The impact the Pacifying Police Units (UPPs) have on Rio de Janeiro’s favelas

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Introduction

Policy makers and governments, not only face obstacles while outlining proposals for public security reform, but while implementing them as well, face obstruction from both civil society and the police. Historically, many types of public security reform policy have been tried and implemented in Brazil, ranging from demilitarizing the police; new penal codes; strengthening internal accountability systems, and restructuring police forces; but so far, seemingly the most promising and popular approach has been community oriented policing (COP). Leaving behind the more traditional, militaristic styles of policing that dominate police discourse throughout the region of Latin America, COP is a preventive approach based on the idea that society is the first line of defence against crime and insecurity. It focuses on the causes of crime, which can motivate citizens, to engage in police community partnerships, and it attempts to use crime statistics more effectively.

The focal points of this paper, therefore, is to investigate community oriented policing in Brazil, known as Unidade de Policia Pacificadora (UPP), and to critically assess its strengths and weaknesses in the context of urban landscapes of Rio de Janeiro in the 21st Century. The paper will seek to compare public security reform critiques, as well as make an in depth analysis of what factors determine the success or failures of police reform endeavours, particularly, those in El Salvador and Brazil. Theses critiques are centred around short term initiatives that fail to identify the main problems inherent with police in Latin America; the international community’s requirements for ‘democratic police’; and the states’ inability to alter the culture of ‘non-questioning military hierarchy’.

The central research question of this paper is, to what extent has the Pacifying Police Units (UPPs) reduced violence in Rio de Janeiro’s favelas? The purpose is to discover whether this central hypothesis holds true, UPPs are reducing violence by displacing it instead of eliminating it, and therefore failing to resolve the problem in the long term. If true, this would seem broadly characteristic of Latin American public security reform.

The paper is divided into three chapters; the theoretical framework provides a paradigm of policing in order to understand which police forces meet the ‘democratic criteria’, mainly focusing on police in Latin American countries and some in Western Europe. Causal factors are highlighted in order to explain why public security reforms are undertaken, followed by examples of main obstacles to the process. El Salvador is then proposed as a relevant case study to further illustrate the complexities and paradoxes inherent in public security reform initiatives attempted after the civil war in 1992. El Salvador is considered a useful study for comparison to Brazil, as police reform was implemented in both places and received similar positive international feedback that was not however applauded by the people of El Salvador, who assessed it as having many negative
effects. The second chapter presents a historical context for Brazil’s public security programmes first initiated after the transition from an authoritarian regime to democracy, post 1985.

The final chapter will attempt to deconstruct the UPPs claims of success through the analysis of societal and economical conditions within the *favela* communities. The methodology used in researching this paper is a mix of qualitative and quantitative data, drawn from academic journals, statistical databases and newspaper articles. This work should provide a better understanding of why the UPPs were implemented only in Rio de Janeiro and how they have developed since 2006.
Chapter 1. Theoretical Framework – General concepts on police and police reform

“…clearly democratic policing takes time, for what is at stake is the fundamental relationships between civic society and government, of which the police are a most visible representative and link”

(Marenin, 1998)

Defining the term police can be an intricate process, as it depends upon; the political setting, the type of agencies considered to be ‘police’, the relationship the police force has with the state or civil society, and what methods they use. The term ‘police’ as stated here, is in a 19th Century, European context, which largely applies to the present day notions of what police should be. In this context, we can however assess the emergence of more contemporary police reform, as well as the external and internal factors, which compel its initiation and determine its outcome. In some cases police reform works effectively, and in others not. This chapter will attempt to uncover why attempts at reform, in particular in South American countries, often fails to improve public security. The paper will also critically assess the case of El Salvador in light of its public security reform policies that were implemented.

In order to gain insight into police and public security reform as contextualised concepts, it is first imperative to define these respective terms. To begin with, two dimensions of the police can be usefully distinguished for the purposes of this paper: state civilian and state military. In modern nation states, state civilian police are assigned, along with the judiciary system, to guarantee public and citizen security, responding to the central government or a minister of the interior, and dealing with civilians. State military police answer primarily to the minister of war, are equipped and armed, and are normally dedicated to the defence of national security (Emsley, 2012: 45; Kincaid, 2000: 41).

Early 19th century Europe witnessed a new type of police force known as the Gendarmerie, which had emerged out of the French Revolution and onto the lines of the old maréchaussée. They were proudly military in style, followed Napoleon throughout war in order to police his armies, as well as conquer territories, and their model soon became adopted by other forces. This method of policing was viewed as successful for maintaining order, and in particular, in creating statehood within peasant communities. In certain aspects such as deployment and equipment, the Italian Carabinieri, the French and Prussian Gendarmeries, the Württemberg Landjäger-Korps and others have all copied the style (ibid). This brief episode in history shines some light onto the development of the police, but the essence of what police are and mean was eloquently captured in Michel Foucault’s theory of ‘pastoral power’. He claimed that there was a conceptual divide between state
and civil society, metaphorical to a shepherd and his flock, which in both cases created certain responsibilities that are confirmed by one to the other. This construction, according to Foucault, is the glue that keeps state power together in contemporary democracies (Foucault 2007: 126). There are more conditions that must exist for these roles to be maintained however, such as legitimacy and accountability of the police. Here we first present a paradigm on police that further explains police behaviour depending on who they serve. The different types of relations between police and society, and police and governments are then examined in order to determine under what circumstances police reform emerges and what conditions must be affected in order for a balance to be reached between all relevant actors.

