knowledge when it comes to ethnographic studies on the inner workings of police institutions (Fassin 2013). Relevant in this regard is Nader’s (1972: 289) call for anthropologists to *study-up*—to study “the culture of power rather than the culture of the powerless”, which she argues carries important democratic relevance as it might help managers understand the consequences of specific (legal) decisions and procedures better, and help citizens have better control over, and gain access to decision makers and governmental institutions. Elaborating on Nader’s argument, Gusterson (1997) has pointed out how “anthropologists [...] have

ignored military elites even more than capitalist elites, despite militarism's evident importance as both a mode of social organization and a site of potent ideological production in America" (Gusterson 1997: 115). Similarly, Rodgers (2001) has criticized a methodological weakness in anthropological approaches to violence, namely that "the number of anthropologists who have directly participated within violent groups or with violent individuals is small compared to the number of researchers who have investigated violence from the perspective of those who suffer it." When perpetrators of violence are included in the scope of the study, Rodgers (2001: 3) argues, this is largely done "through interviews and other non-participatory methodologies, frequently retrospectively, and outside the actual context of violence."

The founding pillar of ethnographic research—participant observation through extended stays in the field—allows the researcher to get immersed in a community, "internalize basic beliefs, fears, hopes and expectations of the people under study" (Fetterman 1989 in Fife 2005: 71). It also allows the researcher to build rapport with his interlocutors and gain access to "secret" information that would be difficult or even impossible to access through other qualitative methods. Thus, through participation the researcher gets immersed in the world of his interlocutors, adopting the *native point of view*, and through observation he is able to detect actual conduct, and not just reported conduct (Malinowski 1992 [1922]). But perhaps one of the main strengths of the ethnographic approach is its reliance on multiple methods of qualitative and even quantitative data collection across a number of dispersed fields, such as interviews, previous literature, archival data, mass and social media, public debates and hearings, and other sources.

## Reflexivity

Anthropology's ethnographic approach challenges positivist understandings of validity and reliability, and the associated notion of *scientific objectivity*. First, in ethnographic studies the ethnographer himself is the main tool for data collection, and empirical observations are inevitably filtered through his own subjective point of view, which is permeated by pre-existing assumptions and power relations. Second, as many ethnographers have noted, the final write-up and analysis is heavily influenced by the personal style and decisions taken by the researcher, and a significant element of the production of ethnographic knowledge production hinges on the subjective criteria and aesthetic judgment of the ethnographer in the selection of what is included and what is not included in the final work, and largely

determines how interlocutors are portrayed (see Van Maanen 2011 [1978]). This has led some academics to compare ethnography to an interpretive art form, rather than a rigorous scientific method (see Fife 2005; Geertz 1973). Conventional demands of validity and reliability is hard to fulfill in ethnographic writing, and thus ethnographers generally refrains from attempts to make positivistic truth claims.

The *reflexive turn* in anthropology argues that the validity of ethnographic research hinges on the ethnographer's ability to carefully reflect on his or her own subjective position, the style of writing, and the implications this has for the scientific output of the research, as well as his or her engagement with other literature in the field. Relatedly, recent calls to *decolonize* ethnography should be read as an invitation for researchers to examine the power relations embedded in their own production of scientific knowledge. Nader's (1972) concept of *studying-up* is informative in this regard. She argues that the study of the powerful poses some particular challenges compared to traditional ethnographic fieldwork. Among these challenges, Nader signaled issues concerning *access* to field-sites, the *attitudes* of many ethnographers, *ethical considerations*, and *methodology* as key obstacles to the study of the powerful.

More recently, post-structuralist notions of power and subjectivity have challenged Nader's assumptions, highlighting how "powerful subjects" occupy dynamic, fractured, and multiple positions, that are also contingent on the relation between the researcher and the researched (Priyadharshini 2003). I will now briefly discuss some of the challenges of carrying out ethnographic fieldwork within an coercive state institution that has been widely criticized for systematic abuses of power and human rights violations, and how I sorted the challenges in light of Priyadharshini's (2003) post-structuralist critique of the notion of *studying-up*.<sup>4</sup>

### Access and multi-sited fieldwork

According to Nader (1972) ethnographers are often cut off from the opportunity to study powerful state institutions due to the formal requirements to gain access: you cannot simply walk into one of PMERJs bases and state that you are going to carry out fieldwork at the base. Police ethnographers have written about how they struggled to gain authorization to

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<sup>4</sup> My discussion in this sub-chapter on the challenges of *studying-up* significantly reproduces the arguments put forth in my thesis *Taming the War Machine* (Salem 2016), as both works are based on the same empirical material and ethnographic fieldwork.

carry out fieldwork with the police, and signaled the need to gain authorization from the upper echelons of the institution (Lofthus 2009; Fassin 2013). However, after contacting the public relations department at PMERJ and exposing my intentions, I was immediately put in contact with the secretary of the Chief of Staff, who scheduled a meeting at the police headquarters within days. The Chief of Staff at the moment was one of the main advocates of police reform within the institution, and gave me a *carte blanche* to carry out fieldwork at the UPPs on the condition that I submit my results to PMERJ once I had completed my thesis.

Due to the heterogeneous results of the pacification project across different UPPs, I was advised to carry out fieldwork at three different bases in order to get an overview of the project, which could serve as grounds for comparison. I started my fieldwork at the UPPs of Santa Marta and Alemão, and later included UPP Mangueira to the research design.<sup>5</sup> While the three UPPs that I eventually included in my research varied in many aspects, they were selected according to four main criteria: the level of armed conflict, or operational risk at each base<sup>6</sup>; the size of the pacified community; the location of the UPP and ease of access to the base; and, finally, the way that practices of proximity policing were carried out at the base. Through this sampling I aimed for a high level of variance between each field site.

Santa Marta was the first UPP to be created in January 2009, and is generally considered the poster-child and success story of the pacification project. The 123 police officers stationed at the base cater a small community with roughly 4000 residents (UPPRJ n.d.). The favela of Santa Marta is located in the middle of the Botafogo neighborhood, in the affluent south zone of the city. An increasing number of tourists visit the favela following its pacification, and an elevator that allows local residents to avoid the long stairs to the top, and facilitates public service provisions, such as garbage recollection, has been installed. When I arrived in Rio the UPP had not yet registered any armed confrontations between the police and gang members since the establishment of the base. The base was ranked as the UPP with lowest operational risk at the time of research (see Appendix D).

Simultaneously, I started interviewing police officers at Alemão, one of 4 UPPs that were created in 2012 to cover the vast agglomerate of favelas known as *Complexo do Alemão* (CPX). According to the latest available census CPX is home to approximately 70.000 residents, and is considered one of the largest agglomerates of favelas in Rio (IBGE 2010). As the former headquarters of CV, and subject of frequent and violent police operations

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<sup>5</sup> See Appendix C for a map of field-sites

<sup>6</sup> See Appendix D for PMERJs classification of operational risk

through the years, it is generally considered the most violent area of the city of Rio. The area covered by UPP Alemão is home to 15.000 inhabitants, and the base employs 320 police officers (UPPRJ n.d.). The operational risk at Alemão was classified as *considerable*, and UPP Alemão is ranked with the second highest risk level, only surpassed by neighboring Nova Brasília, also located in CPX.



Picture 8: The main building of UPP Mangureira. The patrol officers used the container at the right as resting quarters.

With Santa Marta and Alemão representing the two extremes of the pacification project, I included a third UPP into my research design a few months into my fieldwork. UPP Mangureira is located next to the football stadium of Maracana, where the 2014 World Cup final match was held, as well as the opening and closing ceremonies of the 2016 Olympics. The favelas of Mangureira are home to approximately 17.000 inhabitants, and there are 332 police officers stationed at the local UPP. Operational risk at UPP Mangureira was *moderate* at the time of research.

#### Attitudes: Methodological relativism

Ethnography is generally understood to require a certain ability to empathize emotionally with the people that we work with, in order to capture the “native point of view” (Fife 2005). Often, Nader (1972) argues, researchers implicitly chose to work with groups of people that

they already feel some kind of emotional empathy towards, which leads us to favor the perspective of the underdog, assuming that it is easier to empathize with the powerless than with the powerful. On the other hand, most aspiring ethnographers are warned of the problems of going native, and while the ethnographic method of participant observation is characterized by the personal involvement and emotional empathy of the researcher in the field, it also requires the ability to oscillate between closeness and distance with the people that he or she studies (Robben 1995; DeWalt and DeWalt 2002).

According to Priyadharshini (2003) a deconstructive ethnography informed by Foucauldian notions of power can help us transcend *adversarial* approaches in the study of people that hold positions of power, in favor of *inquisitorial* approaches that promote our understanding of our interlocutors. Said with other words, her's is an argument in favor of *methodological relativism*, and throughout my fieldwork I applied this strategy, suspending my own passing of judgement while in the field, and focus on understanding the police officers that I worked with.

#### Ethics: Informed consent and informant anonymity

When it comes to conducting ethnographic research within Brazilian military institutions, Castro and Leirner (2009) have noted how these tend to make a sharp distinction between friends and enemies. In other words, there is no middle ground - either you are with us or you are against us. Consequently, I paid great attention to how I presented myself throughout my time in the field, making sure not to voice opinions that I believed the police would consider controversial, or perceive as a critique, as I reckoned that this would only cloud my objective, which was to understand the point of view of my interlocutors. As R. Mitchell (1993) warns, if researchers give too much priority to full disclosure and openness, they “may fail fundamentally to meet the most crucial of fiduciary responsibilities, the responsibility for informed reporting of members' perspectives.” In other words, if we as researchers are too preoccupied with projecting “honest” representations of our selves, we may fail to understand and report the social world as the groups we study experience it. This being said, I generally found the ethical guidelines of the American Anthropological Association to be perfectly compatible with my research project (see AAA 2012).<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> AAA's principles of professional responsibility are: (1) do no harm; (2) be open and honest regarding your work; (3) obtain informed consent and necessary permissions; (4) weigh competing ethical obligations due

I have gone to great lengths to guarantee the anonymity of the patrol officers that participated in my research. Patrol officers that publicly criticize their institution risk being sanctioned by their superiors, and revelations about corruption or misconduct within the force can potentially put the police at risk of violent acts of revenge by their colleagues. Due to the severe consequences that might follow if my interlocutors were to be identified I have chosen to follow Hopkins (1993) radical technique of ensuring anonymity through the creation of entirely new characters and scenes through the piecing together of many different people and events, while conserving the essence and meaning of the situations depicted. Thus, while the police officers and situations presented in this thesis are composites, their problems, dilemmas, experiences, statements, and opinions are real. PMERJs commanders are public figures, and their identity is not always possible to conceal. Whenever I name my interlocutors I have collected verbal consent to use the information without granting them anonymity.

#### Methodology: Managing dangers in the field

A final challenge when studying up is the limits that the institutional context and the situation of armed violence place on the possibility of doing *participant* observation, and not just observation. The extent and meaning of *participation* can be discussed, as police ethnographers certainly have. Some ethnographers have opted to go *all in* and joined the police academy in order to become an *insider*, others participated by helping police officers carry out small tasks, while others have followed police officers in their everyday routines of the police as observers (for an overview see Newburn 2008, 2009).

The main methodological obstacle during my fieldwork was the situation of armed conflict in the pacified favelas where I worked. At Santa Marta, where the operational risk levels were low, I would be able to join the police on most of their activities, but at Alemão and Mangueira, where operational risks were significantly higher, my participation on patrol was limited to certain areas, times of the day, and moments during my stay when the risks were considered acceptable by the base commanders and supervisors.

However, spent much time talking to the patrol officers at the bases, and also joined the police officers at Alemão on a one-week training course with the special operations units. While I did not stay with them in the fortified trenches, or experience situations of urban

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collaborators and affected parties; (5) make your results accessible; (6) protect and preserve your records; and (7) maintain respectful and ethical professional relationships.

battle directly, I eventually started developing the same feelings of paranoia and anxiety that many police officers at PMERJ report, which I though signaled a natural limit to my participation in the field.

But ethnographic research is by no means limited to participant observation, and I chose to follow Gusterson's (1997) suggestion to de-emphasize participant observation as a strategy to address some of the methodological challenges of the field. This includes interacting with informants "across a number of dispersed sites, not just in local communities, and sometimes in virtual form" and collect data "eclectically from a disparate array of sources in many different ways" (Gusterson 1997: 116). Drawing on multiple methods of data gathering can also help the ethnographer triangulate his findings, enhancing the validity and reliability of his research (Blaikie 2000). In addition to participant observation, I collected data through formal and informal interviews, mass and social media, public debates and hearings, and the vast body of academic literature on the topic. I recorded a total of 10 semi-structured interviews with high-ranking officers and experts, and 21 semi-structured interviews with low-ranking beat-patrol officers. I also collected and recorded the life stories of 3 different beat-patrol officers over the course of a total of 9 sessions, and carried out 7 group-interviews with beat-patrol officers at one of the bases, which I purposely did not record as I considered that this would have been disruptive to the flow and nature of the conversation.



## Chapter 5 EMPIRICAL FINDINGS



Picture 9: Patrol officer on patrol at Santa Marta

## CHAPTER OUTLINE

This chapter is divided in six sub-chapters, chronologically ordered according to the research questions presented in the Introduction. First, I analyze the emergence of the pacification project in light of former attempts to reform PMERJ, the local political context that laid the grounds for the project. I also offer a brief summary of the implementation of the pacification process up until the moment of my arrival in the field in December 2014. Second, I describe the organizational structure of PMERJ and the UPPs—including the work conditions at the UPPs. Third, I sketch out the key objectives and elements of the proximity-policing paradigm implemented through the pacification project. Fourth, I offer a detailed account of the main kinds of patrol that are employed by UPP patrol officers. Fifth, I discuss the institutional dynamics of PMERJ with impact on reform attempts. Finally, in the sixth sub-chapter, I describe the managerial response to the increase in violence in pacified areas.

