

# **The Pacification of Favelas in Rio de Janeiro**

Why the program is working and what are the lessons for other countries

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**(Work in progress)**

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### **I. Violence in Rio de Janeiro**

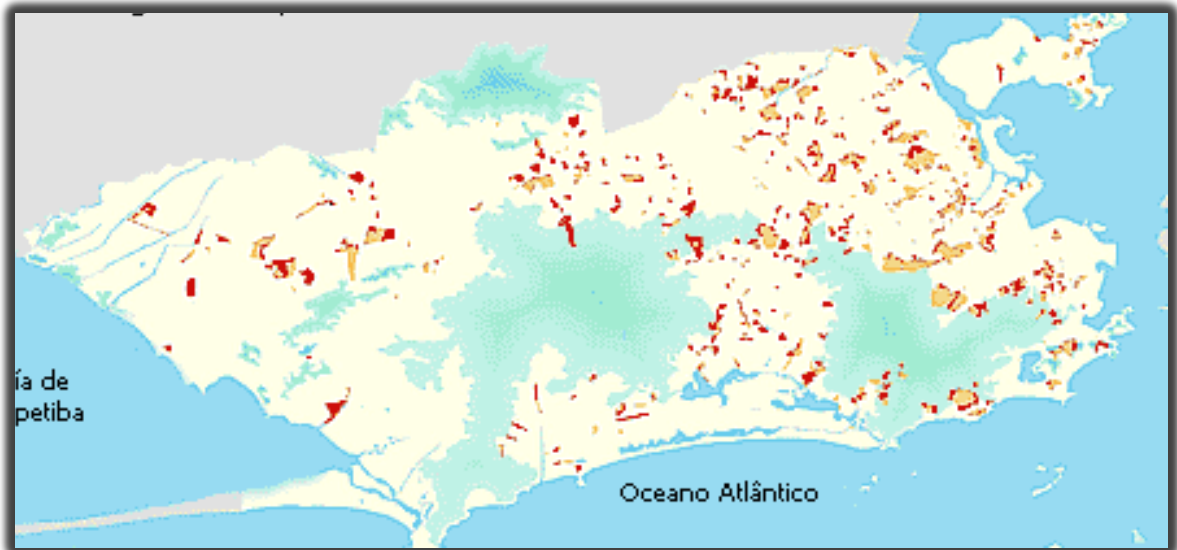
Urban violence has been a serious problem in Brazil for the last half-century, and the famous city of Rio de Janeiro has been no exception. In a country where homicides are the number one cause of death for 15-44-year-olds (UNHCR 2007), Rio has one of the highest homicide rates in Brazil. The situation in Rio is even deadlier than in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict: between 1948 and 1999, an estimated thirteen thousand people were killed in the Middle Eastern conflict, while more than forty-eight thousand people died from firearm-related injuries in Rio between 1979 and 2000 (Dowdney, 2003 in Neat and Platt, 2006 p. 116). That is almost four times as many deaths in a period that was twenty years shorter. Most of the violent crimes in Rio occur in poor slum areas called *favelas* in Portuguese. These *favela* communities are at the center of my research because they are the hosts of a remarkable policing experiment taking place right now.

*Favelas* are informal communities, where most people do not own land and property taxes nor pay taxes, and began to appear in Rio de Janeiro at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century after the government failed to provide veterans from the Canudos campaign with the housing that was promised to them (Neate and Platt, 2006 p. 11). With the rapid urbanization that Brazil experienced in the last century, particularly in the second half, poor migrants had no choice but



a single area of the city, but are found everywhere. One-third of Rio's population lives in *favelas*. Although non-*favela* populations would like them to be invisible, these communities are visible from very many parts of the city. They are located side-to-side to the most affluent regions, and the problems they face, including violence and crime, can be felt in neighboring areas as well.

**Figure 2: Map of the city of Rio de Janeiro with *favelas***



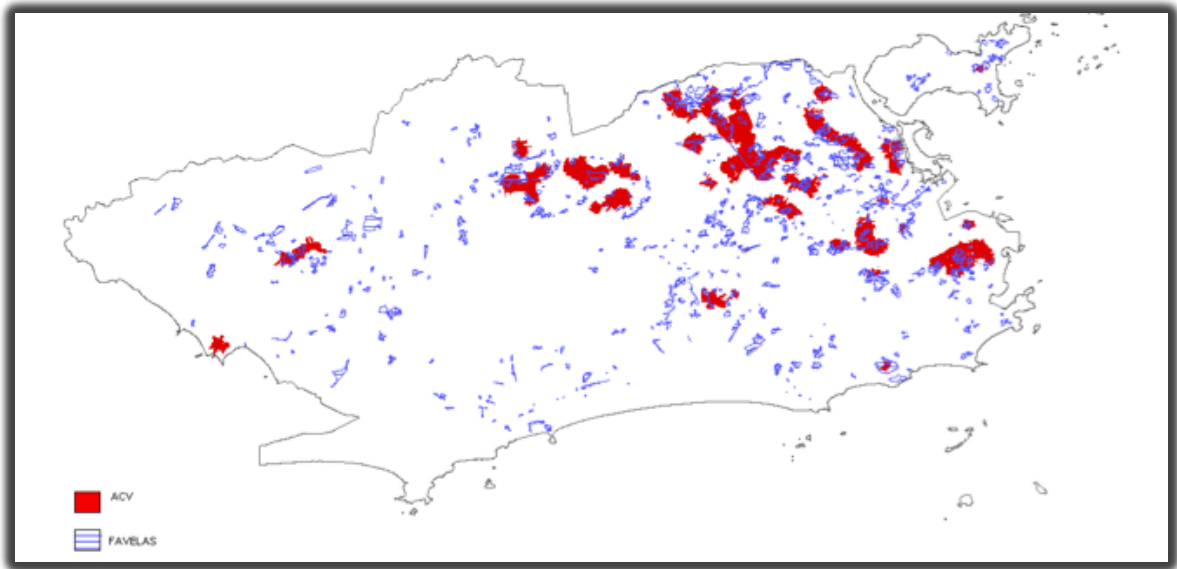
Source: Fiocruz [http://www.fiocruz.br/~ccs/arquivosite/novidades/out04/favela\\_sar.htm](http://www.fiocruz.br/~ccs/arquivosite/novidades/out04/favela_sar.htm)