Prado et al.’s paradigm on types of police, posits four different types of police forces based on a spectrum that leans from one side toward ‘democratic policing’, and the other to ‘authoritarian’ (Prado et al. 2012: 261). Firstly the ‘autocratic’ police protect regimes that are usually military or repressive in nature; this is mostly characteristic of the late 1970s and 1980s in Latin American countries where dictatorships and authoritarian governments were in command (ibid 2012: 262). The second type, the ‘criminal’ police, are associated and controlled mostly by drug gangs, seen in some parts of Mexico today where Federal Police work for drug cartels, protecting trafficking routes, rather than enforcing the law. The third is the ‘autarkic’ police who act independently of state governments and instead set their own policies and rules regarding policing (ibid). This is characteristic of the Jamaican Constabulary Force (JCF) who operate according to their own policies. The term ‘democratic’ police has been endowed various social connotations, but for this paper it should be defined as it is under the United Nations Code of Conduct for Law Enforcement that was endorsed in 1979. The publication dealt with both democracy and human rights issues, stating that an essential feature of the police should be that it is accountable to law, rather than to government. This explicitly establishes a norm for creating a democratic police system that will be illustrated below (Bayley, 2006: 22). This type is accountable to the law and respects human rights as well as protecting civil and political rights, and services the needs of citizens. This paradigm simplifies the task of evaluating which police reform policies might be most effective when attempting to affect dysfunctional police forces.

Identified here are five critical factors that can influence the trajectory of police reform. Firstly, governments or states undergoing reconstruction, or a transition from that of a conflict or authoritarianism, will require the police force to mirror this process (Bayley, 2006: 17). The collapse of Communism in Eastern Europe, for example, saw numerous states undergo a transition towards western style free market democracy, and a wider range for economical activity. This was
also the case for multiple Latin American countries in the 1980s and early 1990s, which triggered a number of initiatives for police reform initiatives, aiming to create civil police institutions that were autonomous from the armed forces (Frühling, 2009: 466). Countries worldwide that travelled down this democratic route gave priority to police reform as an important part of the process because the police were such a fundamental part of the lives of citizens, and in the words of Bayley ‘Police shape democratic life by maintaining the boundary conditions in which it takes place’ (Bayley, 2006: 18). New police forces were established in Guatemala, Honduras, Panama, and El Salvador. El Salvador was widely regarded by many international police experts in 2002, as having had the most successful post conflict internal security reforms of the decade, although, in fact it patently failed to produce representative and accountable ‘democratic policing’, which we will address later (Call, 2003: 847).

Accordingly, the dominant template for police reform is now that of democratic policing, as per the aforementioned, United Nations publication. The encouragement of democratic police practices has become a common goal among the international community, whether undertaken by individual countries or under multilateral sponsorship (ibid: 17). Democratic policing is not reserved for democratic countries, and can present itself as a valuable model for any regime to employ and in the process, create new types of police presented earlier in the paradigm (Prado et al., 2012: 258). The method of creating a democratic police force is a complex and difficult task for any newly emerged government - democratic or not - and can give rise to unwanted police forces or militias. This has been the case for several countries involved in the 2011 Arab Spring, for instance Libya’s problems with the jihadist group, the Islamic State, formerly known as ISIS, who have released videos showing their own police force keeping what they define as ‘law’ and ‘order’ in Libya (Staufenberg, 2015). An alternate argument against democratic policing that is widely regarded in Latin America, for example, is that the police are more effective in ensuring public safety, while violating human rights and infringing the rule of law – known as mano dura (Prado et al., 2012: 258). This is a topic of controversy among scholars, citing the case of El Salvador wherein authorities introduced the ‘Iron Fist’ – Mano Dura – policy in 2003 to combat gang related crimes, responsible for 50 per cent of murders and disorder on the streets (Cruz 2003; Hume, 2007).

A third factor that increasingly drives public policy is fear of crime, which in the case of the Americas dominates public discourse. Citizens can feel threatened by violence they see dramatized by the media, or by political campaigners trying to invoke a ‘fear of crime’ in order to receive more support, and which serves, to an extent, to protect the elites’ interest and to demonise youth. In Latin American countries, political campaigning under the banner of managing these crime rates with harsher “get tough” public safety policies is a common practice which generally only renders short term successes, if any (see, e.g., Ungar, 2004). A study by Stuart Hall et al. concerning
mugging in the UK in the 1970s neatly illustrates this point. The authors investigated the implications of muggings for the UK public and how it served to construct a ‘moral panic’. It was argued that it was purposefully used as political strategy to legitimize any future operations, seeking an ‘authoritarian consensus’ (Hall et al., 1978: 217). Notions that there are high levels of violent crime can in reality disrupt potential policies for police reform because long-term initiatives do not on the surface appear to address citizens’ immediate security concerns, thus denying reformers valuable credit for their efforts (Moncada, 2009: 433). Furthermore, this ‘fear’ can have spiralling effects which, when used as a tool, can manipulate civilians into voting for more punitive legal policies, increased prison populations, and allow a more tolerant view of police misconduct (see, e.g., Cruz, 2005).