## ORIGINS

The 90's was the worst time of the Military Police in terms of war. We managed to reach 56 homicides per 100.000 inhabitants [...]. That was when the notorious *gratificação feroeste* [lit. 'wild-west reward'] was instituted [...]. That used to be the public security policy of this state. That madness used to be the public security policy here. This has a consequence, you reap what you sow. What we are reaping today is the storm of those insanities that called public security policies [...]. It is necessary to fix that, so it is necessary to modernize the police, do what we should have done back in the 90's, when all the institutions were making progress, adapting to the new constitution. They were handing over rifles for 25 year old boys, pushing those boys into killing and dying within the favela (Colonel Ibis Pereira during a public hearing at ALERJ)

There is a relatively broad consensus among Brazilian academics and intellectuals that the spiraling violence in Rio is at least in part the result of the aggressive forms of militarized policing that were adopted during the military dictatorship and sustained in the decades that followed. Since the return of democracy, there has been a series of reform attempts aimed at abandoning warfare-oriented practices of policing, institutionalized by the military rulers, in favor of democratic models of policing. Generally, these attempts have run along the lines of

two opposing currents: one has been directed towards legal and institutional transformations, such as the demilitarization of the police and the unification of police forces, and typically hinges on governmental and political initiative (see Mena 2015; Soares 2015). The second has focused on managerial reforms to increase the efficiency of the police through the improvement of the schooling and training of soldiers, the increase in resources and personnel, community-oriented models of policing and closer collaboration between the Civil- and Military Police within the current institutional framework (Mena 2015). While the latter are also contingent on political approval, managerial reforms enjoy a certain degree of autonomy, and high-ranking officers at PMERJ have often been the foremost advocates of such attempts.

The most significant attempt at a structural police reform so far is the PEC-51, a constitutional amendment that proposes to demilitarize the police, establish a single career path (today high ranking officers and patrol officers are admitted at separate schools), unify all policing activities (preventive, repressive, and investigative) under a single institution, thereby eliminating the division between civil- and military police forces, establish external mechanisms of control that guarantees public participation, and ensure that the labor rights of police officers are upheld, among other (Soares 2012). However, the amendment has so far been blocked in Congress.

Managerial reform attempts on the other hand, have generally been inspired in community policing programs. In the 80's and early 90's Colonel Nazareth Cerqueira was responsible for introducing the first community-policing project at PMERJ (Albernaz, Caruso and Patricio 2007: 40). Under Cerqueira's command the police initiated a short-lived pilot project in the favela of Providencia that would later inspire a community-policing project called GPAE (Grupamento de Policiamento em Areas Especiais). The GPAE project was introduced in the year 2000, in the favelas of Cantagalo/Pavão-Pavãozinho, located between the affluent neighborhoods of Copacabana and Ipanema, and later expanded to include a handful of favelas across the metropolitan area. Initial results seemed promising, and it seems the GPAEs were successful in reducing the level of armed confrontations in the favelas (see Freeman 2012; Menezes 2013; Albernaz, Caruso and Patricio 2007; Ashcroft 2014b). However, in their evaluation of the project Albernaz, Caruso, and Patricio (2007) argue that rather than replacing repressive policing techniques with preventive ones, the project combined repressive policing with social handouts, creating a police tutelage over favela residents and establishing clientelistic relations that mirrored traditional patterns of domination. The GPAE's were eventually discontinued.

## Stressing the situation

The demise of the GPAA's initiated a new cycle of hard hand policing in Rio. In late 2006 Sergio Cabral, from the conservative Party of the Brazilian Democratic Movement (*Partido do Movimento Democrático Brasileiro*, PMDB) was elected for State Governor. During the campaign that brought him to office, he had promised to be *tough on crime*. The start of his term was marked by a surge in gang-related violence across the city, as CV staged a series of attacks, specifically targeting PMERJ. Members of the cartel also set fire to a bus on the city's main highway, *Avenida Brasil*, killing seven passengers (Glenny 2015 in Magaloni, Franco, and Melo 2015)—an event that terrorized the city's residents.

In January 2007 the newly appointed State Secretary of Security (*Secretario do Estado de Segurança*, SESEG), José Mariano Beltrame, ordered the invasion of one of the city's largest conglomerates of favelas and stronghold of CV—*Complexo do Alemão* (CPX)—in response to the recent attacks. The police operation took the shape of a true military endeavor, and PMERJ made use of armored personnel carriers, helicopters, machine guns, and hand grenades to attack CV. Both national and international human rights organizations strongly criticized the attack, which left a high death toll (Magaloni, Franco, and Melo 2015). Beltrame's first years in office was marked by a dramatic increase in violent confrontations throughout the city, and by regular incursions in the favelas in police operations reminiscent of military invasions (Alves and Evanson 2013 [2011]). By the end of the year State police forces (Military and Civil) had killed an all-time record high of 1.330 people, making Rio's police forces the deadliest in Brazil (HRW 2009: 1).

In an interview with former Civil Police officer and current public security advisor at Rio's Legislative Assembly (*Assamblea Legislativa do Estado do Rio de Janeiro*, ALERJ), Vinicius George, he describes the political context that preceded the establishment of the first UPPs:

Cabral started his administration sending the police to kill: *pá, pá, pá, pá...* Cabral's government was ruffling feathers [...] sending the police to cause havoc, following the logic that first you have to stress [the situation] in order to calm it down later—a mode of action similar to what they did in Colombia, in Cali, Medellín—they went there and copied that model. Just that here we have already been stressing for decades, there's no room to continue stressing, right? There's *over stress* here. So, what happened? The federal government, with Lula as President and Tarso Genro as Minister of Justice, were giving their full support to Cabral here at the State government. The reason behind their

support, to say the truth, was to neutralize Garotinho, the former Governor, as he was a threat nationally to Lula - he had disputed the elections with Lula. Just that the national program of public security was completely opposite to what the government of Rio de Janeiro was doing, and Lula was making statements in favor of Cabral, sending money to the State... up until a moment when the Minister of Justice suborned [Cabral]: he said “Listen, *porra* [exclamation used in oral Portuguese to express anger], it doesn’t give... We have a [policy] program, we have a discourse, and you do the opposite, *porra*, the President stands up to defend you, we send you money. Either you change [your policy] or we’ll stop supporting you.” [The federal government] also influenced areas of the police—there [were] sectors of the police [saying] “We can’t continue doing that, it doesn’t give Governor.” And the Governor [saying] “Shut up, fuck off! [I want you to] kill all those motherfuckers [the alleged criminals]!” I’m not inventing this, it was just like that, in the closed reunions, right? Sectors from civil society, human rights movements that were putting pressure [on the government], do you get me? [...] [Cabral] didn’t want [to change his public security policy], he didn’t believe in [the new approach]. [He changed] because he was forced to, and seeing that he was being forced, [he thought] “Now that I’m being forced, I’ll [use it to my] advantage to gain [popularity] in the media and gain [votes] in the elections”, and he [did]: he got reelected because of [the UPPs], because of that banner...

George’s account coincides with the general understanding of the birth of the UPP project as an ad-hoc solution to the escalation in violence at the onset of Cabral’s administration. Importantly, the project evolved out of a series of strategic decisions within PMERJ. In November 2008 PMERJs special units invaded and occupied the small and centrally located favela of Santa Marta in a police operation baptized *choque de ordem* [shock of order]. After the initial operation, where the police had apprehended several gang-members, including the local *dono do morro* [lit. “Owner of the hill”; local gang leader], the Special Forces announced that they would remain in the favela indefinitely, to prevent the return of the gang-members who had managed to escape, and to “impose order” in the community. Eventually, Beltrame announced the creation of the UPP project with the establishment of three permanent police bases in Santa Marta, Cidade de Deus, and Batan (see Menezes 2013; Magaloni, Franco, and Melo 2015).

## Global economy

While the pressure from federal government segments of PMERJ, and civil society, as well as the local political gains made by Cabral, were key to the implementation and expansion of the UPP strategy, its relation to larger political and economic dynamics is also signaled in academic evaluations of the project. In an attempt to address the recent condemnations of the country by the Inter-American court for Human Rights due to the prevalence of state violence, predominantly perpetrated by the police, and disproportionately affecting Afro-Brazilians and the poor, the federal government implemented the National Public Security Program with Citizenship (*Programa Nacional de Segurança Pública com Cidadania*, PRONASCI) in 2008 (D'Araujo 2014; Alves and Evanson 2013). The confrontational model of policing characteristic in Rio since the return of democracy was increasingly questioned due to its evident failure to contain the soaring levels of violence, threatening to become generalized throughout the city (Alves and Evanson 2013 [2011]). Thus, the UPPs soon became linked to a larger institutional reform of PMERJ (Menezes 2013; Salem 2016).



Picture 10: Santa Marta, the first favela to be pacified, receives a lot of tourists due to its privileged location at the foot of Corcovado, and beautiful view of Crist the Redeemer, and the Guanabara Bay and Sugarloaf mountain.

Furthermore, Rio de Janeiro had embraced a development strategy centered on the hosting of *mega-events*, importantly the 2014 World Cup and 2016 Olympics.<sup>8</sup> Through these events local authorities embarked on a project of “rebranding” the city in order to attract capital and foreign investors. This required that the city show itself capable of guaranteeing the security during the events. Among other things, this meant that the pacification policy by and large followed the logics of the market (Vainer 2011; Freeman 2012; Saborio 2013; Steinbrink 2013). Most UPPs were concentrated in the affluent areas of the city, around future Olympic venues, and in areas selected for large urban-renewal projects, such as Rio’s new waterfront development *Porto Maravilha*.<sup>9</sup> The pacification of a favela produced a significant increase in the value of surrounding real-estate, and spurred processes of gentrification that forced many of the city’s poorer residents out of centrally located areas, to more peripheral ones (Frischtak and Mandel 2012; Griffin 2016; see also Ystanes 2016). Also, the establishment of new UPPs was immediately followed by the penetration of a wealth of private service providers (cable-TV, internet, electricity), whereas pressing sanitation problems (open sewages and the lack of garbage recollection) that should be resolved by the government have not being sufficiently addressed (Freeman 2012; Larkins 2013; Sørboe 2013; Savell 2014).

#### A four-stage strategy

Based on the experiences from the establishment of the first UPPs as well as a similar project from Colombia, and influenced by international counter-insurgency doctrine, PMERJ developed a four-stage strategy of pacification. A few days prior to the initial occupation SESEG would publicly announce the intent to *pacify* the selected favelas, giving the gang-members time to flee in order to avoid armed confrontations between the police and the gangs on the day of the invasion. Second, on the day of the invasion, PMERJs special units would occupy the favela and *stabilize* the terrain. The initial occupations were generally televised to a broad public, spectacularly displaying the state’s force in reclaiming these *lost* territories (Larkins 2013, 2015).<sup>10</sup> The third stage involved the establishment of a permanent

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<sup>8</sup> *Mega-events* are events with a global audience that occur regularly at different places and are awarded through a bidding process (Varrel og Kennedy 2011).

<sup>9</sup> See Appendix B

<sup>10</sup> During the occupation of the large favelas of CPX and Maré PMERJ counted on the support of the Brazilian armed forces for the initial occupation, due to the lack of police personnel.

UPP base in the favela, and PMERJ officers fresh out of the academy were put in charge of day-to-day patrolling (Menezes 2013). As drug kingpins were displaced, UPP commanders assumed a salient role as local community leaders in pacified favelas, where the UPPs often acted as nexus between the residents of the communities and public service providers (see Salem 2016). Finally, the fourth stage involves collaboration with social researchers to produce investigations on the impact and development of the UPPs (Menezes 2013).

The first UPPs were generally established in smaller, wealthier, and centrally located favelas. The pacification of these areas was marked by hail by the press, and was met with widespread enthusiasm by the public, careful optimism among many favela residents, and extensive financial support from local economical elites (Ashcroft 2015a). Some initial reports suggest that the strategy was effective in keeping the drug cartels out of the pacified



Picture 11: Special unit patrol officers assisting the UPPs of Complexo do Alemão.

territories, but that their most significant achievement was the reduction of police lethality (Borges, Ribeiro, and Cano 2012). However, these findings have later been challenged, explaining the drop in lethal violence at the UPPs either as a result of underreporting, of a general tendency of decline in lethal violence across the city, also associated with SESEG's implementation of an Integrated Targets System (ITS) in 2009, and with the federal government's policies of social inclusion (Misse, D.G. 2014; Magaloni, Franco, and Melo 2015).

Despite the four-stage strategy of pacification, the project lacked a clearly defined overall strategy, and was quickly adapted to the political and electoral needs of the State government, who had promised the creation of 40 UPPs by the end of 2014. Due to the labor intensive task of patrolling the labyrinthian favelas by foot this placed an enormous pressure on PMERJ to recruit and train police officers. In the words of George:

[Cabral's administration] transformed a valid intervention ideated by the police [...] into a public security policy, a panacea of security, that served for [its] reelection... Everybody wanted the UPP, and the result: you have to make [more] UPPs. And the police officers needed? Do you have them? You don't. What do you do then? You start forging police officers in a hurry, and then the process of schooling and selection of the military police officers, that was already frail, is left even worse off. The guy who spent a year [at the police academy] now spends three months, six months. The [educational] content worsened: it's a police officer *que nojo* [expression of disappointment or disgust with something], right? [...] It's an instant noodle [...] that you cook in five minutes and its done. How is it that that's going to work?

Furthermore, in spite of the emphasis on scientific investigations, the rapid expansion of the project did not allow for a timely evaluation to identify flaws and make tactical and strategic corrections. Also, the growth of the project changed the dynamics and patterns of crime in the city and region, as gang-members that had been displaced from centrally located favelas migrated to other areas, forcing the police to adopt ad-hoc responses as they went. The armed forces' military occupation of the large favela complexes of Alemão and Penha in northern Rio in November 2010, followed by the establishment of 8 permanent UPP bases in 2012 was an improvised response to a crime wave and attacks of the police, caused by the migration of gang-members from already pacified areas (see Savell 2014; Magaloni, Franco, and Melo 2015).