*Favelas'* isolation from legal and reliable public services and lack of paved streets and land titles remains a problem but has improved in many communities, particularly with government programs such as Favela Bairro and PAC. Nowadays they are more commonly characterized as communities that have running water and electricity pirated from the national grid, and solid houses and longstanding business (Neate and Platt, 2006 p. 11). Their isolation from policing services, however, has led to the serious problem they face of control by drug factions, and later by militias. Until 2009, almost everyone living in *favelas* was controlled, supported, and exploited by one of the city's drug factions (Neate and Platt, 2006 p. 12). These groups emerged in the 1970s, and are highly organized and well armed. The three factions that

control drug trafficking and the lives of *favela* populations are: *Comando Vermelho* (CV), *Terceiro Comando* (TC) and *Amigos dos Amigos* (ADA). The first one to emerge was the CV in the late 1970s, when well-educated, middle-class opponents of the military regime robbed banks to finance their activities and were imprisoned. These dissidents banded together with other criminals in prison and taught them about group organization and solidarity (Neate and Platt, 2006 p. 86). Equipped with these new skills, criminals founded the CV to protect and control the prison population, and later started to coordinate activities outside prison, such as pooling crime money to support the families of inmates and to finance prison breaks (ibid). When there was a boom in the domestic cocaine trade in the early 1980s, with cheaper cocaine coming from the neighboring countries, members of the CV quickly grabbed this profitable opportunity and started operating from *favelas*. The TC seems to have been created in the late 1980s to challenge the CV's territorial domination, and the ADA was formed by a group of breakaway CV members in 1996 (Neate and Platt, 2006 p. 87).

In a constant fight over territory with the other factions, and over high positions within factions, these groups turned life in the *favelas* into unsafe and uncertain days that sometimes erupted in violent chaos. Residents were sometimes not able or allowed to leave their homes to go to work, or walk up the hill to get to their homes when back from work. As armed faction members patrolled these communities, outsiders, including the police, stayed out as much as possible. The police would be seen when coming in to collect payments from traffickers in exchange for not killing or arresting them, or in their quick and violent incursions. As a result, many *favelas* became very violent areas. Figure 3 shows the location of Rio's *favelas* in blue, and the top 20% most violent regions in the city, in red. This figure shows that most of the violence in Rio occurs in and around *favelas*.

**Figure 3: Top 20% most violent regions in the city of Rio de Janeiro**



**Source: Rodrigues and Rivero.**

The population's fear of violence, inside and outside *favelas*, was exacerbated by a violent and corrupt police force. In almost all of Brazil the views of the police forces, civil and military, are very negative. The low salaries that officers receive are the main problem, because they force them to seek other work that unfortunately are sometimes illegal (Soares, 2009). Working as private guards or receiving bribes from traffickers is common, and the reason is simple: besides complementing their salaries, when they receive bribes officers also outsource risks and costs to the criminals. Trying to arrest criminals would be much riskier in terms of their personal safety on the job. These arrangements have become pervasive and at least until 2009, that was the situation in almost every *favela* (Soares quote in Neate and Platt, 2006 p. 121). The police are also known to be violent: between 2003 and 2007 the police of the state of Rio de Janeiro killed 5669 people, and although almost all deaths were registered as *autos de resistência* (consequence of the victim putting the officers' or others' lives at risk), research done in 2003 shows that 65% of those killings had unmistakable signs of execution (Soares, 2009).

The police forces are also inefficient and ineffective at their jobs. The two agencies, the Military Police which does patrolling and arrests, and the Civil Police, which is in charge of investigations and judicial proceedings, do not cooperate nor share databases, and are not managed in an integrated manner (Soares, 2009). Their training and values are different, and their identity is based on daily rivalry. The result is their ineffectiveness, exemplified by the number of homicides being solved by the Rio civil police being as low as only 1.5% of all homicide cases (Soares, 2009). The police forces are failing to provide all that they should in a democracy: reassurance, investigative capacity and success, and deterrence – and this failure intensifies the perception and reality of public insecurity (Hinton, 2008 p. 217).

To make matters worse, members of the police force and other state agents started to form militias and take control of some *favelas* from drug factions. The militias are composed of police officers, prison officers, firemen or other armed state workers, almost always in roles of command, and by some civilians and *favela* residents that cooperate – in some cases recruited among the traffickers (Cano, 2008 p. 81). Research in militia-controlled *favelas* (Cano, 2008) presented two hypotheses for militias' emergence and rapid expansion: there may have been a political project behind this, connected to the areas where the Pan American games of 2007 were played and where candidates connected to the security apparatus could gather many votes. The second hypothesis is that it is a result of the economic weakening of the traffic networks, with a decreasing capacity to pay their troops and the officers that allowed them to operate. Given the knowledge that militias displayed about the communities and who was involved in trafficking, it is possible that corrupt officers previously involved with drug factions decided it would be more profitable to take over the community for themselves (Cano, 2008 p. 80). The famous Brazilian

film *Tropa de Elite* (titled Elite Squad in English) shows the militias emerging and operating according to the second hypothesis.

The origin of the word militia connects these groups with a “liberating myth,” as if their members were trying to liberate communities from trafficking control and violence (Cano, 2008). The reality is that while in some communities no new rules were imposed, in others there were many restrictions, and violations were usually punished violently – commonly through physical aggression, expulsion from the community, and death, just like the factions (Cano, 2008). The militias’ main motivation is to profit by controlling commerce, and they keep armed men rotating at all times to prevent crimes and incursions from other competing groups. They are more organized and hungrier economically than drug factions: they tend to monopolize every profitable business, especially water and gas sale, alternative transportation, and cable TV and internet access. The fact that many militia members are police officers should, in principle, increase the possibility of arresting criminals and have other state agencies determine their deserved punishment. However, the informal and irregular nature of the militias makes this difficult, in addition to officers being used to exercising legitimate and illegitimate violence as a social control mechanism and to solve conflicts (Cano, 2008 p. 61). Sometimes the drug traffickers that had been defeated counterattacked, with varying results (Cano, 2008 p. 71). This situation brought on or continued a feeling of war in these communities.