A series of high profile police crises can act as a catalyst for police reform as in what occurred during the 1990s in Latin America outraging the public, who in turn demanded immediate change. Examples from Brazil include; the 1993 Candelaria massacre in Rio de Janeiro, where a group of eight children were killed by off duty military police officers; the killing of 111 prisoners in the state penitentiary of Carandirú in São Paulo, 1992; and 21 residents in the low-income favela community of Vigário Geral, 1993 (Leeds, 2007: 34). Leeds argues that although most of the reforms did not materialize, and acted mostly as a façade to silence the international community, there was some visible progress made by courageous police officials who were committed to making improvements. She gives an example of the state of Ceará, which implemented numerous innovative reforms in the 1990s in response to crises. According to Barreira (2004), an evaluative study on these show that, although each reform had its constraints, there was a noticeable improvement.

Lastly, public security reform will depend largely on the already established relationship between the police and society, which if are for instance good, can explain why societal consent can suddenly be given to repressive policing (Moncada, 2009: 435). As a public service agency, the police should be accountable to the public, though in Brazil for instance, the police do not view themselves as an agency open to public scrutiny or accountable to the public they should be serving (Leeds, 2007: 23).

European policing models, based on the democratic police type, try to enshrine what they believe are fundamental elements of policing such as public trust, legitimacy and accountability. This can mean the difference between a cooperative society that believes in obeying the law, and another that has a greater tendency to disregard police and outwardly oppose them (Sunshine & Tyler, 2003). For example, when the police in London recently provided newsletters to local neighbourhoods reflecting an awareness of resident concerns, they saw a marked increase in local support (ibid). Similarly in Sweden, when police instigated callbacks to those who had contacted to
report incidents, the police were inclined to see ‘if everything was all right’; it markedly increased public confidence in the police (Elefalk, 2007).

Difficulties that have arisen out of the processes when translating public security reforms into day-to-day practices are evident in three different areas; politics, social expectations, and police force resistance.

The first set of problems derives from the political setting. It is dependant on what type of government holds authority, as to whether public policy materializes and whether reform will be successful or not. Furthermore, it depends on the weakness of the state, in that repressive policies tend to be employed when there is little capacity to develop other strategies to contain crime and violence (see, e.g., Koonings and Kruijt, 2004). In the case of Brazil, it is not uncommon for comprehensive policies to never actually be implemented due to ‘political costs’. These political costs would be to officials who may be involved or associated with scandalous and corrupt affairs (ibid). If politicians do implement reform, they tend to prefer a tough-on-crime proposition that undermines civic associations’ proposals for a progressive human rights policy. As is in the case of Latin American politics, which according to Hinton (2006), consists of constant competition and threats, targeted at the opposition. This can discourage the will of policymakers toward meaningful reform deterred by the risk to their own career.

When public security reform policies are introduced, one of the main hurdles that police must overcome is attempting to change the already preconceived perceptions that society holds about the police and the state. The police, as argued by Neocleous (2000), are the main vehicles used to represent and portray state power, and therefore must improve relations with society so as to maintain trust, confidence and legitimacy in the state through their police work. However, in spaces where police officers struggle to maintain legitimacy as state actors, they are much more likely to employ heavy handed and coercive tactics. This is especially appropriate to understanding less liberal environments and non Western contexts like Brazil, where police officers remain widely mistrusted in part because they maintain the legacy of the country’s authoritarian past, both in reputation and in terms of their political conduct, marginalising them further from civil society (Skogan, 2013: 328). Furthermore, excessive use of force and unlawful killings, by death squads or paramilitary groups, have fostered what can be called a ‘culture of impunity’, as prisons and police precincts are referred to often as ‘schools of criminality’ (see, e.g., Zaluar, 2004; Hoelscher et al., 2014).

A widely reiterated issue facing reform is the resistance from within the police force (Leeds, 2007; Skogan, 2013; Prado et al. 2012). This is illustrated in the path dependency theory, which explains why police officers are likely to meet reforms with hostility. The two main concepts are;
self-reinforcing mechanisms, which demonstrates how social norms affect a behavioural pattern that is very difficult to alter or improve within policing and switching costs, which is what the actors affected by the reform would lose out on if they were to adapt to a new system (Prado et al. 2012: 269). This theory helps to analyse in more detail why police officers do not embrace reform so easily and can also explain why the authoritarian legacy maintains itself so rigidly within the police mind-set.

After the civil war that took place in El Salvador from 1980 – 1992, a Peace Agreement was drawn up as part of the ceasefire, that contained mostly military and police reforms that were to radically change the structure of internal security. One of the requirements was to create a new National Civilian Police (PNC) that would be the sole national-level public security force (Call, 2003: 833). It was agreed that 60 per cent of the PNC would be ‘civilian’ applicants (persons without having served as combatants) and that the remainder would be a mix of ex members of the National Police and ex-guerrillas (ibid). This amalgamation of officers helped to prevent any emerging partisan divisions that could threaten the consolidation of the new leading party, the leftist Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN) (ibid: 838). From the perspective of the ‘international community’, this new police force seemed an exemplary model for all other developing countries transitioning toward democracy. Government negotiator, David Escobar Galindo, referred to the PNC as the ‘mas transcendental’ institution to derive from the reforms, and UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros Ghali spoke of the police force as ‘one of the fundamental elements of the peace accords and perhaps the single component with greatest hopes’ (ibid: 837). The PNC experienced surprisingly few problems from former enemies within the police, and in the first stages of its development, the PNC were able to disable a major criminal group. In fact a December 1993 survey showed that 71 per cent of respondents approved of their police work, whilst 2 per cent saw it as ‘bad’ or ‘very bad’ (ibid).