Critics have also pointed out that while the project had initially included promises of accompanying police action with investments in public services, urbanization, and social programs, the pacification remained by and large exclusively a police initiative. The favelas are occupied and controlled by PMERJ, and in some cases economically exploited as exotic tourist destinations, but the populations living in them are not integrated in the formal city. Thus, some of the major achievement during the initial years of the pacification seems to have been its effectiveness in gaining electoral votes, and in addressing the bad reputation of

PMERJ and of Rio de Janeiro as a violent city, while leaving the structural inequalities between the *favela* and the *asfalto* largely intact.

## Crisis

I think that 2013 was [the] moment [that] the crisis began. We started attending to police officers here that would [say]: ‘listen, the UPP project is very fragile, we are experiencing very difficult situations in the favela’ [...] ...if previously the incidents were very limited, they [now] started increasing, increasing, increasing until 2014, when, between the first and second semester there is a surreal, dizzying increase, and it only keeps growing (UPP Psychologist).

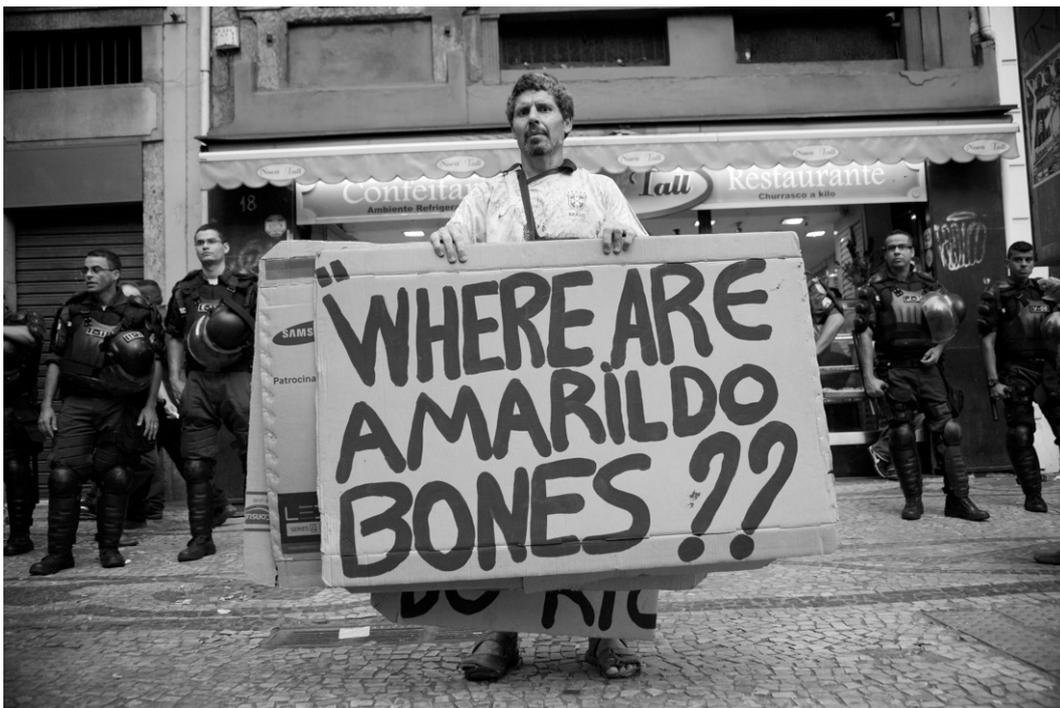
The interventions in the large favelas of CPX and Rocinha in 2012 produced a hardening of the pacification project (Magaloni, Franco, and Melo 2015). The following year turned out to be a point of inflection at the UPPs. In June 2013 the wave of protests that swept through Brazil brought the violence of the police to the public’s attention. A month after the protests, Amarildo de Sousa, a bricklayer from Rio’s largest favela, Rocinha, disappeared after having been detained by local UPP police officers. His disappearance received massive attention in social media, and eventually also in mainstream media, forcing an investigation. Although his body was never found, the investigation revealed that a group of patrol officers from the recently established UPP had tortured Amarildo to death, and that the base commander had been involved in his disappearance.

Amarildo’s disappearance was a serious blow to the image and credibility of the UPPs as a “new” and less truculent police. The event marked the end of the optimism surrounding the project and the beginning of a gradual escalation of violence in the pacified areas, accompanied by a much more critical outlook by the media and the public opinion. It became evident that the ideals of proximity policing—specifically the improvement of police-resident relations and the respect for human rights—were not being achieved in many areas (Ashcroft 2015b).

Violence in pacified areas escalated throughout 2013 and 2014, and armed confrontations between drug-dealers and police gradually became part of the daily routine in many pacified communities. Larkins (2013: 572) offers a critical reading of the deteriorating situation in the favela where she carried out her fieldwork, after the area had been pacified:

The favela [...] saw a spate of assaults and homicides, crimes prohibited and practically unheard of during trafficker rule. [...] Even those residents who were basically happy to have the traffickers gone began to express a quiet narco-nostalgia for the times when the brutality of trafficker rule made the favela safe. [...] Residents experienced pacification as creating an ever-widening power vacuum into which their personal security was rapidly disappearing. [...] The current power dynamics [...] suggest that the entrance of the state has not yielded the promised results regarding security, if the state truly can be said to have entered at all. Rather, pacification has opened up a new space for new configurations and collaborations between organized crime and law enforcement.

While most of the problems were concentrated in larger favelas, like CPX and Rocinha, there were smaller episodes of armed violence and confrontations between police and residents in generally peaceful communities as well, indicating a general deterioration of the project—or at least the failure of the project to gradually improve police-resident relations.



Picture 12: Man holding up a hand-painted sign that makes reference to Amarildo's disappearance, during a public protest in the center of Rio, January 2015.

## THE UPPS

PMERJ is a state police force, under the authority of Rio's state government. On a political level, SESEG is responsible for appointing the leadership of the institution.<sup>11</sup> In Brazil, the organizational structure of state military police forces mirror that of the armed forces: jurisdiction is divided between *batalhões* [battalions], and within the military police there is a strict hierarchical division between a small group of *oficiais* [officers] in charge of managerial tasks, and a large group of *praças* [patrol officers] in charge of administrative tasks and patrol. Depending on the size and population of the favelas, the UPPs generally employ between 100-700 police officers.<sup>12</sup> Each UPP falls under the jurisdiction of a battalion, but the commanders at the UPPs enjoy a high degree of autonomy from their local battalion. They generally respond directly to CPP, in charge of the overall strategy of the pacification project. Similarly, the Special Operations Command (Commando de Operações Especiais, COE) coordinates the efforts of PMERJs special forces, including BOPE and Choque. COE works in close collaboration with CPP, and is integral to the strategy of pacification also after the establishment of permanent UPP bases in pacified communities. It offers tactical support to the UPPs and carries out police operations in search for drugs and weapons in pacified favelas with frequency.

### Work conditions

The work conditions of the patrol officers at PMERJ have been described as being “analogous to slavery” (Soares 2015: 28). Long shifts, insufficient time to rest in between shifts, lack of equipment and resources, poor infrastructure, unpaid extra hours, low and delayed wages, laws against unionizing, a rigid institutional hierarchy, and an arcane disciplinary code of conduct are just some of the elements that add to the stress patrol officers experience as a result of the armed violence at the UPPs. The work conditions of police officers have been signaled as a significant challenge to democratic policing in Rio and Brazil (see Barros 2015; Soares 2015).

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<sup>11</sup> See Appendix A.

<sup>12</sup> See Note on language; Appendix E.



Picture 13: Degrating facilities, such as dirty and dysfunctional toilets, are common at the UPPs. This is an example of one of the better toilets.

At PMERJ most patrol officers, except those in administrative positions, are assigned to the same work schedule that is common in the Brazilian Armed Forces. Generally this means that patrol officers work either 12 or 24 hour shifts on a 1:3 ratio.<sup>13</sup> Additionally, they are assigned extra shifts through a system called *Regimen Adicional de Serviço* (RAS), which was mandatory when I started my fieldwork, but was gradually discontinued due to Brazil's then incipient economic crisis.

During 24-hour shifts patrol officers are entitled to 4 hours of rest. However, the resting facilities are generally improvised or inadequate at best, making it difficult for them to rest properly during shifts. At Alemão the patrol officers slept on thin, worn out, dirty mattresses laid out on the cramped floorspace in their locker room. However, as one Soldier told me: "sleeping on the floor here is actually an advantage, because generally the gunshots

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<sup>13</sup> Patrol officers working 12 hour shifts alternated between 24 and 48 hours off between the shifts, while patrol officers on 24 hour shifts generally had 72 hours off, and exceptionally 48 hours off between shifts

come from above [...]. If you are on the floor you are protected, if you were in a bunk bed you would have been hit, right?” Another Soldier told me that he preferred to sleep on the roof of the building as the low walls that surrounded the roof were made of bricks rather than the aluminum-covered styrofoam walls of the rest of the building, useful for keeping the heat out—the bullets however, cut through these walls like butter.

According to one of the staff psychologists at CPP, working long shifts at the UPPs is more demanding than at the battalions: “The guy from the UPP [...] spends all the time in the terrain, he is in danger the entire time.” The team of psychologists receives numerous complaints from patrol officers that the time off between each shift is not sufficient to recover from the previous shift. Additionally, although it is illegal, many patrol officers moonlight in private security companies or do other odd jobs during their time off to make the ends meet, and are often tired when they start their shift at the UPP.



Picture 14: Sleeping area at UPP Alemão

## Hierarchy and discipline

PMERJs institutional hierarchy is enforced through a strict disciplinary code of conduct, which has been criticized for being both arcane and principally oriented to the protection of the institutional image (Cano and Duarte 2012b). Furthermore, the disciplinary code is often arbitrarily applied by the commanding officers at the battalions and UPPs, who wield extended discretionary powers over patrol officers. There are numerous reported cases of abuse of patrol officers by their superiors at the police academy, the battalions, and the UPPs—including physical abuse and torture (Barros 2015).

The disciplinary code requires patrol officers to show deference to their superiors and follow orders without objection. Transgressions that might seem relatively harmless from a public security point of view are punishable with several days of disciplinary confinement at PMERJs barracks. One Soldier that I spoke to told me that he had been sentenced to 4 days of confinement for not wearing his beret. The strict and arbitrary enforcement of the disciplinary code often produced high levels of stress and anxiety among low ranking patrol officers. The strict enforcement of the institutional hierarchy through the archaic and arbitrarily enforced disciplinary code, and the abusive treatment by superiors, has been signaled as a contributing factor to the high prevalence of stress among patrol officers, and subsequently to power abuse and extrajudicial killings (see HRW 2016).

## Armed violence

While the prevalence of armed violence varied greatly across the UPPs the general level of armed confrontations was far higher than what had initially been predicted or expected. At some UPPs the initial period of relative peace, as gang members fled the favela, had gradually given way to increasing conflict levels. Other UPPs, especially the favelas of CPX, never succeeded in effectively expelling the drug cartels. Although the pacification of large favelas such as CPX had never achieved the purpose of territorial control, they saw a dramatic increase in armed confrontations since 2013.

At Alemão the main building was frequently attacked during my time in the field. During attacks we would lie down on the floor to reduce the risk of being hit, and the police would take me to the armory, which was the only bullet-proof room in the building. In a recent survey 44% of patrol officers at UPPs with high operational risk report that they have been involved in shooting episodes. The overall average of UPP patrol officers who have been involved in shooting episodes is 33%. Similarly, a third of the police officers at the

UPPs say that they feel unsafe at work, while an additional third say that they neither feel safe nor unsafe (Musumeci 2015a).



Picture 15: The pictures of fallen “heroes” hang on the wall of the UPP at Mangueira.

## Mental health

The prevalence of armed violence in pacified areas has significant and detrimental effects on the mental health of patrol officers (HRW 2016). As one of the staff psychologists emphasized during an interview:

*...the war has a price [...]. You cannot escape it with impunity, you cannot leave [saying] ‘Ah, I’m great, I went to war, I killed, I almost died, I’m great!’ Now, we perceive that [the patrol officers] like [war], they banalize it, they think that ‘Ah no, I was in a shootout, no big deal.’*

According to the psychologists at the UPPs, the mental health of patrol officers at UPPs with high conflict levels deteriorated at much faster rates than normal, and many patrol officers have reported alcohol abuse, depressions, and suicide thoughts (see Magaloni, Franco and Melo 2015). The psychological stress of armed violence is amplified by the strict institutional hierarchy, arbitrary application of the disciplinary code, and the degrading and demeaning work conditions of the police. Indeed, the staff psychologist highlighted that many patrol

officers preferred to work at a high risk UPP if the commander in charge was considered reasonable and fair.

Most commanders that I spoke to were painfully aware of the detrimental effects that the situation at the UPPs had on the patrol officers: “[The police officer working at the UPP] is having an enormous problem with post-traumatic stress [...]. He deals with a hostile environment, and is always in an demanding position, [which] leads him to present symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder” (PMERJ Colonel). The deteriorated mental health of the police officers at the UPPs is perceived as one of the main challenges to effective police reform by the reformists at PMERJ.

## PROXIMITY POLICING

Apart from the continuous police presence in areas previously dominated by drug cartels, the main innovation of the UPPs is their attempt at reforming PMERJ, and of substituting repressive policing techniques with preventive techniques (Saborio 2014a). Initially, the UPP project was presented as a community-policing program. Policymakers hoped that the community-policing paradigm would help improve the strained relations between police and residents, characterized by mutual hostility and distrust after decades of violent and repressive policing in the favelas, and promote collaboration and cooperation between police and local residents (Larkins 2015). Arguably, one of the main aims of the reform is to forge a citizen police force respectful of human rights.