## **II. A new policing program**

In the last few decades, different actors have tried to tackle the problems of violence, drug trafficking and poverty in the *favelas* with mixed results. Past *favela* policing programs include the *Posto de Policiamento Comunitário* (Community Police Posts), *Centro Integrado de Policiamento Comunitário* (Integrated Center of Community Policing), *Batalhão Comunitário*

(Community Battalion), and the more recent *Grupamento de Policiamento em Áreas Especiais* (GPAE) (Police Grouping in Special Areas). In general, programs did not last long, especially because of a change in government administration or because the program was the idea of one person and was not supported by other important actors in the police and government. In addition, the police were often far outnumbered by traffickers, making it hard for the police to gain control and easy for them to collude with the traffic (Tierney, forthcoming).

Lessons were learned from past programs and from others that took place abroad. Municipal programs developed separately in Bogotá and Medellín became well-known in Brazil (Henriques and Ramos, 2011 p. 243) and, with adaptations according to Rio's context, helped develop Rio's latest *favela* policing program, the Unidades de Polícia Pacificadora (UPP) (Pacification Police Units) (Barroso, interview). The development of the UPP program began in December 2007 and is based on the following goals: i) take back state control over communities currently under strong influence of ostensibly armed criminals; ii) give back to the local population peace and public safety, which are necessary for the integral exercise and development of citizenship; iii) contribute to breaking with the logic of "war" that now exists in Rio de Janeiro (Henriques and Ramos, 2011 p. 243). This program does not have among its objectives: i) to end drug trafficking; ii) to end criminality; iii) be a solution for all communities; iv) turn itself into the panacea for all socio-economic problems in the community. The UPP program, therefore, is not a broad policing program for all urban territory, but rather focused on taking back territories that are controlled by drug factions (Henriques and Ramos, 2011 p. 243).

The UPP approach is divided into three stages: i) the police elite forces, known as BOPE, come into the favela community and take over the territory from the local drug faction, arrest criminals and seize weapons and drugs; ii) the pacification process begins, in which the BOPE

(sometimes with the help of other forces, including the army) gathers intelligence and continues to make arrests, seizures, and identify hideouts and drug sale spots; and finally iii) once the community is “pacified” a new police force called UPP comes in and provides proximity policing on a permanent basis (Barroso, interview). A fourth stage of bringing in social services and social investments is beginning to take place in a few *favelas*. Because the government always publicly announces an occupation before the BOPE goes in, many criminals have time to flee and there is little confrontation between them and the police – often no shots are fired. This strategy is sometimes criticized because it allows criminals to escape and invade other communities. The police’s argument is that once displaced, the criminals become more vulnerable and are easier to defeat (Rodrigues da Silva, interview). The drug traffickers are highly dependent on the territory that they know well in order to hide and operate, and when forced to flee they may be found by the police, by their enemies, or create conflict by competing with their allies in the community to which they flee. Data show that violence is decreasing in Rio, and not moving from one community to another.

The first UPP experience was in the *favela* Dona Marta starting in December 2008, followed by the infamous Cidade de Deus (City of God) (Ferreira, 2011 p. 90). As of September 2011, there are 17 communities with UPP bases and the goal is to have 40 by the time the FIFA World Cup begins in 2014 in Rio (O Globo 3, 2011). While the average number of inhabitants per police officer for all of Rio state is 405, in UPP communities that number is 101 (Ferreira, 2011 p. 91). This high rate allows the UPP officers to engage in proximity policing, getting to know the community and the inhabitants well and developing a relationship of trust.

Rio’s State Department of Public Security prefers the term proximity policing to community policing for its UPP program, because they believe that the former is a pre-requisite

to the latter (Barroso, interview). The police first start interacting with the population to begin to form a relationship, before the trusting relationship is truly consolidated. As the Department's Undersecretary for Training and Prevention Programs, Ms. Juliana Barroso, described: proximity policing is at the flirting stage, while community policing is the marriage (Barroso, interview). Colonel Robson Rodrigues da Silva, the UPP program's commander, also likes the term because proximity is an ideal to be reached inside the entire police force, since that is the way the police should be doing their work and proximity is so essential to crime prevention (Rodrigues da Silva, interview). Experiences that have been successful in reducing violent crime generally combine 1) substantial improvements in the corporative governance of police agencies; 2) coordination between police agencies that are involved with prevention, and 3) a focus on territories (hotspots) and groups at risk and other risk factors (Ferreira, 2011 p. 80). A more detailed description of how the UPP program combines these and other elements for a successful strategy follows.

#### The UPP approach: police reform

Proximity policing goes against the values and training that the military police of Rio de Janeiro hold. The police receive a military training that the UPP commander describes as the formation of a warrior ethos, whereby militarism is a part of a dehumanizing ritual. Much like violence held a symbolic value for the traffic, with the police as their symbolic enemy, the police were not trained to recognize the humanity of the *favela* residents, who they see as complicit in criminality. The commander confessed that training in the warrior ethos remains the most obstinate obstacle to police reform (Tierney, forthcoming). Luiz Eduardo Soares, a respected anthropologist specialist in public security who has worked in various positions with the government, agrees that with the exception of situations when special forces such as BOPE are

necessary, the Brazilian military police was not designed for public safety (Soares, 2009). The challenges of public safety policing require flexibility in decision-making, decentralization, and quick and adaptive supervision, none of which the military police have and which are necessary for a method focused on problem-solving and proximity policing (Soares, 2009).

Currently, UPP officers receive different training from the rest of the police force, which includes Sociology and Human Rights in a more integrated manner with the other disciplines, with a focus on proximity policing and dialogue instead of force, and an internship at an UPP base for two weeks. The UPP commander says what is currently being done is not enough. A better capacity of dialogue and argumentation needs to be inserted into the training curriculum, because at UPP communities officers use dialogue much more often than their weapons (Rodrigues da Silva, interview). So while the physical and technical capacities still need to be trained, there needs to be a greater focus on the unique aspects of proximity policing.