Call (2003) contends that although El Salvador’s police reforms were hailed as successful by international bodies, the national situation began to sink deep into what he called a ‘post war crime wave’. The United Nations publications on peacekeeping missions in El Salvador¹, stated that crime erupted due to several aspects of the Peace Accords suffering serious delays, such as plans to phase out the National Police and establish the PNC. Factors such as the widespread availability of guns and high rates of unemployment due to demobilisation of the old security forces led to further collective frustration and gang mobilisation. Combined with structural problems and the legacy of authoritarianism, all efforts to build a more peaceful society were promptly undermined by the newly forming climate of fear and violence (see, e.g. Pearce, 1998; Hume, 2007; Call, 2003). The

Central American University’s Public Opinion Institute (IUDOP) conducted surveys between 1993 and 1999 to show that crime was consistently ranked as the single most important problem facing the country. Kidnappings became a common occurrence, as did armed robberies of banks, armoured cars and automobiles (Call, 2003: 840). The emergence of gangs became widespread as it provided a sense of belonging and identity for many young people, which suggested to what extent Salvadoran social and political life in the post-war era, had degenerated (see, e.g., Hume, 2003; Santacruz Giralt and Concha-Eastman, 2001). Between 1996 and 2000 crime continued at high levels, a poll showed that 56 per cent of respondents had ‘little’ or ‘no’ confidence in the PNC as reforms had required that most of the police force possess little experience in policing. According to the World Bank, in 1996 El Salvador’s homicide rate reached 139 per 100,000, becoming the second highest in the world, and still maintains that position today. According to one study conducted by the Igarape Institute, more than 3,830 people have been murdered in El Salvador in the year 2015. The homicide rate is predicted to pass 90 per 100,000 this year, overtaking Honduras as the highest in the world. This makes El Salvador almost 20 times more dangerous than the United States, and 90 times deadlier than the United Kingdom (Watts, 2015).

Proposing public security reform and implementing them is a long and fragile process that faces many obstacles along the way. The effectiveness of police reform largely depends on the strength of the state and on whether the sources of violence are identified accurately as Prado et al. (2012: 264) asserts, failure of institutional reforms occurs so often because policy makers do not consider the unique conditions of each country, its historical legacies, nor the true nature of what may look like relatively common problems. Moreover, each country’s context often “requires a different reform strategy” (ibid, 2012: 265). Wolff (2015: 8) agrees with this when he says the process would benefit more from identifying the underlying logic of that violence, rather than simply copying programmes that have appeared to be successful elsewhere. This was the case for Mano Dura policies, implemented in El Salvador, Honduras and Guatemala as a regional anti-gang strategy (Hume, 2007: 747). In El Salvador, state responses to growing criminality had been to focus on repression of criminals, rather than prevention of crime. These approaches did not solve the problem of crime or violence but did serve to deflect attention from weak governance, encouraging more campaigns to exaggerate ‘fear of crime’.

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3 See IUDOP poll of July-Aug, 1996, Series de Informes 57 p.103  
4 http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/VC.IHR.PSRC.P5
Chapter 2. A Historical Context of Police Reform in Brazil

“A society cannot obtain ‘security’ through police lawlessness, precisely because it is lawless”
(Paul Chevigny in ‘Defining the Role of the Police in Latin America’)

This second chapter will provide a historical context of police reform in Brazil since it’s transition from an authoritarian regime to a democracy that followed post 1985. This period has been chosen since statistics were more reliably gathered from 1980 (Hoelscher et al. 2014: 959) and therefore can better serve to validate points made here. The following sections will be arranged by; firstly an overview of factors of violence and police crises that have contributed to Brazil’s demand for police reform since 1985; what other police reforms have been established in Brazil previous to the UPPs; and lastly why is community policing becoming so popular a method, especially in Rio de Janeiro?

Brazil’s transition to a democracy in the 1980s “paradoxically coincided with historically high levels of violence” (see, e.g., Zaluar, 2004; Hoelscher et al., 2014). In the year 1980, homicide rates tripled in the metropolitan region of Rio de Janeiro, with 6,399 victims of violent death, of which 45% were homicides (Zaluar, 2004: 7). The 1980s witnessed a sharp increase in socioeconomic inequalities, which in turn boosted the trading of small arms and illegal drugs between traffickers in impoverished areas, such as the favelas. This constant crime led to the breakdown of rule of law in the 1990s, and attempts were made by the state to regain control, but violence increased by the 2000s, due to the enlargement of an illegal narcotics market (Hoelscher et al., 2014: 961). A significant turnaround for Brazil was during President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva’s administration period (2003-2010), whose main aim included greater inclusion of the poor (Ruediger, 2013: 283). The administration implemented policies that raised the standard of living of around 30 million Brazilians below the poverty line, which in turn moved a larger part of the population in to the ranks of lower middle class (Neri, 2011). These social and economic advances were seen as a triumph, but also contributed to increasing social demands for public security during the 1980s and 1990s.

During the 2000s, Brazil as stated already, experienced high volumes of violence; in 2010 almost 50,000 people were killed, (Hoelscher et al., 2014: 960). Brazilian social scientists (see, e.g., Cerqueira et al., 2003; Oliveira, 2005; Mello et al., 2010) have tried to pinpoint what caused this huge surge of violence, so widely experienced throughout Brazilian states and cities. Their findings consist of; high levels of poverty and income inequality, poorly governed urbanisation, urban marginality, overgrowing unemployment among youth populations, and a rise in drug trade activity along with organised crime. Another underlying reason for the growth of violence in Brazil was the “weakness of the state and the rise of ungoverned urban spaces” (Hoelscher et al., 2014: 961). This
refers to the *favelas*, also known as shantytowns, where communities tend to be governed by gangs of highly organized drug traffickers who maintain order and provide social services (Arias, 2013: 1). The structure of *favelas* is crucial for a further understanding of how these Brazilian communities turned into such cesspits for the arms trade and illegal narcotics, and why violence has continued over the past three decades. The *favelas* will be analysed further, after the following police reforms in Brazil are presented.