Eventually, policymakers abandoned the community policing paradigm in favor of the related approach of proximity policing, which shares many of the main objectives and key elements of community policing—such as decentralization, problem-oriented policing, and foot patrol—but with less emphasis on the collaboration between police and residents in determining the public security needs of the community (Saborio 2014a). PMERJs understanding of how proximity policing should be applied has been loosely described as an approach that “*goes beyond* community policing and is based on the partnership between the population and the public institutions of the security field” (Saborio 2014a: 272; see also Menezes 2013). However, the actual meaning of proximity policing has not been clearly defined by UPP officials. Due to the lack of a clear definition of proximity policing, I will now attempt to trace its objectives and practices empirically through the statements of the officers in charge of implementing the approach.

### Objectives

According to PMERJs Chief of Staff, Colonel Robson Rodrigues, the reform-oriented officers within the institution saw the pacification project as an opportunity to finally transform PMERJ into a citizen police. They hoped that the implementation of the paradigm of proximity policing would help them address the protracted crisis of legitimacy that PMERJ was suffering from after years of widespread corruption and of adhering to ineffective and repressive policing strategies.

In the following transcript from a recorded interview with Colonel Robson, the main objectives of the proximity policing approach are spilled out:

Proximity policing is part of the kinds of community policing, right? [...] In a general manner they are models of policing orienting the police to do what is has to do, [...] a citizen police, a police devoted to the interests of a collective. [...] That strategy [of proximity] should be applied in the environments with the characteristics that I mentioned: where there are distorted representations, where there is separation, not physical, but symbolical [separations between police and residents]. [...] The practice of proximity gives us an opportunity to deconstruct [symbolic representations]. So it has as its objective to increase the credibility, the trust, the credibility of the police, the mutual trust between the police and the population. It pretends to reestablish relations that for political, social, economic reasons were strained during a long time. [...] So the practice of proximity, which I call the pacification of the police, is an opportunity to practice the respect for human right in a mutual manner. [...] [It] is to do what the police has to do in a democratic society [based on the rule of law] in an intelligent way, creating a suited environment for the efficient action of the police, and acting [in a way] that provides it with legitimacy [...]. It wont be through violence that [the police] will [achieve this], although all the peculiarities of Rio de Janeiro are ripe with opportunities for the use of violence, although the police has been instrumentalized by a political elite, an economic elite, right? [...] There is a moment when the police has to reinvent itself, has to be made aware of its true role within that scenario...

As can be gleaned from this quote, the officers in charge of the reform assigned a number of meanings to the paradigm of proximity policing. However, I suggest that three related objectives can be identified: *first*, the proximity policing approach aims at improving the deteriorated police resident relations in the favelas and establish relations of mutual trust between residents and police; *second*, it is seen as an opportunity to reform PMERJ and create a citizen police respectful of human rights; and *third*, it proposes a reduction in the use of violent force and an increase in the police's reliance on preventive policing techniques.

All of these objectives are seek to reestablish the legitimacy of the police within a democratic state order. Furthermore, as Robson states, they can be understood as an attempt to *pacify* the military police (see also Henriques and Ramos 2011; Saborio 2015; Salem 2016). The answer Colonel Robson gave me when I asked him what he had meant by this, further supports the suggestion that one of the objectives of proximity policing is to reduce the violence of the police:

First, it was a pacification in practice, as we [were able to] verify with the information—less police lethality—than with the previous model, [which] was a model of invasion, and thus a tense model, of confrontation. It produced *autos de resistencia* [deaths resisting arrest], it produced deaths, it also produced the deaths of police officers. So, in a way, it showed that it is possible to make interventions that are not so drastic, so harmful, right? Now, it is necessary to learn and try to remodel the police. What we did is to observe the UPPs as laboratories, that is, [to observe] the good practices, where we can really identify the causes and effects. [...] What we proposed was for the UPP to work as a laboratory for reform, for the transformation of the police.

Briefly put, the paradigm of proximity policing can be seen as an attempt to modernize PMERJ, and replace the current model of confrontational or warfare oriented policing with a model inspired in the community-policing paradigm. By and large, these objectives are pursued through the training, qualification, and subjective transformation of police officers and the institutional culture of PMERJ (Salem 2016).

However, actions taken to ensure the territorial occupation of the favelas does not necessarily coincide with objectives of proximity policing stated above. In fact, they might even be antagonistic to these objectives, as territorial occupation often requires the police to enter into armed battles with drug traffickers in many pacified favelas. I will return to this point in my discussion in the next chapter, but first, I want to describe the practices of policing at the UPPs.

## Practices

In order to reach the objectives of the paradigm of proximity policing, the police incorporated several elements inspired in the community policing paradigm. These include, but are not limited to (1) decentralized command; (2) preventive policing techniques; (3) social outreach projects; (4) community councils; and (5) foot patrol.<sup>14</sup> I will briefly address points 1 to 4 before I discuss point 5 at length in the next sub-chapter.

1) *Decentralized command*: The decentralization of command is one of the key features of community-oriented forms of policing. While the overall strategy of the UPPs is coordinated through the CPP, the variations across different favelas require each UPP commander to adopt the strategy of proximity policing to the local context. Consequently, the

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<sup>14</sup> See Musumeci (2015a) for an alternative classification of practices of proximity policing.

organization of patrol at the UPPs varies according to the size, geography and socio-historical characteristics of the areas covered (e.g. the modes of domination of the drug-cartel formerly in control of the favela), as well as the personal style of the commander in charge of the base. In the word of one of the officers at the CPP:

The CPP is basically a consulting organ, we are here to support and coordinate [between] the UPPs. Logically, the commanders have freedom to establish their actions within what is stipulated by the CPP. But [independent] actions are always welcome [...]. The realities [of the] UPPs are unique: one cannot be identical to the other, [and] never will be. We have differences in the terrain, we have differences in the behavior, in the interaction with the residents, we have historical differences, which count a lot - the history of the *morro*—it's very relevant (Major at the CPP).

At some UPPs there are separate teams of *proximity policing teams*. These are small groups of patrol officers who have received special training, wear differentiated uniforms, and are exclusively devoted to preventive policing techniques. Similarly, some UPP commanders collaborate closely with local resident associations (RA's), and are open to reorganizing patrol routines at the base according to the suggestions or complaints of the RA's.<sup>15</sup> At Santa Marta one patrol unit was dissolved after an incident where local residents had attacked the unit during an arrest attempt. Representatives of the local RA had voiced complaints against one the police officers involved in the event, and the commander decided to temporarily reassign the police officers involved, to show the RA that he was attentive to the needs and wants of the local community. At Alemão on the other hand, there was little to no dialogue between the UPP and the local RA's according to the police officers at the base.

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<sup>15</sup> On occasions, the police at the UPPs also collaborate with local churches, NGOs, and other civil organizations (see Musumesci 2015a).



Picture 16: The proximity policing team at Mangueira collaborating with representatives from the local RA.

2) *Preventive policing techniques*: Preventive policing techniques are typically oriented towards the deterrence of future crimes. At the UPPs the permanent or intermittent police presence in all areas of the favelas were believed to discourage the return of gang members and crime. Furthermore, the UPPs borrowed elements from *problem-oriented policing*—a strategy of policing focused on responses that do not depend on the use of the criminal justice system, but engage other public agencies and the community to find a solution to local problems that might otherwise escalate (Goldstein, H. 1977). Among other things, all the UPPs offer a voluntary conflict mediation service, and at each base there are one or two patrol officers in charge of *comunicação social* [lit. ‘social communication’; public relations] who address issues related to sewage, water, electricity, and health, among other things, are trained mediators, and responsible for implementing and coordinating social outreach projects at their UPP. At UPPs with teams of proximity policing many of these tasks are carried out by small groups of patrol officers with additional training in proximity policing techniques: their main responsibility is to coordinate the delivery of social and public services in the favela. For example, if the sewers were clogged and overflowing, the proximity team would notify the sewer company and have them come and unclog it. One of the patrol officers at the proximity policing team at Mangueira explained the logic of these actions: “Some people think that what we do isn’t real police work, but it is! The things we

do prevent people from protesting, and when there are protests shots are often fired, or at least tires are burnt on the streets.” He argued that their efforts *prevented* situations that would have required *repressive* police actions (Salem 2016). This is a clear example of how the actions of the proximity teams, and their understanding of the form and contents of preventive policing implies the securitization of access to basic public services, such as sewage, water, and electricity (see Chapter 2).

3) *Social outreach projects*: In addition to these activities, the patrol officers in charge of public relations and the proximity teams organized a series of social outreach projects, such as sport and recreational activities, debutant balls, celebrations of holidays such as Christmas and Easter, and distributed small gifts to local residents, i.e. food baskets, toys, or candy. Through these activities the police tried to craft a different image of patrol officers as *benefactors* and *friends* of the community.

Most of social outreach efforts of the police were directed at the children living in the favela. Police officers believed that children had to be targeted from an early age, before they could be swayed by the appeal of the drug cartels. Efforts generally centered on the attempt to replace the “negative” role model of the *traficante* with the “positive” role model of the *friendly patrol officer*. The police claimed that children in the favelas had to be targeted at an early age, before they were swayed by the appeal of the ostentatious lifestyle of *traficantes*. As one of the police officers at the proximity team of Mangueira told me: “We use to say that the problem starts when they are 7 years old” However, the efforts of the police were generally short-lived. As children grew older trust-building initiatives were gradually replaced by frequent ID-checks and humiliating searches of male teenagers by the police officers in charge of regular patrol activities.

While the police often argued that the social project were an attempt to make up for the lack of involvement of other public agencies, they can largely and mainly be seen as attempts at gaining the local resident’s trust. Consider the following comments from one of the Colonels that I interviewed:

We need much more social actions [in the favelas]. And [...] due to that absence of social projects [the pacification project] developed several [projects]. [...] There are several police officers in [the] pacification that are giving lessons in musical instruments, holding classes in martial arts, judo, karate, jiu-jitsu, right? That are making choirs with the children. So we have several social project implemented by the police to improve the integration between the police [and the] community. [...] [The] police needs to conquer

the citizen [...]. When we enter a pacified community, the population [...] knows exactly where the *marginais* [lit. 'marginal' - local jargon for criminals] live, where the armory of weapons is hidden, they know. And how can we *conquistar* [conquer, aquire] that information? Only by developing partnerships, approximating, and creating security and tranquility and seriousness through [our] job, because when a person feels [our] firmness he opens up, he talks. And without firing a shot we catch the *marginal*, we seize the gun, seize the drug, and then we start making a new police. It is in that sense that we [are adopting the paradigm] of proximity policing... (PMERJ Colonel)

This quote reflect a general understanding among the police of the social outreach projects and police-resident integration as a tool to gather intelligence, rather than a way to adapt the policing of pacified areas to the needs of the local community. While exceptions can certainly be found—such as the commander at Santa Marta who reassigned patrol officers on request of the local RA—the collaboration between police and citizens is by and large conceived as a way to facilitate PMERJs fight against the cartels, even among high ranking PMERJ officers, rather than a strategy to adapt policing to the needs of the community, which is arguably the main concern of community policing.

As social outreach projects and preventive policing techniques generally aim at winning the *hearts and minds* of local residents, the UPP strategy seems more reminiscent to military counterinsurgency doctrine than to the paradigms of community policing that it is arguably modeled upon. It reflects the prevalence of a militarized concept of policing and shows how the discourse of proximity policing is still firmly embedded in the logic of war, in spite of it's aim to depart from this logic. As one of the police officers in charge of proximity efforts at Mangueira put it, “the UPPs are *also* carrying out a *psychological war* of winning over the population” (the *also* in this sentence meaning “in addition to the *war on drugs*”).

Thus, the objective of social outreach project is twofold: on the one hand social outreach projects are seen as a strategy of crime-prevention through the establishment of positive role models for children who patrol officers claimed would otherwise grow up to become gang-members. On the other hand, the police sought to *build trust* with local residents and *gain allies* (informants) in the war against the cartels (see Salem 2016). These practices are grotesque expressions of the process of securitization embedded in the philosophy of proximity policing, and effectively reproduces the errors of the GPAE project signaled by Albernaz, Caruso, and Patricio (2007), such as the establishment of clientelistic relations, and of a police tutelage over favela residents. This being said, it should be noted

that the number of patrol officers in charge of the social outreach projects at each base was proportionally insignificant compared to the number of patrol officers carrying out traditional and repressive forms of policing.

4) *Community councils*: The main arena for participation and dialogue on issues that concern the local community are the community councils organized by the UPPs. There, local residents and their representatives have the possibility to voice their opinions and exercise influence on the ways in which their communities are policed. However, while these councils are organized by police officers, scholars have suggested that they mainly center on problems related to the inadequacy of the public services in the favelas (Sørbøe 2013). I participated in one such council at Rocinha, and my empirical observations there support previous findings, and suggest that while the police officers and commanders have repeatedly and publicly stressed that the councils should act as arenas for debate on security-related issues, this is not the case.

Furthermore, and contrary to the rhetoric of dialogue and collaboration, I witnessed how expressions of dissatisfaction with the actions of the UPP police were met with violent assertions of authority by the police: In April 2015, following the wave of armed violence in CPX, and the death of a 10 year old Eduardo de Jesus Ferreira by a bullet to the head in a shooting episode involving police officers from the local UPP, residents staged a protest on the main road that runs through the favelas of Alemão. During the protest, police officers at the local UPP were deployed to contain the protesters. They ended up using large amounts of teargas and less-lethal armament to violently disperse the crowd.

5) *Foot patrol*: Finally, community-policing approaches tend to rely on foot patrol as a means to bring the police officers closer to the communities that they police. However, as I will show, foot patrol in and by itself does not guarantee approximation between police and residents, nor does it necessarily lead to improved police-resident relations, as patrol is often carried out in a militaristic fashion. While patrol routines vary across the UPPs where I conducted fieldwork, there are some general features that characterize patrolling in pacified areas. I will now center on the practices of patrol at Alemão, Mangueira, and Santa Marta, and show how these, in spite of the rhetoric of prevention and proximity still represented a highly militarized and war-oriented approach to policing.