Rio's Department of Public Safety is aware of these needs and believes that it is not only UPP officers that need training in proximity policing, but all police officers. The UPP approach is the new standard model, and to that end the entire police training curriculum is changing. The curriculum will move away from a training that prepares officers for war, with the warrior ethos in mind, to a method of proximity policing that UPP officers are leading by example. When Ms. Juliana Barroso became Undersecretary for Training and Prevention Programs earlier this year, she realized that the UPP model of policing, of preparing officers to get to know well and serve the communities where they work, was not expressed in the current police curriculum. One of the changes that were deemed necessary was to interconnect Human Rights with all other disciplines – it has been taught as a separate discipline until now – so that officers will learn how

to, for example, approach people, use force, and talk with vulnerable groups in a way that respects human rights (Barroso, interview).

The Undersecretary's team also created an Integrated Education Committee, comprised of her department, specialists, and all five state forces that specialize in public safety. Each group had a chance to look at the others' curricula and discuss them in a formal setting for the first time, making the curriculum development process legitimate because they all had a chance to participate. Problems with teaching are also being identified and remedied: because instructors at the military police were working for free, were in essence volunteers, their work was not coordinated and sometimes they taught opposite ideas. As part of the curriculum reform, instructors will be paid and selected on a transparent manner via the Talent Database, and will all be familiar with the new police curriculum and expected to abide by the new values of the academy. The new curriculum is being developed with the International Committee of the Red Cross and the federal government's Human Rights Agency, and will be implemented in January 2012. This new curriculum will allow UPP officers to have a specialized internship at the end of their training, but will not require a differentiated curriculum for them because all officers will be trained according to the same principles. Specialized forces, such as BOPE, will still exist and have their specialized training, but the basic training will be the same for all police officers (Barroso, interview).

There will also be changes in the ways that police officers receive training on the job. As of now, they receive sporadic training for refreshment or updates, in general every ten years. The new model is still being developed, but the idea is that it will include classes with the analysis of recent case studies, remote education, and partnerships with higher institutions so that officers can specialize in fields useful to their jobs and the police academy, such as Criminology,

Management and Public Safety. This refreshment training will be mandatory and include 25% of the force each year, with each officer attending 120 hours of class/training every four years. Ms. Barroso also said that the department is aware of and concerned about the fact that a large part of the police academy does not have a college degree, which makes it harder in terms of their training and maturity on the job (Barroso, interview).

With the success of the UPP program, one of the new goals of the UPP Commander and the State Department of Public Safety is a cultural transformation within the police force. To that end, in communities where there are no UPPs the idea will also be to focus on the causes of crime, not the effects. The new model of proximity policing can be used in parts of the city that do not have UPP, as is the case of Morro Azul in the Southern area of the city, where there is no UPP but officers in charge decided to practice proximity policing (Rodrigues da Silva, interview). The UPP Commander says that they are still far from a general cultural transformation, but they have started the process. One concern is that people's fears often guide public security policies, so if something goes wrong with one of the UPP bases people might get scared quickly but we cannot let that represent a regress in a program that is proving to be successful in reducing crime and gaining the trust of the population (Rodrigues da Silva, interview).

In an attempt to prevent corruption among UPP officers, the program only recruits officers straight from the academy (except for the captain who commands the base). The Secretary of Security for the State of Rio de Janeiro, José Mariano Beltrame, the man who is the face of the program, argues that if officers have been on the job outside UPP bases, they may have been "spoiled" (O Globo 1, 2011). They will have likely learned how to get bribes and other bad practices. The Secretary also says that bringing in new officers facilitates the building

of a good relationship with *favela* residents, because they will not be the officers who participated in violent incursions. In addition, young officers have a different perspective from older officers, and bring in the hope of making a difference (Barroso, interview).

The reform being carried out also seeks to attend to some of the other problems that the anthropologist Luiz Eduardo Soares pointed out, such as the lack of integration between the civil and military police, and low salaries for the officers. With an increase in funding commitment from the government, salaries are increasing and cash bonuses are being offered. In order to encourage integration between the civil and military police, targets and bonuses are based on the performance of a region which includes one military police base and one civil police base. This new sectional system is called AISP, and there are 41 of them in the city of Rio de Janeiro. In order to increase their effectiveness and the chances of meeting the crime reduction targets for their region, the two forces have to work together, sharing information and coordinating efforts. Cash bonuses are given to all officers in top-performing AISPs, and not to individuals, to encourage group work. A new system was created in 2009 to manage the targets, called *Sistema de Metas e Acompanhamento de Resultados* (SIM) (System of Targets and Results Monitoring).

SIM was developed with a Brazilian management consulting firm and it is inspired on methods used in the private sector. The system monitors murders (*homicídios dolosos*), robberies followed by death (*latrocínio*), vehicle thefts (*roubo de veículos*), and street thefts (*roubos de rua, a transeuntes, no interior de coletivo e de celular*). In the second semester of 2011, it will include all intentional violent deaths and bodily injury followed by death (*lesão corporal seguida de morte*) and *autos de resistência* (*people killed by the police during conflicts*). In order to calculate the ranking of AISPs through meeting targets, the indicators now have different weights: 3 for fatalities, 2 for vehicle thefts, and 1 for street thefts. This decision to have different

weights is based on how they impact the population's feeling of safety differently – i.e. those crimes that make the population feel most unsafe should count more. When targets are met by AISPS, they become higher for the next cycle. If targets are not met, the civil and military police get together to study the criminal phenomenon and find solutions. The SIM system encourages the institutions to work together, and learn from their successes and failures. With the extra incentive of cash bonuses, officers become more engaged and successful experiences are copied. The AISP ranking by targets met shows the good work of the UPPs: in the first semester of 2011, AISP 19 came in first, and AISP 6 came in third, and all *favelas* in these two regions already have UPP bases (Comunidade Segura, 2011).

Another benefit of having the UPP police presence is that with drug factions out, the civil police can come in to do its work. Investigations were very difficult to carry out when drug factions were in control, and the police would often have to inform them beforehand and get permission to enter the community. The UPP officers working in the community now have much more knowledge about the place and the people, and can also assist the civil police in its work.