During the end of the twentieth century, various types of public security reform were proposed in attempt to combat and reduce violence, poverty and drug trafficking in Brazil. Past *favela* policing programmes included the *Posto de Policiamento Comunitário, Batalhão Comunitário*, and the more recent *Grupamento de Policiamento em Áreas Especiais* (GPAE) that is analysed later in this chapter (Stahlberg: 7). But these Community-based Policing programmes, and other attempts at changing the traditional police force, were met with fierce resistance (Ferreira, 2011). In the 1990s, numerous organizations were also set up throughout Brazil, in response to highly visible acts of police abuse. Instead rather than state sponsored initiatives, however, these were established by a coalition of civil society actors that included human rights organizations, community associations and private sector actors (Leeds, 2007: 32). Civilians in Rio de Janeiro were appalled by the *Candelária* and *Vigário Geral* massacres in 1993, and responded with the organisation ‘*Viva Rio*’, which still contributes lessons to contemporary police training, conflict mediation and small arms control. The ‘*Afro Reggae Cultural Group*’ was also established in the same period, and was known for creating alternative cultural activities for at-risk youth, such as hip-hop, dance, and circus (*ibid*). São Paulo founded the ‘*Sou da Paz*’ organization in 1999, which promoted disarmament campaigns and supported their police with annual awards for exemplary police practices (*ibid*).

In Rio de Janeiro, a program was installed in 1999, to improve the quality of service to the public (of 5 million residents). This was aimed at the civil police, and was launched by the state Governor Anthony Garotinho, who called it the ‘model police station program’. The programme had great intentions for improving the quality of policing, however, it was only haphazardly implemented which meant it could not fulfil its true potential. Problems came from internal opposition by poorly paid and de motivated police (Husain, 2007). A year later, Garotinho tried tackling corrupt policing with a pilot program called the *Grupamento de Policiamento em Áreas Especiais* (GPAE), based on ceasefire, and originated in Boston. The programme was initially successful as statistics showed homicides officially dropped to zero in its target communities (Arias & Ungar, 2009: 419). However, it did not last long as the GPAE failed to produce any significant alterations to Rio’s police institutions, which the UPPs, on the other hand, managed to do. Furthermore, GPAE lacked clear operational mandate, performance monitoring, or any
accountability mechanisms to secure long term funding which resulted in the project collapsing after Governor Garotinho left office (see, e.g., Morães and Cano, 2007).

A precedent police reform of the UPPs was the National Program for Public Security and Citizenship (PRONASCI) set up in 2007 until 2010, in Brazil, in order to democratize the police. It was essentially designed to represent a change in the model of public security (Ruediger, 2013: 281) under President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva’s second term and launched by the Minister of Justice of Brazil, Tarso Genro. The programme addressed a long-standing list of issues, proposing ninety-six specific projects, and aimed at various aspects of policing, such as; improving the conditions of officer’s lives; gaining sufficient funding for support training programs and better equipment; and to both upgrade managerial practices and police planning. The programme also set up a housing subsidy program for police recognising that they were underpaid. In addition, PRONASCI aimed to restructure the incarceration system and involve more community participation in violence prevention (Skogan, 2013: 320). Ruediger’s article (2013: 281) on the strengths and weaknesses of the program PRONASCI highlight the many flaws of the project, mainly that it presented a shock to the traditional system of policing. Initially viewed as successful, soon PRONASCI disintegrated due to continuous resistance from segments of the bureaucracy. The policy was fundamentally a progressive response to crime and aimed to replace fear with trust between a reformed security apparatus and the public (ibid: 285). According to Ruediger (2013), the most visible successful initiatives were the introduction of non-lethal weapons and community policing, which in turn spawned a number of successful spin-off projects, including the UPPs in Rio de Janeiro. These indirect benefits cannot be ignored as it not only helped foster community policing’s place at the top of public agenda, it also helped the state to win international competitions such as the hosting of the 2014 World Cup and the 2016 Olympics.

Labelled ‘parallel states’ by Hoelscher & Norheim-Martinsen (2014), Rio de Janeiro’s favelas make a popular subject for contemporary film and media. Portrayed as entrenched in urban conflict, in films like ‘City of God’ and ‘Tropa da Elite’ (Hoelscher et al., 2014: 958), these depictions are not in fact characteristic of what life is like in these low-income neighbourhoods (see, e.g., Garmany, 2014). Most favelas on the other hand, are poor and peaceful areas, though residents can experience a very complex and interconnected relationship with state law enforcement (Garmany, 2014: 1242). Major contributors to the violence in Rio de Janeiro are the police, drug factions, and groups commonly referred to as “militias”. Militias are criminal gangs consisting of off-duty or retired government agents who take control of territory by violence and extortion (Oosterbaan et al., 2015: 180). The lack of state presence has indeed caused violence to expand, as organised criminal groups take refuge in some of these neighbourhoods. Once installed, gunmen turn them into a locus for
gangs connected to the drug trade, controlling most aspects of daily activity for the residents. The limited opportunities available to marginalised urban residents can also cause many to pursue drug related economic activities, leading to career insecurity, imprisonment, as well as early and violent deaths (Hoelscher et al., 2014: 963). The Brazilian television media has also cultivated a ‘culture of fear’ amongst the upper and middle classes, with it’s over dramatized imagery of what is believed to be a real and true conveyance of favela life. This has led to increased public support for more repressive action and violent responses by the police (ibid: 962). In light of Brazil’s hosting of the World Cup in 2014, and the Olympics to be held also in Brazil in 2016, more attention has been given to what approaches would be sustainable in combatting violence. The collective psyche in Rio de Janeiro appears to maintain that “barbarians will one day come down from the hills” (ibid: 959).