## PATROL

While patrol officers at the UPPs can be assigned a range of different patrol duties, I have chosen to focus on three main forms of patrol: fixed-point patrol, regular foot-patrol, and tactical patrol.

### Fixed-point patrol



Picture 17: Barrels filled with sand protect the patrol officers stationed at Canitar. Complexo do Alemão, April 2015.

Fixed point patrol [*ponto-fixa*] are stationary patrol units located at specific points in the favela. The main purpose of a fixed-point unit is to ensure territorial control in strategically important areas—i.e. high grounds or access roads—through permanent and visible police presence. During the training of UPP police officers at the CPP, one of the Majors at PMERJ explained the purpose of the fixed point patrol units to a group of patrol officers:

The first mission of the pacification was the territorial occupation, which has as its goal the impediment of free movement of the traffickers from point A to point B. For this purpose it is fundamental to occupy strategic points within the communities [such as] the

high parts of the hill. There is nothing new to this strategy: Von Clausewitz talked about the importance of strategic points.

The emphasis on territorial occupation, and the Major's reference to Von Clausewitz is a clear example of how the logics of war permeated the organization of patrol at the UPPs. His comments highlight one of the major contradictions of the pacification project: what might be a strategic location for military territorial occupation does not necessarily respond to the security needs and concerns of the community, and might even be directly at odds with public security concerns. For example, during my fieldwork there was significant controversy surrounding an advanced container-base and a fixed point patrol unit at CPX that had been stationed right next to a local elementary school.<sup>16</sup> As the police were frequently targeted by local gang-members, armed battles between the police and gang-members would occasionally turn the schoolyard into a war zone, forcing the schoolchildren to seek cover inside the school building.

Similarly, academics have noted how the war rhetoric of the police has reconfigured entire favelas as war zones (Penglase 2014; Salem 2016). According to Penglase (2014: 152) favelas are pictured as occupied enemy territory ruled by organized criminal syndicates. Comparisons of Rio with war zones like Kosovo and Iraq are common, and the favelas are generally seen as "free-fire zones." The remarks of a female police officer regarding the recent death of Eduardo Ferreira illustrate the effect of the rhetoric of war. She firmly insisted that the police could not be held responsible: Why had the parents of the child allowed him play outside? Didn't they know that they were living in a war zone?

### Regular foot patrol

Regular foot patrol, or the proximity police groups (*Grupo de Policia de Proximidade*, GPP), are patrol units mainly devoted to preventive patrol practices through deterrence. They patrol specific areas of the favela by foot, generally areas considered low risk, and like the fixed point patrol units, they are charged with preventing crime through visible police presence in the favelas. Occasionally they carry out stops and frisks, but the GPP units that I joined on patrol rarely did. Most of the time, they remained stationed at the advanced bases, with the fixed-point units, or in the areas of former or current *bocas de fumo* [lit. 'mouth of smoke'; drug selling spots located within the favelas]. While GPPs generally patrol in a less

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<sup>16</sup> Freight containers were used across the UPPs as advanced bases.

militaristic fashion than the tactical patrol units (*Grupamento Tatico de Policia de Proximidade*, GTPP), the GPPs at Alemão patrol with their guns unholstered, and often employed the same urban warfare tactics as the GTPPs.



Picture 18: GPP on routine patrol at Alemão.

### Tactical patrol units

The GTPPs are patrol units generally composed by 4-6 Soldiers, and on occasions by a Corporal or Sergeant. On average, between a fourth and a fifth of the total effective at each base is dedicated to tactical patrol (Musumeci 2015). The main task of the GTPPs is to combat the drug cartels that continue to operate within the favela in spite of the police presence, through the apprehension of drug traffickers, drugs, and weapons. Most of the armed confrontations and apprehensions at the UPPs involve the action of one or more GTPPs.

At favelas where the operational risk is low they patrol in smaller groups, and in favelas where operational risks are high they patrol in larger groups, and will even coordinate patrol between several GTPPs, in order to offer each other tactical support and assistance. The patrol practices of the GTPPs are a blueprint of the urban warfare tactics of BOPE—as one BOPE Soldier told a group of UPP patrol officers: “The only difference between us and you is [the amount of] training.”



Picture 19: Armament employed by the GTPPs at Santa Marta. From the top: standard patrol rifle; shotgun w/rubber bullets; teargas and pepper-spray canisters; standard handgun; Taser.

At Santa Marta and Mangueira, the patrol officers of the GTPPs often carry so called non-lethal or less-lethal armament such as shotguns with rubber bullets, Taser guns, sound bombs, pepper spray and tear-gas. Resting on the assumption that these weapons are used *instead* of lethal arms, and that they favor a *gradual* use of force, PMERJ officers generally argue that less-lethal armament contributes to the reduction of police lethality. However, the use of these weapons has sparked international controversy. In spite of what the name might imply, they are perfectly capable of producing the death of the victim. Rubber bullets, for instance, are lethal when fired at close range, and Taser guns have resulted in a number of deaths internationally. Furthermore, rather than substituting lethal weapons and favoring the gradual use of force, “non-lethal” arms are currently critiqued for lowering the threshold for use of force by the police.<sup>17</sup> Adding to the controversies, the UN Committee Against Torture declared that the use of Taser guns can be considered a form of torture in 2007. This led to a court ordered prohibition of these weapons in Argentina in 2010. Furthermore, the proliferation of these kinds of weapons is related to a global trend towards increased reliance on repressive and militarized forms of policing, with the oxymoron this implies regarding

<sup>17</sup> See Musumeci 2015b for a detailed discussion on the relation between non-lethal armament and police use of force.

PMERJs justification of the use of these weapons as a strategy to create a “citizen police”. Taking into consideration the findings from other countries, it is reasonable to question the assumption that the use of less-lethal armament implies a “softer” form of policing.

Depending on the amount of rifles available and the conflict level at each UPP at least one patrol officer in every GTPP is armed with a rifle. While rifles are the weapon of choice of most patrol officers, they generally patrol with 9mm handguns due to the generalized lack of equipment at the UPPs. The use of rifles is generally justified with reference to the improved accuracy and firepower they offer. However, patrol officer recognized that the main benefit of rifles was the “respect” that they imposed, acting as powerful deterrents. The strategic use of weapons for deterrence is common across the PMERJ. For example, it is common for police officers from the special units—particularly BOPE—to carry large combat knives due to the “psychological impact” of these weapons.

The customary use of weapons for deterrence within the PMERJ explains the GTPPs reliance on rifles even in favelas where conflict levels are low, like Santa Marta, where the police had not been involved in a single shooting episode in the 6 years since the initial occupation when I arrived in Rio, but still patrolled with rifles. One of the GTPP soldiers at Santa Marta admitted that they didn’t carry rifles on weekends and holidays due to the increased presence of tourists: “They might get scared, and the UPPs are supposed to carry out a different kind of policing.”

## RESPONSE

By early 2015 the escalation of violence in the pacified favelas had strained police-resident relations and produced the decline of practices of proximity policing in critical areas in favor of militarized forms of policing (Musumeci 2015a). In order to address the escalation in violence, and the crisis of the UPP project, SESEG made significant changes to the central command at PMERJ. A team of reform-oriented Colonels were put in charge of the institution,<sup>18</sup> and officers with *operational* [military tactical] background from BOPE were transferred to the CPP. According to the new commander in chief at the CPP, “the main objective is to minimize, reduce the number of victimized military police officers” (Colonel Laviano, Commander at the CPP). Thus, the new commanders implemented a series of measures to guarantee the safety of patrol officers working in pacified favelas and “stabilize” the terrain, under the assumption that effective territorial control is a pre-requisite for practices of proximity policing, and of the subsequent pacification of the favelas.

The UPPs were classified according to the level of operational risk at each base, organized on an ascending scale from low conflict levels to high conflict levels, and divided in three color-coded sub-groups: green, yellow or red.<sup>19</sup> Green favelas exhibit low conflict levels, and the application of practices of proximity policing is given preference over repressive policing techniques. Yellow favelas require a mixed application of both repressive and proximity policing, while red favelas present high conflict levels, and practices of proximity policing are not advised until conflict levels have been reduced.

This protocol explicitly shows how the pacification effectively functions as a two-tire system that relies on *both* repressive and preventive forms of policing, with the variable being the proportion of patrol activities at each base dedicated to traditional, repressive policing and proximity policing respectively.

Next, the commanding officers identified four main challenges at the UPPs: (1) lack of adequate buildings and equipment; (2) difficulties in achieving effective territorial control; (3) insufficient personnel, hampering patrol throughout the entire areas of the UPPs; and finally, (4) insufficient training of patrol officers, who were now engaged in frequent combat. In an interview recorded towards the end of my stay in Rio, one of the Major’s working at the CPP explained how these challenges were addressed:

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<sup>18</sup> Colonels Pinheiro Neto, Íbis Pereira, and Robson Rodrigues assumed the general command of PMERJ in January 2015.

<sup>19</sup> See Appendix D.

The UPP is a program aimed at the territorial occupation [of the favelas] through police action, and through the territorial occupation, [at the] establishment of a channel [that allows] other services to enter [into] those communities that were really living in exile. [...] Today our objective is to continue with the maintenance of the occupation, but in a safer manner for our patrol officers. At the moment that is our biggest objective, to guarantee the security of our patrol officers, [...] to maintain the patrol officer in strategic points in the community with safety. [...] What are we aiming for? Identifying the strategic points of the communities and then start to occupy those points with advanced bases—either armored cabins, or trenches. While we locate those bases we remove the UPP troop, take them to COE to do the training, and in [their place] we leave the Special Forces, the Choque battalion and BOPE. From that moment onwards we start to reorganize that area, and that has produced good results.

As can be gleaned from above, the *safe territorial occupation* of pacified areas is seen as a prerequisite for the provision of other public services. However, it was also seen as a prerequisite for effective police reform. In the words of the Chief of Staff at PMERJ: “...we need the police officers to be protected, equipped. If he isn’t he will be stressed, scared, and in the extreme he will use his armament badly as he wont be in good conditions to [...] make decisions on how to act” (Colonel Robson). While my own observations concerning the effects of the armed violence at the UPPs supports this claim, it leads to the paradox of increasing the entrenchment and militarization of patrol as a strategy to transform the police from a warfare oriented police force to a citizen, proximity police.

## INSTITUTIONAL CULTURE

So far in this chapter, I have focused on the conflict between the traditional forms of militarized policing that characterize PMERJ, and the attempt at transforming the institutional culture of the police through the paradigm of proximity policing. I have shown that militarized forms of policing are deeply embedded in the UPP strategy. However, while the reliance on urban warfare strategies and tactics, and the prevalence of a rhetoric of war at the UPPs might be the most visible face of the military nature of the pacification strategy, the militarism of the institution also conditions the reform attempts, and the relation between police and local residents in more subtle ways. Importantly, within the literature on policing and police reform, scholars have focused on how some values and representations that are thought to be universal to police institutions across the world, commonly referred to as *police* or *patrol officer culture*, hamper effective reform attempts (see Chan 1996; Hinton 2005).

Reiner (2000) has noted how police institutions across the world are characterized by their isolation from the civil world and strong group cohesion within the police. This has also been noted with regards to military institutions, who are characterized by institutional isolation where excessive contact with the “outside” world might be perceived as “contaminating” and by an institutional ethos based on heroism, courage, and honor, which sustains an ethics of moral superiority in relation to the civilian world (Cano and Duarte 2012). Similarly, Castro and Leirner (2009), have argued that military subjectivity tends to be constructed as morally and ethically superior to civilians through representations of the military as proactive, respectful, altruistic and patriotic, and of civilians as lazy, undisciplined, individualist, and strictly concerned with their own interests.

### Police-resident relations

Patrol officers at the UPPs often describe themselves as “social garbage men” [*lixeiro social*]—as the persons in charge of handling everything that’s bad in society. They deal with drug dealers, thieves, domestic disturbances, child abandonment, and often in contexts of poverty and socio-economic vulnerability that aggravates these situations. The following quote from one of the staff psychologists at the CPP is illustrative:

[The police officers] talk about society as very rotten, as very violent. When it can, it tries to bribe the police when it [has done something wrong], but when the police commits a mistake it [...] wants the police to be punished, it doesn’t want to understand

the context that the police is acting in. But the police officer perceives himself as a little bit outside of all that, you know? He sees all of that social structure as if it is horrible and he's the guy who has to live in the middle of that, but without being responsible for any of it. He doesn't take much responsibility for a social structure that he is also part of to some degree.

I often heard patrol officers express contempt for the immorality of gays, intellectual elites, corrupt politicians and businessmen, white-collar criminals, and journalists—whom they accused of being anti-police and pro-criminal whenever they published news about police misconduct and corruption (which was quite often). However, their contempt for the political, economical and cultural elites of Rio does not translate into a defense of poor favela residents, who are generally held in equal disregard. Interestingly in this regard, are Fassin's (2013: 219) observations of the French police:

...the sociological profiles of police and residents might suggest that their common working-class origins would bring them closer together. In fact, as has been observed in other contexts, this apparent similarity only serves to accentuate the effects of separation and the desire to mark the distinction.

Among patrol officers at the UPPs, social and economic explanations of crime and poverty are generally rejected in favor of explanations that placed emphasis on the personal responsibility of the poor. Poverty and crime is almost without exception understood as the result of flaws of character of favela residents. The following ethnographic vignette depicts a scene from one of the UPPs where I conducted fieldwork, and is fairly illustrative of how many of the police officers at the UPPs relate to the people living in the favelas.