#### The UPP approach: building trust

In order for the police work in the *favelas* to be effective, they need to earn the trust of the residents. Finding criminals, drug sale spots, hideouts, and getting reports of other illegal activities, including of wrongdoings by police officers, are all more effective if residents cooperate by sharing information with the police. They can do so anonymously, by calling the number that UPP officers distribute and post all over the communities, or contacting the ombudsman. In the UPP commander's words, public safety is the state's obligation but everyone's responsibility (Rodrigues da Silva, interview). After decades of abandonment, and sometimes also exploitation and terrorization, the police will need some time to gain the trust the

population. Even if officers are new and are part of a brand new program of policing, the image of the police corporation as violent and corrupt has left scars in many of the residents, especially the youth and adults.

The group that is most resistant to the UPP presence and action are the youth, who grew up only seeing drug trafficking as a way out of poverty and are at an age where many of them would have joined the business. With drug trafficking they would get money on the spot (as opposed to one paycheck per month) and could earn five times (or more) money than with legal work, not to mention the respect that these groups gain from youth (Neate and Platt, 2006 p. 15). Another contentious issue with youth is the regulation of *favela* nightlife. UPP communities initially ban all *bailes funk*, which are dance parties that play a style of music called *funk* and typically attract large crowds of young people. The police have two problems with these parties: that is where most of the drug was sold inside *favela* residents, and *funk* music tends to praise violence, criminality and drugs. In fact, many of the *bailes funk* used to be sponsored by the drug faction in charge. Some communities now permit the parties to last until a certain hour, in others they are still banned (Tierney, forthcoming). Many residents, especially youth, do not appreciate these new rules.

The police are very aware of these challenges with youth, and are coming up with ideas on how to become closer to them and help them find work opportunities. The teenage years are a critical age of transition, and it is essential for police officers to understand youth's values and behaviors. The first step is to understand them and open up communication channels (Rodrigues da Silva, interview). The State Department of Public Safety is working with the Social Action Department to hold meetings with community youth and UPP officers wearing plain clothes (most of whom are also very young) in the audience. They started off conversations and also

introduced some playful role-playing of *abordagens* (approach and search), so that the youth could understand how hard it is to approach reluctant and distrustful teenagers, and also so that officers could understand how youth feel discriminated against and disrespected. They concluded by role-playing what would be the ideal *abordagem*, all in a playful atmosphere to decrease the tension between the two groups. Although in the first day of the event the youth presence was not meaningful, in the second day attendance highly increased (Barroso, interview). The UPP commander highly encourages his captains and officers to always be open to conversation and seek positive interaction with youth (Rodrigues da Silva, interview).

The government and police officers are also establishing contracts and partnerships with organizations that can provide youth with job training. One example is UPP-Sebrae, a partnership to train and find jobs for *favela* residents. The UPP commander said that *favela* youth are in disbelief with formal education, which many of them have abandoned, so they are trying to open up other channels for them (Rodrigues da Silva, interview). Preparing them for the job market will help them succeed through formal and legal means and keep them away from the criminal life many of them used to envision. Therefore, it will be of great help to the police when more social services are available to *favela* residents, the fourth step in the pacification process. These services will complement the police's work and give it credibility (Rodrigues da Silva, interview). For now, UPP officers are holding meetings with the population to listen to problems and requests, and are trying to bring in the services the population needs. Although this is outside the work of traditional policing, it helps officers interact with and get to know residents well, and they gain credibility when they assist the community in getting the services they need (Nogueira, interview).

Residents, especially adult women and children, have also been interacting with police officers through classes, workshops and events. Police officers are teaching music, computer literacy, sports, fitness, and planning events such as Easter, Mother's Day, *Baile de Debutantes* (Sweet 16, which is celebrated at age 15 in Brazil) and *Baile da Terceira Idade* (Senior Dance), all in an attempt to bring programs that were not available before, and increase positive interaction with residents. UPP officers also assist residents in case of emergencies, for instance when a woman is in labor and needs to be taken to the hospital (Nogueira, interview).

Although the relationship between the police and *favela* residents is certainly improving, officers are aware that this is a transitional process that takes time. Officers say that even for people to say hello takes time, but they understand it since it was not long ago when the police would come and put guns in people's faces, only now they say good morning and have a friendlier attitude (Tierney, forthcoming). In addition to the bad image that people have of the police, another challenge in improving interaction is that many people fear that if they just say hello to the police, drug factions will retaliate against them. A captain recalls a mother hitting her child and yelling after the little one said hi to an officer; the mother was raised to avoid dialogue with the police out of mistrust towards them and fear of the traffic, and she was trying to protect her child (Tierney, forthcoming). If residents believe that saying hello can already cause them punishment, we can imagine how they feel about sharing information about the factions with the police. In the residents' mind, there is always a chance that the traffic will come back to the "pacified" *favelas*, since many other government and policing programs have ended before. Many people still believe that the program might lose resources and start to regress after the second big international event taking place in Rio in the next few years: the 2016 Olympic

games. In a survey conducted in January 2010, 68% of the 600 UPP *favela* residents interviewed said they fear that the traffic will return (O Globo, 2010).

Government leaders and police officers often reassure the population that the program is here to stay, and a few aspects of the UPP program help diminish *favela* residents' insecurity: (i) the police build permanent bases for UPP officers, to show that they seek a permanent presence in the community; officers work in only one community, so their faces become familiar and they are more likely to get to know residents well and build mutual trust; and the fact that the UPP program is very popular with Rio's population makes it likely to keep earning votes for the politicians who are behind the project. Still, for people who have met violent and corrupt police officers, and have seen policing programs come and go while drug factions continue to control their communities, it might take some more time until they feel fully comfortable with the police presence in their communities. Being as transparent as possible should help officers gain credibility and trust - a community leader recommends the police to explain their motives for setting hours for parties and walking around the community with heavy weapons (Tierney, forthcoming). After so many years of neglect and mutual distrust, the police should expect to put in a lot of effort and gain little at a time.