The complexity of the situation further reveals itself in the fact that Brazil’s federal republic, containing 200 million citizens, has twenty-seven state governments each controlling public security, which causes layers to overlap in government policies between the federal, state and local level (Arias et al., 2009: 417). Scholars are critical the federal system in Brazil, arguing that it does not work to its advantage in regard to public security. When promoting state responsibility, the differences in patterns in violence, and their responses, become confusing and contrasting in spatial and temporal terms (Hoelscher et al. 2014: 960). Policing services, at the state level, consists of two bodies known as the civil police and the military police. The civil police operate in plain clothes and are responsible for conducting criminal investigations and matters regarding prosecution (Skogan, 2013: 320). In contrast, the military police are heavily armed, dress in uniform, and deal with traffic enforcements, riot control and respond to emergency calls (ibid). In Brazil however, these two branches can sometimes overlap in how they deal with crime, which contributes to the general disorder as Soares (2009) claims the Brazilian military police were not designed for public safety.

Brazil’s affliction with violence also engendered significant financial costs to the country; healthcare costs, private insurance costs and material losses are consequences of violent acts by criminals, police and militias. Not only are there these primary issues, but the infamous homicide rates within Brazil have done nothing to encourage levels of saving and investment for the long term (Prado et al., 2012: 254). Community policing became key for change, and police reform that incorporated this policing method led to a profound diminish in economic losses, homicide rates and also drove it to win two major international sport events that are taking place within two years of each other.

It is important to note that until rather recently, the academic community in Brazil was perceived by the police as “a source of subversion” (Leeds, 2007: 27). The relationship between
these two spheres was distant and rather hostile, resulting in neither social scientists nor progressive politicians inclined toward amending policies on public safety or criminal justice. It was just not in their interests as both military and civil police in Brazil were, and to an extent still are, committed to a culture of ‘non-questioning military hierarchy’ (ibid).

With pioneering programs like PRONASCI reconstructing the models for policing, community policing was put at the forefront for change as it has evidently worked to some extent. Community policing had its first formally evaluated experiment in Copacabana in 1994, and was followed by similar cases in other Brazilian cities (see, e.g., Frühling, 2009) – the PRONASCI program emboldened the vision for community policing as it invited more trust into the space that had been otherwise filled with fear and suspicion. With such wide regard for its positive results, community policing was able to prove that where in places these programs were in effect, public confidence in police grew considerably (Frühling, 2009). This can be explained by the simple reasoning that community-oriented policing (COP) focuses on society rather than the state, which in the context of types of policing, causes police to move into the direction of democratic policing, and therefore feel accountable to the law instead of the government, as previously stated (Arias: 410). Despite the failures of other former initiatives which had not done much to help curb violence in the favelas (Oosterbaan et al, 2015; Perlman, 2010), both the GPAE and PRONASCI programme did manage to improve relations between police and favela residents, although temporarily, and caused a reduction in homicides and armed confrontations which can not be underestimated (Wolff, 2015: 5).
Chapter 3. Exploring the case study of the UPPs installed in the favelas of Rio de Janeiro

The final chapter will focus on the case study, the Unidades de Policia Pacificadora (UPP), and seek to evaluate the impact it has had on the favela residents, with regard to the research question; to what extent has the Pacifying Police Units (UPPs) reduced violence in Rio de Janeiro’s favelas? The chapter will be divided into several parts; firstly an introduction on how the programme materialized and what sources of inspiration were used to enforce the various phases of the UPPs; the second section will look at the positive impacts it has had on favela residents; the third part will present different critiques of the UPPs and finally the conclusion will try to answer the pressing question, whether the ‘pacification’ strategy has indeed rebuilt trust between police and communities it serves, or rather, has been more concerned with re-establishing the sovereignty of the state in contested territories.

The United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti, also in Brazil, the MINUSTAH was established in 2004 as a peacekeeping operation to ‘pacify’ large parts of the Haitian capital, Port-au-Prince, which had been under control from local gangs and stimulated high levels of crime and violence (Hoelscher et al., 2014: 959). Based on this operation, along with other public security initiatives from previous, Governor Sergio Cabral spearheaded the development of the UPPs in Rio de Janeiro during his term in office (2006-2014). This policy shift was significant in its turn around approach, founded on trying to create social and political changes in the city (Wolff, 2015: 4). The UPP model, largely based on the MINUSTAH due to its success in Haiti, adopted certain characteristics of the Brazilian peacekeeping troops, such as physical appearances, “similar army fatigues and blue caps”, and by adopting the term ‘peacekeeping’ to identify UPP police activity within the city’s pacified favelas (Hoelscher, 2014: 964).