A group of patrol officers have gathered under the shade of a big mango tree in the middle of the favela. I've just asked them how they would describe their relation to the local residents, and André, a Soldier in his late twenties is the first to talk. "Some people hate us, and of course they do, our work is mainly repressive. Nobody likes to be approached by the police and searched." One of the other patrol officers, Fabio, consents: "The hill is their world. It's all they know. Because of their limited economic resources their world is limited to the favela. They like to listen to their music, take their drugs, do

nothing. And they see our presence as an impediment” Fabio says that he’s not being bigoted: “When I first came here I wanted to help out, I wanted to make a change. But now I have given up. I’m tired of the favela and of the *favelado*.” He scuffs. “To be honest, I don’t understand why so many tourists come here to see the favela. I swear, when I leave the police I will never set my foot in a favela again in my life!” André agrees: “The *favelado* has no reason to complain. He *chooses* to live in a pile of rubbish



Picture 20: Young, black men and boys are the usual suspects of the police, and subject to frequent stops and frisks and ID-checks by patrol officers.

because it’s cheap. He *decides* to live in the middle of the shootouts.” He raises his voice. “Afterwards everybody complains when a child is killed. Damn, it’s a war! People are going to get killed!” Fabio interrupts him “I don’t understand what is going through the head of the people that live in this favela. [...] The people that live here prefer the *sacanada!*<sup>20</sup>” “People? I don’t know if they can be called people...” André says, putting an end to the conversation.

A while later while we’re sipping a glass of soda a couple of residents greet André as they pass by. “That is nice! Saying good evening to people.” Fabio disagrees: “I think it’s dangerous. You get too mixed up with the residents.” He nods towards the football-field in front of us: “That over there is the limit between those who support the police and those who support the *gansos* [thugs]. Over here (in reference to where we are standing)

<sup>20</sup> Conjugation of *sacanagem*

people are *sausage water*” I ask him what that means. He laughs: “Sausage water? That they’re useless. We use to throw out the sausage water. It means that they can’t be used for a damn shit!”

“The majority of society sees us as wrongdoers” Fabio says. The rest of the Soldiers agree, and I ask them to explain. “If the police *aborda* [stop and search] a guy on a motorbike, the neighbors will immediately start to yell ‘*He lives here, he lives here - he’s a worker!*’” Fabio makes a mocking voice when he imitates the people yelling at the police. “‘*Worker, worker!*’” André interrupts “I am a worker as well! But society doesn’t see me as a worker, but as a *prejudicador* [someone who does harms, injures or impedes]!”

On our way back to the base, Leonardo, one of the soldiers that had remained silent during the conversation by the mango tree approaches me: “To be honest with you, not all people here are bad, there are a lot of people that don’t support the *traficantes*.” He tell me he lived in a favela for 10 years, and assures me that most people here are good people. “They want the police to succeed, and the reason they don’t talk to us is because they don’t trust us, and are afraid that they will be punished by the *traficantes*.” I ask him how he relates to the local residents here. “There are good people and bad people. The good people I treat well” he says, and adds: “Favela residents don’t want to live with young kids firing their guns around, imposing their will! They don’t want bullets flying through the air, they want to be able to invite their friends and family to their homes without them being scared because they live in a favela.”

This vignette shows that in spite of the UPPs goal of improving deteriorated police-resident relations there was little approximation and dialogue between the two groups at most of the UPPs. Often, as André and Fabio’s comments show, the pre-existing negative stereotypes of the police were reinforced, not attenuated, once Soldiers started working at the UPPs. My observations challenge the assumption that permanent police presence and foot patrol in the favelas necessarily contributes to improved police-resident relations. Most police officers perceived residents as conniving with the *traficantes*, reaping benefits from their criminal activity and leading an immoral way of life, although some of them shared Leonardos view (see also Saborio 2014b).

However, on a general level, the conception of policing as a war against the drug cartels leaves little room for nuanced understandings of the positioning of local residents, who are either classified as *friends* or *enemies*—a hallmark of a militarized understanding of

the world (see Castro and Leirner 2009). While police-resident relations are generally worse at UPPs with high levels of violence, such as CPX, most patrol officers claim that local residents side with the drug cartels rather than the police. Rather than seeing the lack of collaboration with the police as a result of the terror imposed on residents by the cartels, or the lack of trust towards patrol officers due to the historical patterns of collusion between police and criminals, patrol officers interpreted the lack of collaboration from local residents as a sign that they were conniving with the *traficantes*.



Picture 21: Soldiers from one of the GTPP units at Santa Marta chatting with a local business owner and resident.

However, it should be stressed that high-ranking officers tend to offer a different understanding of favela residents. They claim that residents are generally supportive of the police's presence, and that the terror of the cartels and the distrust in the police are the main impediments to dialogue and cooperation between residents and police. Officers attributed the tense relation between police and residents to the history of policing in the favelas, and the different forms of violence that patrol officers were subject to.

Many patrol officers believe that just because they have expelled the traffickers the residents will see them as heroes, but that's not the way it works. Cops have to try to get closer to the community all the time. [...] Residents are skeptical to the police due to the

long history of violence and corruption of the police force. [...] When the police is met with hostility - when residents throw stones or yell at the police - the police has to intensify their efforts to improve their relation with residents. However, many patrol officers don't see it this way. The problem is the poor training and the working conditions of patrol officers. This makes it difficult to change the attitudes of patrol officers, and change the relation between patrol officers and residents (UPP Commander)

Poor training and horrible working conditions might partially explain the relations of animosity between patrol officers and residents. However, these factors alone do not suffice to explain the blatant disregard that many patrol officers expressed in relation to the general public, and to favela residents in particular. The characteristics of military institutional culture, specifically the feeling among many military police officers of being morally superior to their civilian counterparts, and their fear of being "contaminated" by too much proximity (expressed by Fabio) are important contributing factors that make the ideal of approximation hard to achieve.

## Chapter 6 DISCUSSION



Picture 22: A bullet has shattered the window at the main base of the UPP at Alemão.

## CHAPTER OUTLINE

Through the empirical findings presented in the previous chapter, I have tried to offer a detailed description of the pacification project of Rio de Janeiro. I will now summarize and discuss my main findings drawing on the theory from Chapter 2. First I will discuss the modes of legitimation of the pacification project against the actual practices of policing in pacified favelas, and next, I will analyze the practices of policing in Rio's favelas against theoretical approaches to late-modern warfare.

## LEGITIMACY

In Chapter 2 I traced the origins of the modern understanding of security to the contractualism of Hobbs. According to liberal philosophy, security is a *social good*, and something to be had or to strive for. I contrasted this understanding of security with marxian notions of the state as a partisan and guarantor of the security of those in control of the state apparatuses. Furthermore, I showed how scholars within the emergent field of securitization have reinterpreted security as a discursive tool with the potential to legitimize military solutions to problems that are essentially social in nature, among other things through the rhetoric of war—against crime, drugs, or terror.

The philosophical debate on the concept of security is important to understanding current controversies surrounding the pacification project. If we adhere to a liberal understanding of security as a *social good*, the prevalence of armed violence and insecurity in the favelas will generally be interpreted as the result of the state's failure in effectively establishing a monopoly of violence in pacified areas, and the solution might be to strengthen the presence of state security forces in the favelas in order to outweigh the belic power of the cartels. As I have shown in the sub-chapter on PMERJs response to the escalation in violence in pacified areas, this has been the strategy adopted by the police. It is the classic Clauzewitchian strategy of military domination. According to the proponents of this view, the failure of the UPPs is generally explained either as the result of strategic or managerial shortcomings, such as the lack of training of patrol officers, the rapid expansion of the UPP project, the lack of resources, such as armament and personnel, or the corruption within the state forces.

Alternately, academics advocating a broadening of the concept of security, to include aspects such as health, education, employment, etc., have suggested that the problem with the pacification strategy is the lack of involvement of other public agencies. Critical supporters of

the project, reformists at PMERJ, and many of the patrol officers that I spoke to, generally argued that the UPPs had failed since the social interventions that were supposed to accompany the project had not been implemented. As long as the pacification remained exclusively a policing approach, the police would be working in vain. However, while this assertion certainly highlights a central problem with the pacification strategy, it fails to account for the partisan role of the state, as well as the processes of securitization and militarization of the favelas through the UPPs.

Marxian approaches to security offer a much more critical outlook of the UPPs. They question the legitimacy of the pacification as a project that seeks to improve the lives of favela residents, suggesting that it is a strategy designed according to the needs of global capital—specifically the needs of the private investors of urban renewal projects, and of the city’s business strategy of attracting global capital through the hosting of mega-events. This critique is supported by the observation that most UPPs are located near wealthy neighborhoods, Olympic venues, important infrastructure, and urban renewal projects, and not in the areas of the city most affected by urban violence (Magaloni, Franco, and Melo 2015).

In my historical account of the pacification project I argue that the UPPs are the last in a series of attempts to reform PMERJ since Brazil’s return to democracy in the 80’s. These attempts have run along the lines of two opposing currents: managerial reforms inspired in community oriented models of policing, or structural reforms directed towards legal and institutional reforms like the demilitarization of PMERJ. However, as I’ve stressed throughout the thesis, two separate processes converge in the UPPs: the *territorial occupation* of the favelas, and second, the *reform of PMERJ*. My empirical findings suggest that the objective of *reclaiming* territories controlled by armed drug cartels gained priority over the objective of police reform, which was primarily seen as a way to gain legitimacy and “rhetorical immunity” for the military occupation of the favelas (see Klockars 2009), or as Saborio (2014b) suggests, as a strategy to *sanitize* state violence.

Drawing on existing literature, and on expert interviews, I have shown that while the pacification of the favelas started out as a police initiative, it quickly gained political support. This has largely been explained as the result of two main factors: on the one hand, the recent international and federal pressure to address the alarming rates of police violence in Rio, and on the other, the need to address Rio de Janeiro’s reputation as a violent city, in order to attract global capital and investments, and to demonstrate the local authorities’ capacity to guarantee the security during the upcoming mega-events (see Freeman 2012; Steinbrick 2013; Saborio 2013, 2014b). While the UPPs were tailored according to the needs of

neoliberal market logics, they drew their legitimacy from a rhetoric of social inclusion that presented the project as a way of *bridging the gap* between the favela and the asphalt, guaranteeing the exercise of full citizenship of favela residents, and of breaking the logic of war that characterizes the urban violence in Rio. These arguments are heavily contradicted by the dynamics of the *urban renewal* strategies that accompanied the UPPs, as well as the gentrification of pacified favelas as a result of the increase in real-estate prices and rent. Harvey (2003, 2005) develops the concept of *accumulation by dispossession* to describe processes like these, which tends to increase inequalities rather than promote social inclusion, as poor residents are forced out of centrally located areas towards more peripheral ones (Freeman 2012). Thus, while the UPPs draw their legitimacy from a rhetoric of social inclusion, arguing that the project is a way of bridging the gap between the favela and the asphalt, and of guaranteeing favela residents' exercise of full citizenship, the project is tailored according to the needs of Rio's elites, and promoted heterogeneous patterns of inclusion/exclusion that often lead to a widening rather than a bridging of the gap between the wealthy and the poor.

The rhetoric of social inclusion and citizenship of the UPPs shares much in common with the rhetoric of "humanitarian war" (see Fassin 2012; Lutz 2006). According to the logic of humanitarian wars, war is configured as a necessary evil to guarantee the respect for human rights, "build" democratic institutions, and secure social and economic progress. Similarly, the exceptional levels of urban violence—largely a result of hard handed public security policies—in the years preceding the establishment of the first UPPs, acted as legitimizing backdrop for the ample support of the subsequent military occupation of the favelas. In other words, and as exemplified by Georges' account (page XXXX), the state first contributed to the high levels of violence, before they suggested a militarized solution to the problem, legitimized to a wider audience through the rhetoric of social inclusion.

According to Geyer (2006 in Lutz 2006: 292) militarization can be understood as "the contradictory and tense social process in which civil society organizes itself for the production of violence" and includes an intensification of resources allocated for military purposes, and the shaping of other institutions in synchrony with military goals. Thus, it can be said to involve the expansion of a "military mindset" into other areas of social life apart from the military, such as policing. While the militarization of PMERJ is certainly not a recent phenomenon, and while the actual objectives and contents of proximity policing have been poorly defined, the pacification project's objective of breaking the logic of war in Rio, reducing the amount of lethal violence in the favelas, and creating a citizen police, would at

the very least require a demilitarization of the police's conception to public security and of their practices of policing.

In spite of the rhetoric of proximity policing, the main objective of the pacification strategy is to crush the power of the drug cartels, and establish effective territorial control in the favelas through recourse to supreme military power. The patrol officers' comments regarding the importance of social outreach project illustrate how proximity policing practices are primarily applied whenever they are seen as functional to this ulterior objective of the UPPs.

Additionally, while territorial control is presented as necessary in order to bring peace and tranquility to the favelas, it is often directly at odds with this objective, as the strategy of confronting gang members through armed battles in the favelas feeds the spiral of violence, and increases local resident's sense of insecurity. The establishment of the fixed-point patrol unit next to the elementary school in CPX is a clear example of the incompatibility between bio-political notions of security, and the sovereign logic of the police: many police officers defended the permanence of the base next to the school as the displacement of the base would be interpreted as a sign of weakness by the traffickers and encourage future attacks.

Thus, throughout this thesis I have shown how the UPPs effectively represent a militarization of the favelas and of policing: through the permanent military occupation of pacified areas by PMERJ; the military hierarchy at PMERJ, as well as the military institutional culture that shapes the subjectivity of police officers; the processes of securitization implied in the practices of proximity policing; the urban warfare strategy and tactics that both repressive and preventive patrol at the UPPs are modeled on; and the intensification of these practices of policing as the state's response to the increase in violence in pacified areas.