#### The UPP approach: a focus on prevention

During my interview with the UPP commander, Colonel Robson Rodrigues da Silva, the two words that he repeated most often were learning and prevention. The commander sees the UPP program as a learning process, where the police are learning by doing, building upon successes and fixing mistakes. Their main focus is no longer to tackle the effects of crime, by chasing and arresting criminals, although that remains an important part of their job. Prevention

of crime, by tackling its causes, is seen as just as important in police work, and police officers have set some strategies to work on crime prevention.

The age group that officers believe needs to be invested in the most is children. Little ones are just beginning to form their own ideas and values, and “the hope is that they will be less initially opposed to the police, and thus translate their acceptance to the rest of their family” (Tierney, forthcoming). To that end, officers have been preparing many activities for children, such as soccer lessons and tournaments, other sport activities, planning events such as Easter and cultural days with outings to museums. Close and positive interaction is changing the idea of a role model for *favela* children – previously, when asked what they wanted to be when they grow up, many children would answer *bandido* or *traficante* (a criminal or drug dealer), and now many answer a police officer (Nogueira, interview). With positive role models and more opportunities that are being offered to them, this generation of children is expected to follow a much better path in life than the generation before the UPP program.

Part of the prevention work also includes the use of data and analysis. The UPP commander, who holds a master’s degree in Anthropology, is a firm believer in empirical analysis and is investing in getting more data about UPP communities. Because criminality indicators and data already exist, researchers have been hired to create indicators for the new elements the commander wants measured: the legitimacy and impact of the UPP program, and other data to assist the prevention work (Rodrigues da Silva, interview). Data measuring the effectiveness of the prevention work is much more complicated to develop than what the police has focused on until now, such as number of arrests and seizures of drugs and weapons. The commander wants the analysis to be continuous, so they can find out what is the right number of

officers in each community and which crime prevention strategies are most effective (Rodrigues da Silva, interview).

#### The UPP approach: other contributing factors

The strategy of proximity policing, with officers being friendly, helping bring in services to *favelas* and focusing on prevention and helping children and youth, has been very favorable with Rio's population. The program is popular, especially because it is showing great results in terms of decreasing crime and violence rates (see section III). But besides these favorable and successful policies described in this section, there are other reasons why the program is being successful, and I discuss two: unity among all three levels of government, and a Secretary of Security who is the right man for the job.

In at least the last three decades, the city of Rio de Janeiro has not seen such a good alignment of forces: the mayor, the governor of Rio state and the president of Brazil are all from allied parties. Governor Sérgio Cabral, elected in 2006 and then again in 2010, supported the candidacy of the current mayor of the city of Rio de Janeiro, Eduardo Paes. Paes used to be his Secretary of Sports and Tourism and joined the same party, PMDB, to be his supported mayoral candidate (Folha, 2008). Former president Lula, and current president Dilma, are both from PT, which is PMDB's main ally. This alignment of forces and interests has translated into political and financial support for the UPP program from all levels of government. Their alignment goes as far as agreeing on the fact that without public safety there is no development, because safety helps businesses and services run – when the situation gets chaotic in Rio, hospitals and schools are forced to shut down because safety is not guaranteed (Barroso, interview).

Governor's Cabral decided to make public safety one of his administration's priorities, and his choice for Secretary of Security, back in 2007, probably could not have been better. José

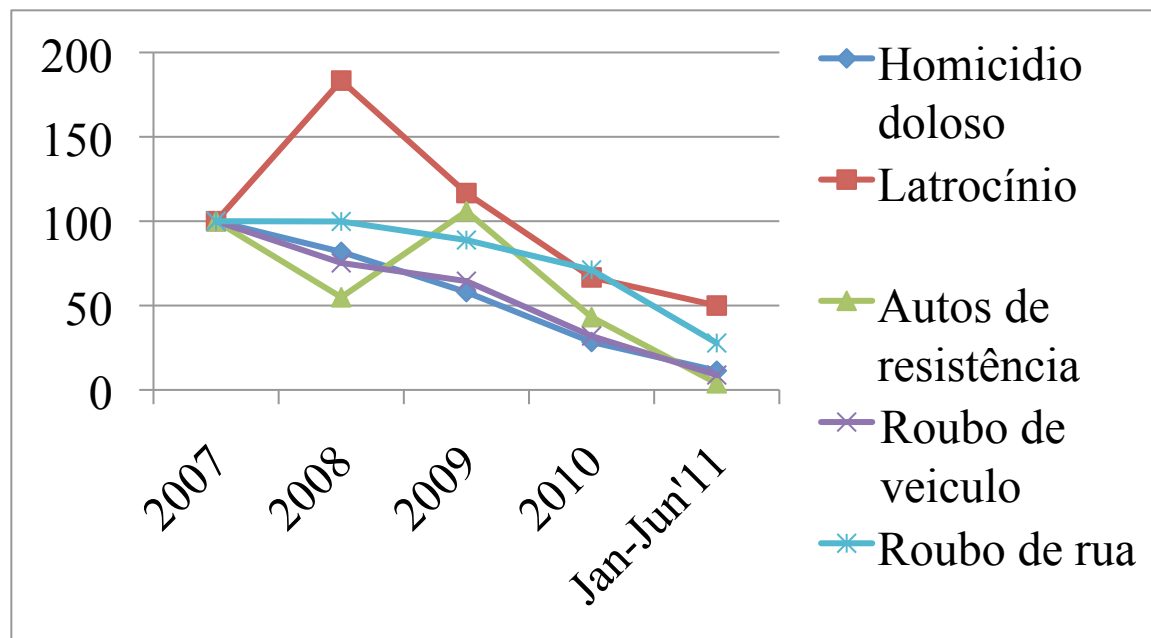
Mariano Beltrame joined the Federal Police Corps in 1981 as a narcotics special agent. He has held multiple posts in the intelligence sector, as well as stints in academia—teaching courses on combating organized crime and intelligence. He is not originally from Rio de Janeiro state, and perhaps someone who had not grown up among Rio politics and hopelessness towards the violence situation was just what Rio needed. Secretary Beltrame has become the face of the UPP program, as he often gives interviews and attends every important event. His presence is a constant in pictures showing the inauguration new UPP bases, important meetings in the communities, and events such as soccer tournaments with *favela* youth. Most importantly, he also patrols UPP communities every week, to see first-hand how things are going (Barroso, interview). A job where you lead efforts to dismantle some of the most powerful criminal groups in the country requires a brave man who is not afraid of making himself constantly seen, and Secretary Beltrame has proven to be the right man. His great work is being recognized through many honors and awards that he has received, including the “Making a Difference” award for Person of the Year for Rio de Janeiro in 2009 and Person of the Year for Brazil in 2010, for which he received a standing ovations (SESEG news, 2010 and O Globo 2, 2011). Having a good leader has certainly benefited the UPP program.