The aims of the UPPs have been twofold: to firstly restore state control within favelas, thereby increasing security, and also to “return them” to the residents (Oosterbaan et al., 2015: 181). The second part was to integrate favela residents into the formal city by improving public, social and economic opportunities that would further help to deconstruct the social stigma that has clung to favelas and their residents throughout history. This second part will not be a focus for this paper, as it was a component of another programme called the ‘UPP Social’, which was related to the UPPs but set up independently to it. Like many police reform strategies, the UPP program was born out of an immediate political crisis; a kidnapping and torture involving a news reporter and his team in the favela of Batam (Wolff, 2015: 5). After the incident, the Cabral administration offered the programme and received glowing public support, along with enough political capital to expand the
program further. In addition, the hosting of international mega events brought in even more stakeholders, which helped financially to launch the programme on a large scale. The government guaranteed that at least 40 UPPs would be built during Cabral’s second term, as well as thousands of newly trained police officers to be assigned to their newly designed positions. Within two hours of having launched it’s first military operation in Complexo do Alemão – the city’s largest favela and most notoriously known for carrying out drug trade procedures – it was conquered. It conveyed a powerful message to the rest of Brazil, that any “future resistance would be futile” (Hoelscher et al., 2014: 967).

The UPP programme operates in four different stages. Formed by a special police force, the Batalhão de Operações de Policiais Especiais (BOPE) primarily invades the target favela, in order to remove any armed criminals or traffickers. In the second phase, the police forces (both military and civil police) eliminate any potential criminals, arresting them, and keeping the areas secure so that the third stage can be implemented; that being the installation of the community police. The main goal of the third phase is to get the favela in to a state of ‘pacification’, where there is reduced firearms, security is established, and the “UPP Social” can then enter the arena for the purpose of improving the quality of life of residents, and lastly for integrating residents into general civil society (see, e.g., Alves & Evanson, 2011; Governo do Rio de Janeiro, Secretaria de Segurança, 2013, Oosterbaan & Wijk, 2015). To date, there are now a total of 38 UPPs, occupying 264 favelas in Rio de Janeiro, and employing some 9,543 police officers.5

Some critics have stated that this multi stage assault appears overtly brutal and physically harsh while arriving at a peaceful end. Challenging this notion is Rupert Smith’s ‘utility of force’ concept, which states that a precondition for engaging with the favela resident community is firstly regaining territory control (Hoelscher et al., 2014: 966). This point of excessive force has sustained across several articles on the subject and has arguably been a main critique of this forceful ‘invasion’ felt by many ordinary residents with families, however, the government has tried to counter this problem by publicly announcing the dates and times that they would be entering and occupying the favelas. This is meant to give everyone warning of the overwhelming force that would be assembled, and also to give traffickers time to escape (Wolff, 2015: 6).

In terms of the UPP’s own aims, it has to an extent, proven that it has been successful in accomplishing its first part; in regaining territorial control and increasing security. Examples of this can be most explicit in rates of homicides, which have dropped by 75% on average in and around UPP communities (Wolff, 2015: 6). Surveys also indicate that a large proportion of residents in

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pacified favelas feel significantly safer (ibid). This suggests that the more “friendly” policing approach has opened up dialogue between residents and police, which represents a significant break from traditional policing methods in Rio de Janeiro, characterised usually by militarised confrontation (see, e.g. Wolff, 2015; Garmany, 2014). According to Fundação Getúlio Vargas (2009), 90% of respondents hoped that the UPPs would continue indefinitely in their communities, and 95% supported the expansion of UPPs into other favelas. Residents no longer anticipate stray bullets hurting them or their families, as security has increased and there are less armed territorial battles between police and armed criminals (Oosterbaan & Wijk, 2015: 183).

The UPPs have been successful, when compared with other community oriented policing programmes, as the project has been able to avoid such internal resistance that contributed to the collapse of previous projects. Prado et al., have claimed that the UPPs used a strategy known as ‘institutional bypass’ which allowed it to reform the police insidiously. Government officials kept the traditional institution – the old police force – but also created a parallel institution that performed exactly the same function under a different organizational structure (2012: 275). This gave birth to a new police force without directly aggravating the other police forces. Furthermore, the UPPs managed to maintain flexibility in their programme, so that it was able to adapt to different circumstances, proving to be a key element in its survival (Stahlberg: 29). Lastly, the institutional design of the UPPs has decided the term ‘proximity policing’ be utilized instead of ‘community policing’. This is in order to create dynamics between police officers and civilians without creating institutional mechanisms of control, by the community over the police force, which is often characteristic of community policing (Prado et al., 2012: 276).

Not only has the presence of the UPP reduced incidences of armed confrontation, but it has also allowed for new businesses to flourish within these highly marginalised geographical areas. This is evident in the growth of favela tourism, the legalisation of a range of goods and services, and the elimination of barriers to political campaigning (Wolff, 2015: 6). Furthermore, due to more economic opportunities, housing and rental prices have increased in favelas. These have risen on average by 6.8%, diminishing the gap between the poorer neighbourhoods and the formal city (ibid). Alongside the rise in businesses and property prices in favelas, the social impact has also been favourable. The movement of people and capital has become less restricted due to the absence of drug gangs and this has led to a lessening on the otherwise strained relationships between the morro and asfalto. According to one survey, 72% of respondents felt more respected by outsiders due to the UPPs (ibid: 7). Access to education and healthcare has become more expanded and more investment has gone in to building new schools and health care centres, with doctors being able to enter pacified favelas more easily. Residents feel that their children have more freedom given that there is less danger for them to play outside; the level of education is moving up and there are fewer
visible drug traffickers to coerce the youth into a life of crime (see, e.g., WB, 2012; Oosterbaan & Wijk, 2015). Though there are criticisms that there are not enough doctors available and waiting times take too long; some municipal investments like sewage systems, cable cars, garbage collection and lighting have already bettered the conditions residents have to deal with on a daily basis.