Furthermore, my findings demonstrate that the officers at PMERJ understand the military endeavor of territorial occupation as a prerequisite for the social inclusion of favela residents. While simultaneously noting the lack of involvement of other public agencies, they sustain that the provision of public services in the favelas can only be achieved if the police first effectively and safely controls the areas. Simultaneously, the provision of these services is *securitized* and *militarized*, not as citizen *rights* (to water, energy, education, health), but as *preventive policing strategies* aimed at avoiding future conflicts, social unrest, and violence. The argument generally put forth that public services were deficient in the favelas due to the domination of criminal groups falls short as most of the promised public interventions were not implemented after the police expelled the cartels, establishing a fragile and transitory

“armed peace” in the favelas. In sum, the UPPs are arguably trapped in a paradox: in order to implement the paradigm of proximity policing, transform the police into a citizen police, and break the logic of war in Rio de Janeiro, they rely on militarized and repressive policing techniques. Opposite to what would be expected in accordance with the rhetoric of pacification, these techniques have increased, not decreased, with time (see Musumesci 2015a).

The observed increase in lethal violence since 2013 and the prevalence of extrajudicial killings at the hands of the police at the UPPs—thoroughly documented in a recent report by Human Rights Watch (HRW 2016), and of which the Amarildo-case is but one example—bring the dilemmas between the bio-political modes of legitimation of the pacification project and the sovereign nature of the actions of the police to the fore. In this vein, Agamben’s writings on the police and the state of exception are particularly well suited to highlight the contrast between the bio-political legitimation (social inclusion) of the UPPs and the sovereign exercise of power by police officers. In spite of the claim that the purpose of the UPPs is not to end drug trafficking, the UPPs are effectively still at war with the drug cartels in many (if not most) pacified areas. The urban warfare tactics employed during patrol in the favelas contrast to the patrol tactics employed at the battalions, and are more reminiscent of the tactics of the special units. Thus, it seems that the UPPs replace the intermittent police invasions in the favelas of the special units, with the establishment of emergent and fragile police states—characterized by a permanent *state of exception*—in the favelas.

I find it interesting to note in this regard that the main break with previous models of policing in the favelas seem to be the mode of legitimation of police practices: while BOPEs aggressive approach was legitimized through reference to the radical alterity and danger of the drug traffickers and the criminalization of favela residents, the pacification strategy is legitimized through the rhetoric of social inclusion of the same residents, now presented as victims of the terror of the cartels (see also Misse 2010; Saborio 2015). Both of these narratives are visible in my ethnographic account of the police officers and their view on favela residents.

Furthermore, while policing at the UPPs might represent an improvement compared to the actions of BOPE—among other things expressed through the reported decrease in police killings in pacified areas—it also perpetuates historical patterns of repressive and militarized policing, although in a somewhat *softer* form than prior to the reform attempt. Furthermore, quantitative studies that identify a reduction in police killings as a result of the

pacification strategy are not able to determine the reason for this reduction, which might lead to the automatic assumption that reduction in police truculence is due to the pacification strategy and the paradigm of proximity policing. However, qualitative studies have suggested that the incidence of police violence in Rio is largely dependent on the public *visibility* of violence (see Soares, Bill, and Athayde 2005; Saborio 2015; Salem 2016). Thus, it remains unclear if the reduction in police lethality is attributable to the effectiveness of the change in paradigm, or if it is simply a result of the high media visibility of the UPPs.

## SECURITARIAN WAR

A wealth of scholars have tried to capture the convergence of recent trends in late-modern warfare through concepts such as *humanitarian war*, *global surveillance war*, *risk-transfer war*, *drug war*, and *criminal war* (see Shaw 2005; Lutz 2006; Fassin 2012; Lessing 2015). Each of these concepts can offer useful insights into different aspects of the pacification project, but they also ignore salient characteristics. I have already discussed how the discourse of security, and a process of securitization of development and social inclusion legitimizes the military occupation of the favelas, and sanitizes state violence at the UPPs. Therefore, I suggest that the concept of *securitarian war* can serve as an encompassing analytical category that can usefully combine different approaches, and offer a way of thinking about the dynamics of public security policies, armed conflict, and war in Rio de Janeiro.

The concept of securitarian war draws our attention to the coupling of a rhetoric of public security and a development discourse. Among other things, this coupling is exemplified in the suggestion that public security challenges and high levels of violence in Latin America are among the key obstacles to the wellbeing of citizens and human development in the region—a suggestion that inadvertently contributes to a deepening of processes of securitization (CDDRL 2014; see Chapter 1). The UPPs should be seen as the latest articulation of the securitarian war in Rio: the concept allows us to trace the continuities between the war on drugs and the pacification strategy, and to incorporate competing approaches to late-modern warfare.

On the one hand, Laidi's (1998) approach to recent wars as a *search for meaning* highlights the political rationality behind Rio's securitarian war. It shows how the exercise of state violence in Rio has relied on the construction of the powerful enemy image of the *traficante*. As I discussed in Chapter 3, at the end of the cold war the war on drugs replaced

the national security-doctrine as the *grand narrative* of through which the democratic Brazilian state exercised violent power. Prior to the pacification, the monstrous figure of the *traficante* helped frame the policing of Rio's favelas as a fight against evil, and against the *dangerous* poor population living in the favelas. The Brazilian state was subsequently legitimized through spectacular enactments of state violence in the favelas, targeted at the cartels. While the pacification continues to draw on the image of the dangerous *traficante*, the UPPs represent a rhetorical shift where the discourses of proximity policing, development, and social inclusion are used as a way to "sanitize" and legitimate state violence in the favelas (see also Saborio 2014b). The discourse of pacification is a blueprint of the western discourse of humanitarian wars.

On the other hand, the economic rationality of Rio's securitarian war can be traced in the predatory forms of accumulation historically associated with the favelas. In this regard, two different dynamics can explain the dynamics of policing and state violence in Rio. On the one hand, the predatory forms of accumulation of the illicit economies of the drug trade, such as relations of bribery between police and cartels, often rely on spectacular displays of violence to increase the price of bribes. On the other hand, the notion of accumulation by dispossession draws our attention to predatory forms of accumulation in the legal economy. The militarization of the favelas can thus also be interpreted as a process of predation, whereby Rio's elites ensure the adequate conditions for capital accumulation (i.e. through the urban renewal projects, gentrification, and forced removals associated with the pacification strategy) through the exercise of coercive state power in the favelas. Thus, the ebbs and flows of war and armed conflict can be interpreted as an effect of different forms of predatory accumulation.

The difference between the logic of global capital and the logic of violent corruption is that while violent corruption is a coercive strategy, global capital can be understood as a strategy of conquest: it rests on the states ability to bring their opponents into "peaceful submission" - which is the ultimate goal of *pacification* (Neocleous 2013). The UPP strategy of territorial occupation would thus imply a departure from a strategy of coercion towards a strategy of conquest. However, during my time in the field the patrol officers at the UPPs would often explain fluctuations in violence in pacified favelas as violent negotiations of the relations between the police and the drug cartels. Rumors and speculations of collusion between police and cartels were quite common among the patrol officers that I worked with, although the patrol officers at *Alemão* generally stressed that there was "no corruption" at their base. In the case of CPX, the extreme levels of violence seem to confirm these

statements. Similarly, patrol officers often interpreted the absence of armed confrontations as a sign that local police commanders or high-level bureaucrats had struck a deal with the drug cartels.

Changes in command at the UPPs were generally perceived as destabilizing, as they thwarted pre-existing bribery relations, and could be followed by attempts to place pressure on the drug cartels through intensification of patrol, and of armed confrontations, “to sweeten the deal” as one Soldier expressed. One police officer recounted a situation at one UPP where, according to him, the base commander had authorized the invasion of the favela by a rivaling drug faction, triggering a turf war in the pacified favela, in an attempt to increase the price of bribes. Similarly, my friends in my home favela told me that there were rumors that the local UPP had started charging bribes from the local cartel after my departure from Rio, and that as a result, gang members now expressed more confidence, openly displaying their weapons, and conducting stops and searches of foreign tourists visiting the favela.

The rumors and accounts of collusion between police and cartels in pacified favelas suggest that there is a continuity of practices of violent corruption at the UPPs. While my empirical evidence is anecdotal on this issue, it is supported by recent declarations by the Civil and Federal Police that reveal the existence of corruption schemes at several UPPs.

The notion of *securitarian war* also draws our attention to bio-political approaches to late modern warfare, particularly Gregory’s (2011) suggestion concerning the spatial and conceptual blurring of the borders and boundaries of war. The difficulties scholars express in defining the policing of the favelas as a war, in spite of the acknowledgement that the policing of the favelas is carried out in a highly militaristic fashion, suggests that the conceptual blurring is at the heart of Rio’s securitarian war. Rather than bringing clarity to the situation, the concept of *pacification* contributes to this blurring. The UPP strategy also represents a blurring of the temporality of war, as the patrol activities in pacified favelas have increasingly taken the form of a perpetual state of war, or a “war without end” (Chandler 2009; Mbembe 2003; Salem 2016).

Thus, through the concept of *securitarian warfare* the pacification project can be conceived of as a paradigmatic example of recent developments in the area of public security that conflate developmental rhetoric, policing, and warfare. Rather than breaking with the logic of war that has characterized Rio for decades, my empirical findings show that the UPPs perpetuate a diffuse state of war in the favelas, as a means to secure the interests of capitalism and the global economy. This ulterior political and economic purpose is veiled by

the rhetoric of development and community policing, which vests an essentially military endeavor with rhetorical immunity (see Fassin 2012; Klockars 2009).

## Chapter 7 CONCLUSION



Picture 23: A Soldier at Alemão holds up the gun of a 16-year-old gang member that was just shot dead by one of his colleagues during a shooting episode in Complexo de Alemão.

## SUMMARY

I started out this thesis writing that I wanted to explain why the pacification project has failed to reach its stated objectives, and what lessons public security experts can draw from the case of Rio de Janeiro. I suggested that in order to address this problem, it was necessary to understand both the institutional and political context and conditions that the police reform is set within, as well as the dynamics of violence in Rio de Janeiro.

In Chapter 2 I presented the main theoretical perspectives that inform my analysis. By and large, I draw on an assemblage of post-structuralist or critical approaches to security, policing, and warfare. In Chapter 3 I described the historical and political context of policing in Rio and Brazil, paying particular attention to the decades following Brazil's return to democracy. I also integrated different theories on the dynamics of violence in Rio's favelas through the analytical concepts of predatory accumulation, violent corruption and violent plurality to account for the economic and political rationality behind the urban violence in Rio (Arias and Goldstein 2010; Lessing 2015).

In Chapter 4 I presented the research strategy I adopted to address my research problem, and discussed some of the methodological challenges of doing ethnographic fieldwork within a military police institution, and how I solved these challenges. The purpose of this discussion was to reflect on my own role as an ethnographer and researcher, and the implications that my positioning has for the scientific validity and reliability of my findings.

In Chapter 5 I presented my main empirical findings. I described how the pacification project originated as the result of federal and international political pressure on the state government, how the media and public support for the project lead to its rapid expansion as a political strategy to gain votes in local elections, and how the project is tied up to the interests of Rio's economic elites, and a business strategy focused on urban renewal projects and mega-events. I also showed how militarized forms of policing were perpetuated at the UPPs, through the focus on territorial occupation and control, and the urban warfare tactics employed by the special units and the GTPPs. Furthermore, I described the detrimental effects of the military institutional form on the mental health of police officers, and on police-resident relations. Finally, I described the institutional response to the increase in violence in pacified areas and the crisis of legitimacy of the pacification project, signaling the incompatibility between the military goal of safe territorial occupation of the favelas on the one hand, and the proximity policing approach on the other.

Finally, in Chapter 6 I discussed my findings against the theoretical framework presented in Chapter 2. I tried to show how in spite of the rhetoric of proximity policing, the

UPPs perpetuate militarized forms of policing in pacified areas, and that in spite of the rhetoric of peace, the police are effectively at a war with the drug cartels in the favelas. Through the concept of *securitarian war* I have tried to highlight the modes of legitimation of state violence in Rio de Janeiro through a liberal discourse on security, as well as the political and economic rationalities of state violence. Drawing on Marxian approaches to security, I've challenged development policies articulated through police and military intervention.

I have also argued that rather than guaranteeing favela residents rights to citizenship, and improving their lives and wellbeing, the UPPs seem to perpetuate practices of collusion and predatory forms of accumulation that produce violence. Essentially, I claim that the UPP strategy has failed and will continue to fail because it is tailored according to the needs of Rio's economic and political elites, and because the violence in the favelas is economically and politically profitable. Changing this situation requires broad political reform, and as long as such reforms are not pursued, critical supporters of the UPPs and public security experts engaged in progressive critiques of security through concepts such as *human security*, risk becoming the unwitting handmaidens of perverse state policies of securitization, militarization, and warfare.

Public security experts must *desecuritize* their own field, and on the other hand, they must propose solutions to contemporary security challenges in ways that do not challenge our liberal democratic rights and values. While the question of how this should be done falls beyond the scope of this thesis, other scholars have signaled ways forward that carry promising potential. A desecuritization approach could for instance imply treating drugs as a public health problem rather than a public security problem. The legalization of all drugs in countries plagued drug related violence could potentially eliminate the main economic incentive behind violence (see also Magaloni, Franco, and Melo 2015; Salem 2016). The fact that the most significant achievement of the UPPs has been to lower the prevalence of police killings in the favelas does not justify the military occupation of these territories. Rather, other strategies to reduce police lethality should be pursued. In this vein, Human Rights Watch (2016) has made a long list of recommendations to end police impunity, that do not rely on militarized techniques of policing.

## COMPARISON WITH PREVIOUS LITERATURE

My analysis can be read as a support of the *radical critiques* of the pacification project, that see it as a militarization of the favelas, tailored according to the needs of neoliberal market

logics. My findings also support previous findings that highlight the contrast between patrol officers' critical outlook of the project and the general support among commanders and high ranking officers, the poor training, miserable work conditions, and persistence of repressive models of policing at the UPPs as well as the deteriorated mental health of patrol officers.