### **III. The results**

The reason for Secretary Beltrame’s many awards and for the popularity of the UPP program is that it has been showing results. Rio’s population wants crime rates to decrease and that is exactly what the UPP program is doing: violence numbers are down across all pacified communities (Tierney, forthcoming). In the first two pacified communities of Santa Marta and Cidade de Deus, homicides fell by 100 and 82 percent, respectively; robberies by 40 and 88 percent; and car theft by 44 and 84 percent (Fundação Getúlio Vargas, 2010). Perceptions of

security have also improved, with 60 percent of those interviewed in these communities saying that security is good or very good (Tierney, forthcoming). The following graph shows the decline in crime rates for AISP 6, the region that has the highest number of UPP bases in its *favelas* (six).

**Figure 4: Select crime rates for AISP 6**



**Source:** Author's analysis with data from Instituto de Segurança Pública (ISP).

The UPPs located in AISP 6 were all installed in 2010, the year when we can see a clear decline in all crime indexes shown. Before 2010, crime rates were steady or even increasing. The number of murders (*homicídio doloso*) for AISP 6 is down from 88 in 2007 to 25 in 2010 and only 10 in the period January-June 2011. The number of robberies followed by death (*latrocínio*) increased from only 6 to 11 in 2008, and was only 4 in 2010. The numbers for vehicle thefts (*roubo de veículos*) and street thefts (*roubos de rua, a transeuntes, no interior de coletivo e de celular*) are also steadily going down. Autos de resistência, which measures the number of deaths

in confrontation with the police, has decreased from 51 in 2007 to only 2 in the period January-June in 2011.

The Instituto de Segurança Pública (ISP) recently started releasing crime data for the 13 UPPs that were installed before the end of 2010. The graph below shows how in all three categories of violent fatalities, car theft and street theft, the numbers have decreased significantly from 2010 to 2011.

**Figure 5: Crime data for UPPs**

**Data for 13 UPPs <sup>1</sup>**

|                                        | <b>1st half of 2010</b> | <b>1st half of 2011</b> |
|----------------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| <b>Violent fatalities <sup>2</sup></b> | <b>21</b>               | <b>6</b>                |
| <b>Car theft</b>                       | <b>65</b>               | <b>14</b>               |
| <b>Street theft <sup>3</sup></b>       | <b>217</b>              | <b>135</b>              |

1: Andaraí, Batam, Borel, Cidade de Deus, Chapéu Mangueira e Babilônia, Dona Marta, Formiga, Macacos, Pavão -Pavãozinho, Providência, Salgueiro, Tabajaras e Turano.

2: Homicides, Robberies followed by death, Opponent deaths during police action, Injury that ended in death.

3: Pedestrian muggings, Cellphone thefts, Muggings in public transportation.

**Source: Author's analysis with data from Instituto de Segurança Pública (ISP).**

The population of Rio is aware of this increased security that UPP bases bring. A survey (O Globo, 2010) conducted in 2010 with 600 residents of 44 Rio *favelas* that do not live in UPP communities showed that 70% of those interviewed are favorable or very favorable of an UPP base being installed in their communities. Another 600 residents from UPP *favelas* were interviewed, and 93% said their community is safe or very safe, while only 5% said it is safe or unsafe. In non-UPP communities, 48% of those interviewed considered their community unsafe.

Residents also feel better about UPP police officers, in comparison with traditional officers, because now they know the police working in their communities (Tierney, forthcoming). Their names and faces are familiar, while before the police would come to shoot at the traffic and get shot at and then leave. This new familiarity also helps the officers, who need to know who lives in the community and who is involved in criminality. A result of residents' increased trust in the police is the spike in crime reports coming from UPP communities. Right when the pacification process starts, with BOPE coming in, calls to *Disque-Denúncia*, a toll line for crime reports based on Crime Stoppers, increase and the main topic is information about drug trafficking. Months later, when the community is considered "pacified," there are fewer calls and they are much more likely to involve public services, interpersonal conflicts, and the establishment of a safe relationship with the police. As women feel safer in their communities and gain more trust in the protection of the police, there also are more reports of domestic violence after the UPP police come in (Uol, 2011).

#### **IV. Challenges and next steps**

While the results of a decrease in violence are promising and the program is considered by most a success, there are challenges that remain in the present and in the future. First, because the government makes a public announcement before the police enter a community to begin the pacification process, most criminals have time to flee. Although they are weaker outside their home base, there is still a chance they could get organized in one of hundreds of non-pacified *favelas* and continue their drug trade, or even carry out counter attacks. In September 2011 in Complexo do Alemão, a community that is in the second stage of the pacification process, a day when residents and the army were having conflicts presented itself as a good opportunity for relocated criminals to launch an attack. Complexo do Alemão is not yet "pacified," it has the

BOPE and the army still present and a huge resident population of over 200,000 people. But if a counter attack happened in Complexo do Alemão once, it can happen again there or somewhere else. The police need to make sure they are squeezing out all of the criminals' power to organize and launch attacks.