## IMPLICATIONS FOR THE FIELD OF PUBLIC SECURITY

I believe that my work signal the challenges of recent processes of securitization that prompt militarized solutions to complex problems that are both social, economic, and political in nature. While militarized public security policies are not a new phenomenon in Rio de Janeiro, the rhetoric of pacification establishes a connection between the social and economic development of the favelas, and a public policy that is mainly founded on the coercive exercise of power by the state. These policies are generally at odds with the rights, guarantees, and values that liberal democratic states are founded on. There is an urgent need for a de-securitization of the many and complex challenges faced by the residents living in the favelas, which are often the underlying causes of violence. The challenges of poverty, unemployment and underemployment, drug abuse, insufficient and ineffective public services, healthcare, and education will not be solved through militarized policing.

My research suggests that police reform attempts will always be contingent on the socio-political contexts that they are set within. In the case of Rio de Janeiro and Brazil, it is hard to imagine the reformists within the police to succeed as long as reform attempts are not accompanied by broader political reforms that limit elite influence on the political system, and guarantee public representation in local and national politics. In these contexts, public security experts should be wary of proposing police reforms that advocate increased police presence as a strategy for social inclusion. The argument put forth in this thesis calls for a critical approach to state power in the field of public security, and a better understanding of how democratic states are involved in the production of violence. I believe that scholars in the field might find that anthropological approaches to state power and violence are particularly informative in this regard.

## FUTURE RESEARCH

Parting from these reflections, I would like to call for the ethnographic explorations of situations similar to the situation in Rio de Janeiro to examine the limitations and usefulness of the analytical category of *securitarian wars*. I believe that it can be usefully put to work to

analyze a wide range of situations that meet the criteria that I have established. Some cases that come to mind are the drug wars of Mexico, the policing of black communities in the USA, or the policing of the *banelieus* in Paris.

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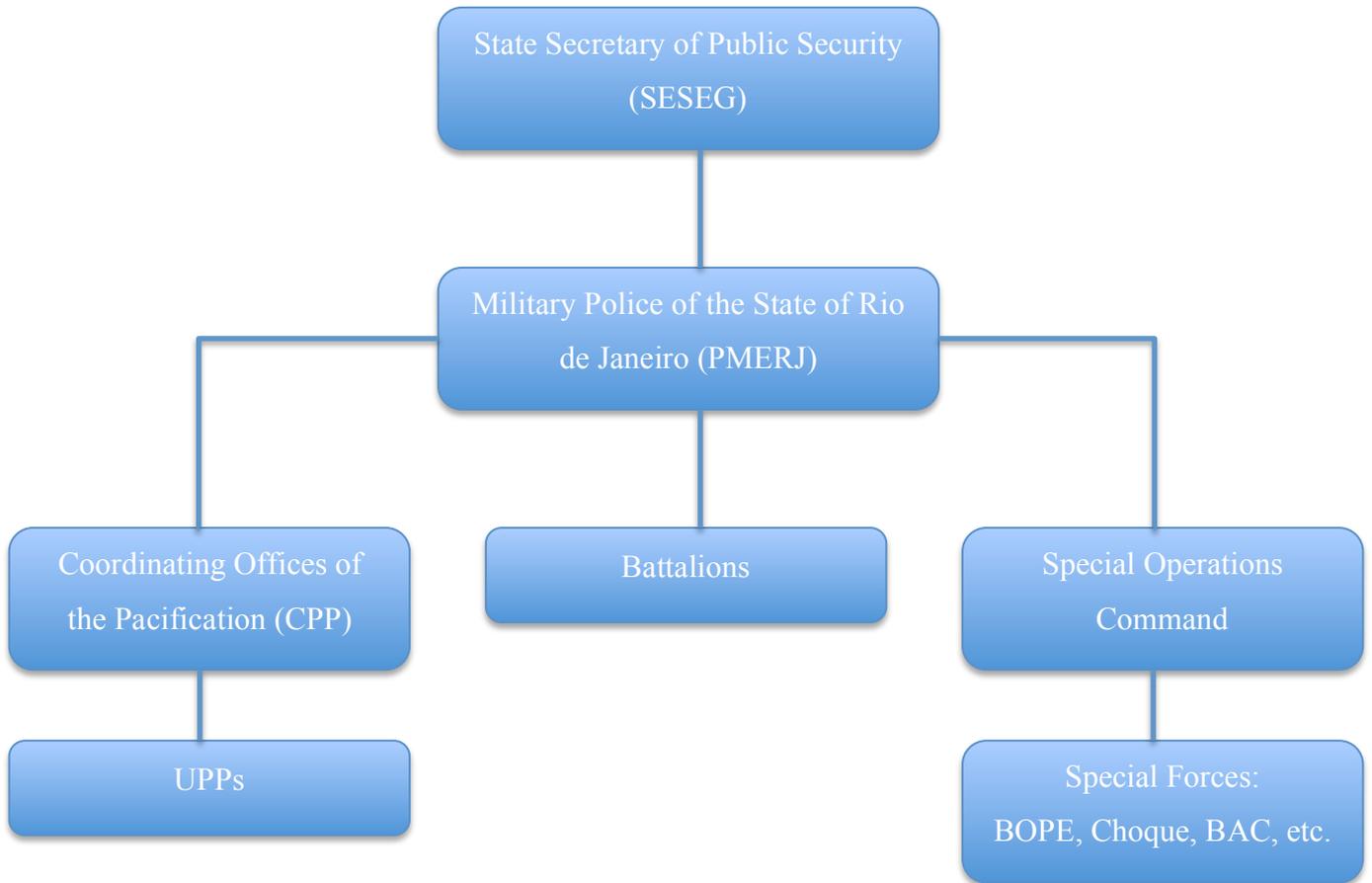
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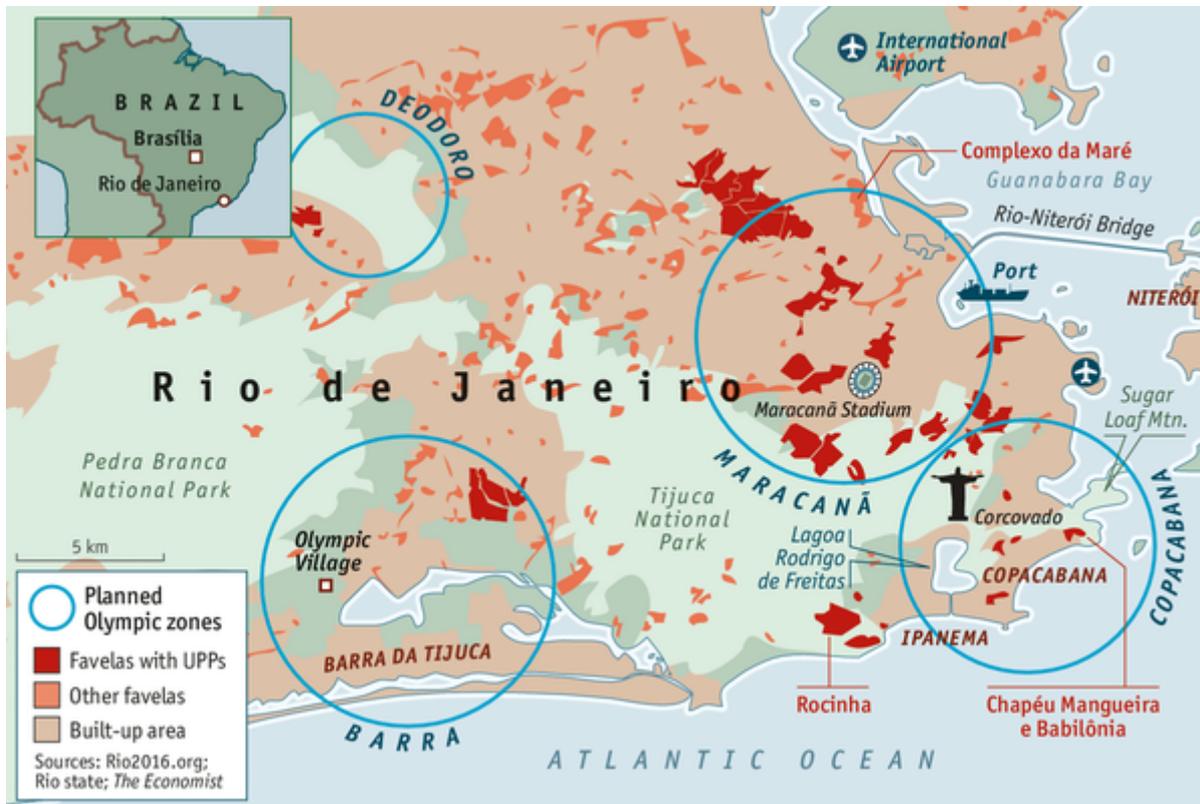
## APPENDIX

Organizational structure of PMERJ

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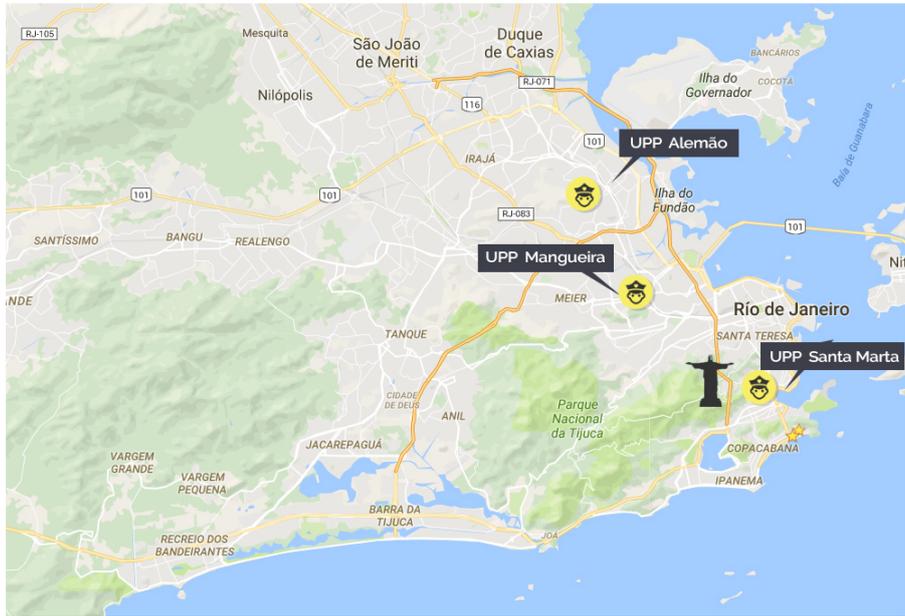


Map of pacified favelas and Olympic venues

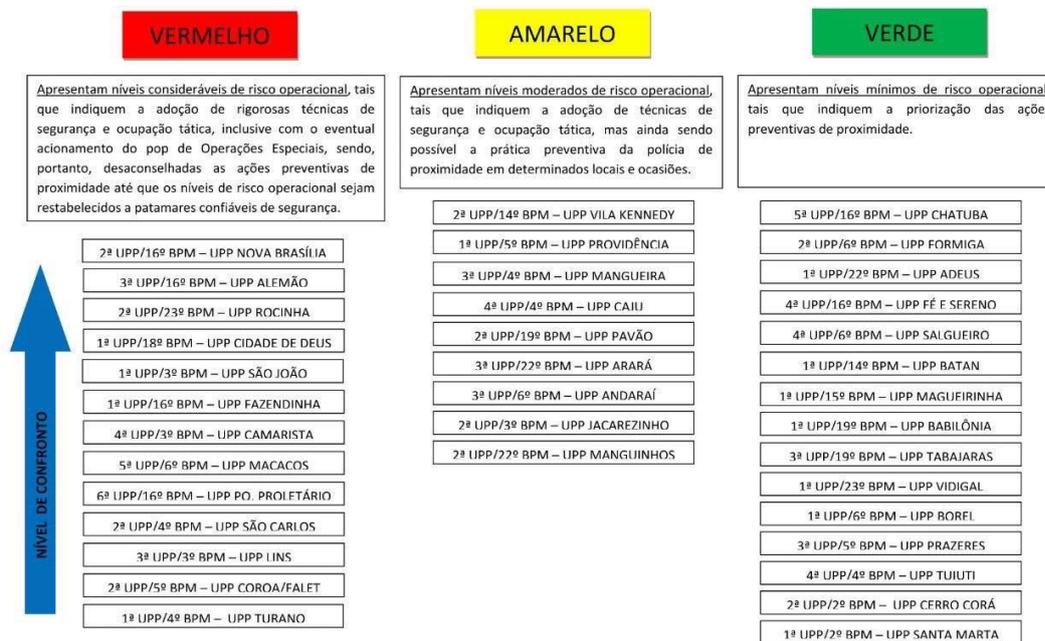


1: Pacified Favelas and planned Olympic zones. Source: <http://www.economist.com/news/americas/21586322-sensible-security-programme-brazils-olympic-city-no-longer-enough-satisfy-voters>

APPENDIX C  
Map of field-sites



NÍVEIS DE RISCO OPERACIONAL DAS UPP'S



www.fistudio.com

Source: PMERJ

The 38 UPPs classified according to the operational risk at each base. Red favelas exhibited high conflict levels, yellow favelas exhibited medium conflict levels, and green favelas had low conflict level at the time of research. Within each category, the UPPs are organized with risk ascending as you move up the list. Thus, at the time of classification, the UPP with least risk was *Santa Marta*, and the UPP with highest risk was *Nova Brasilia* (at CPX). The three favelas were I carried out my fieldwork rank 2<sup>nd</sup> (UPP Alemão), 16<sup>th</sup> (UPP Mangueira), and 38<sup>th</sup> (UPP Santa Marta).

Officers [Oficiais]

Colonel, Lieutenant Colonel, Major, Captain, First Lieutenant, Second Lieutenant



Sub-Lieutenant, First Sergeant, Second Sergeant, Third Sergeant, Corporal, Soldier  
Patrol Officers [Praças]