Funding is also a problematic issue, especially in the long term. As of now the program has plenty of support from all levels of government and Rio's population, but what if *favela* residents' fear becomes true after Rio hosts the World Cup and the Olympic games? The program is expensive, although it is much cheaper to create proximity policing than to purchase heavy artillery for incursions (Nogueira, interview). An economist from the Brazilian National Development Bank (BNDES) estimates that in order to have permanent UPP forces covering all *favelas* of the city of Rio de Janeiro, the security budget would have to increase by \$595 million reais, or 20% of where it stands currently (Ferreira, 2011). Although after some time fewer offices would be needed, a quick and premature decrease or departure could have tragic consequences. Trafficking groups showed what they are capable of in Complexo do Alemão in September 2011, and in the many terrorist attacks they launched around the city in November 2010. Therefore, funding will have to remain high for some time to ensure a complete pacification process.

There are some challenges with the police as well. As the officers who are helping set up this program, current UPP police face some difficult working conditions, such as long commutes, working in a trailer for the first few months of the pacification process, and not being able to secure their belongings at UPP bases. The issue is complicated since not even the state can determine what pieces of land in *favelas* can be used to build a permanent UPP base, because of the lack of documents in *favela* territory. Services such as water and electricity are not always

easy to get, thus the police are facing some of the many challenges that *favela* residents face too, which is part of the learning and understanding process (Rodrigues da Silva, interview). The UPP commander and the State Department of Public Safety are aware of these working conditions problems and are trying to improve them, but most UPP officers would still rather work in non-UPP communities (Cesec, 2011).

Perhaps the biggest challenge is the pacification of the police. This effort requires strong leadership and a vision of the future because of two big wars: an internal one for police reform, and external one against the parallel power of militias and drug cartels (Ferreira, 2011). While the police have been part of the violence problem in Rio, they are also integral to its resolution, therefore this process must include police reform (Tierney, forthcoming). The reform of Rio's police currently includes not only a humanization of the police's relation with residents, but also a humanization of the police themselves (Tierney, forthcoming). With the change in curriculum and approach being carried out, to transform the training from one focused on the warrior ethos to proximity policing, there is some resistance inside the corporation (Rodrigues da Silva, interview). One UPP captain said he is missing many resources because the force does not have support inside the corporation – this tension between the two police forces might be due to a difference in policing strategies, in uniforms, and in pay scales (with the UPP police being paid slightly more to prevent corruption) (Tierney, forthcoming). However, the UPP commander's ideal is not to have two different police forces, but to see the UPP as a laboratory for reforming the entire police corporation (Rodrigues da Silva, interview). Hence, the UPP police will be a means of pacifying the territories controlled by drug factions, and of pacifying the police themselves.

Besides full reform of the police to become more humanized and focused on proximity policing, other next steps are talked about for communities that are already pacified. Public and social services are trickling in, with ideas for many other projects that can improve the lives of *favela* residents. As mentioned before, these services will also be essential for the UPP police to gain credibility and legitimacy, and will facilitate their work because the police will be able to focus on maintaining peace. Another next step is to have a “shock of order” to formalize businesses and real estates: the city government is putting in place *mutirões de formalização* (formalization task forces) in UPP communities (Ferreira, 2011). These efforts are part of the program *Empresa Bacana* (Cool Company), and are generally supported by a *favela* population that seeks citizenship legitimization.

## **V. Lessons for other countries**

The appropriate policing approach for each context will depend on its own history and characteristics. Rio’s Department of Public Safety and UPP officers are also aware of this reality, as the UPP program itself learned from other international experiences but was adapted to best fit the Rio based on its context and past experiences. Nevertheless, there are lessons from the UPP program that may be helpful to other countries. Many countries have become interested in the UPP program, and have sent delegations to visit Rio and learn more about the program. Delegations from El Salvador, Argentina, Germany and the United States have visited to learn more and share experiences, and students and scholars from many other nationalities have also visited UPP communities. Representatives from other cities in Brazil have also visited the communities and discussed the program with officials, and the Northeastern city of Salvador began its own UPP-based program in 2011.

The Undersecretary for Training and Prevention Programs would say that the biggest lesson is that, as bad as it may look, it is possible to change any scenario (Barroso, interview). The population of Rio has often lost hope that things could get better and the violence problem could be solved. If one policing strategy is not working, it is better not to insist or give up but to try another strategy. Perhaps a good move in Rio was to bring in a Secretary of Security and other officials from out of state, who came in with a fresh perspective and hope.

The UPP commander says that the police situation in Latin America is complicated because these are colonial forces, created to work with a distance from society and often against it. The experience of military dictatorships, with the police carrying out horrible actions, also left the relationship between the police and society scarred (Rodrigues da Silva, interview). Therefore, it is important to work on improving this relationship with an acknowledgement that society has had its reasons to mistrust the police. Proximity policing is a strategy that may work in other contexts that need this new approximation between the police and society, for improving the lives of the population and the work and morale of the police. A horizontal relationship of mutual trust generally works better than a vertical relationship of mistrust and disrespect.

In addition, it is important to keep in mind that the police cannot solve all socio-economic problems by itself, and its work will be most effective when other actors and agencies are helping solve other development problems. Safety is one important pillar for development, but it will not necessarily sustain development by itself. A good policing program will combine efforts with other actors who can attend to the population's other needs.

Finally, a dual public security approach of training specialized forces, such as BOPE, to act during conflict and emergencies, and a larger proximity police force to engage in daily policing work, can work well. Police officers trained for war are not apt for maintaining day-to-

day peace and working respectfully with the population. These officers should only be engaged when a conflict arises, or is expected to arise, and the situation needs to be controlled with force or the threat of its use. Regular policing work should be conducted by officers who are trained to work with and for the population, such as the UPP officers.

In sum, what I see as the main lessons from the program are: 1) Proximity policing with a focus on crime prevention can be more effective and popular, including in places with a history of police mistrust; 2) A policing program will gain much more credibility and legitimacy when combined with other social and public services; and 3) A dual public security approach of specialized forces and proximity policing works and is more humane and effective. The UPP experience is still in the beginning, and some of its main goals, to prevent crime and help the current generation of children stay out of it, will show effect in the years to come. Therefore, it is a good program for other countries to keep an eye on, as it expands and tries to overcome barriers and challenges in a city that has never seen an effective policing program tackle organized criminal groups. Rio's UPP program's successes and failures in creating and installing an effective policing program, which are informing all of Brazil, can also serve as lessons to other countries facing similar challenges of urban and drug-related violence.

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