There are a number of criticisms that have been levelled at the UPPs, both as individuals and as a collective. Although there has been progress in some areas, and this can be argued as a great incentive for more changes in the future, there are still a lot of areas that lack substantial support. One of the main recurring problems is that of distrust between police and favela residents. It is an almost impossible task to redeem the police forces of all corruption, and although the UPPs programme sought to diminish this by only using fresh recruits straight out of the police academy, there have already been reports filed against incidents of corrupt behaviour (Oosterbaan & Wijk, 2015: 186). For relations to ease between these two players there needs to be commitment from all sides, including the government who is administering the programme. The government claims that UPPs were to be mostly installed in ‘high-risk’ favelas, and that demarcation has become a subject of debate since current operations only exist in ‘high-value’ favelas near the wealthier southern zones of Rio de Janeiro, and where the international sporting events will be taking place (ibid).

Misse (2011) has labelled it as a ‘safety corridor’ that connects Rio’s Galeão International Airport and the Olympic City, evidently showing that the government is in fact protecting areas of its own interest. The geographical factor has a dominant role as the UPPs appear to be deployed to favour private sector investment purposes rather than concerning themselves with the welfare of favela residents (Hoelscher et al., 2014: 965). Taking this into consideration, it is therefore unlikely that the rest of the city’s favelas (estimated around 600 to 700) will have UPPs set up in the near future (see, e.g., Zaluar and Conceição, 2013), but most probably will continue to experience more violence, since armed criminals have been displaced to these areas (see, e.g., Roller, 2012).

Another highly feasible consequence of the UPPs is that they now act as the de facto government within these favelas, operating as the main source through which to link locals with goods and service provided by the state (Rodrigues et al., 2012). The UPPs furthermore, consist of a military regime that is integral to police culture, institutions and training within Brazil, as explored in Chapter 1. This sets up a challenge for the UPP officers who have already assumed the role of arbiters of economic and social organisation in favelas. For example, a community member was ordered to negotiate directly with the local UPP commander about his initiative for starting up a paintball business (Wolff, 2015: 8). Their range of authoritative activities also exceed those of regular police, and some residents hold the opinion that the UPPs are now the “new boss”, instead
of replacing the pre-existing patronage system, they have simply traded places with the former drug barons (see, e.g., Cano, 2012; Oosterbaan & Wijk, 2015: 186).

The legitimacy of the project has come under dispute as several incidents have sparked widespread protest and a slow return of violence has started to undermine the efficiency of the programme. *Complexo do Alemão* has had a tense year in 2015, where 48 officers were wounded or killed. In *Rocinha*, UPP officers were accused of having tortured and killed a resident in 2013 which led to mass protesting (Wolff, 2015: 7). Although there has been an overall decrease in homicides where pacification has taken place, there has been an increase in ‘non-lethal crimes’ (Oosterbaan & Wijk, 2015: 183). These can be categorised as “grievous bodily harm, domestic violence, rape, and theft”, this also includes missing people (*ibid*), all of which have increased according to a study conducted by Cano (2012). Testimonies by *favela* residents show that some do not believe these police are capable of dealing with them, one respondent from the *Santa Marta favela* claimed that “four children were raped, the UPP officers did nothing”, whilst another stated that “committing robberies is easy now since nobody reports them” (Oosterbaan & Wijk, 2015: 184). This suggests two conflicting arguments; one that there are higher crime levels since the presence of UPPs; and two, that residents are more willing to report crimes because of their presence in their communities (*ibid*).

A further criticism of the UPPs is that there are not enough to cover the whole of Rio de Janeiro. There is a widely shared sense of fear that the drug traffickers will return due to the visible cracks appearing in the programme. Even though many drug barons have been relocated, they are still able to intimidate residents through covert actions such as graffiti or “visits” (Koenders & Koonings, 2012). This fear is further reinforced by police officers’ exercising discretion in their policing work, and in particular through the prohibition of the notorious *baile funk* parties, which has become a serious issue for Rio’s *favela* youths (Larkin, 2015; Wolff, 2015). These are being replaced with parties that have a richer clientele, implying that the price to get in is high and those that live there would not be able to afford to go to it. Arguably a form of cultural appropriation since the *favela* culture is being used without the inclusion of those credible for creating it.

Lastly, although seen in a positive light by some, the diminishing of restrictions on goods and services have meant that many *favela* residents who are entrepreneurs are being forced to compete with outside capital and bureaucratic legal hurdles which had previously been absent, given that absence of state regulation and taxation (Wolff, 2015: 6). Along the same thread, the rising costs of public services may have improved the quality of living, but only to those who can afford it. For many, they are being evicted or see the increased rents as a burden that is pushing to move them out of the *favelas* into more marginalised parts of the city, and further away from their work. This has been labelled as a *remoção branca* (Oosterbaan & Wijk, 2015: 190).
Conclusion

The unjust and dysfunctional police and judiciary in Brazil have played an important role in this crisis of morality, and allowed criminals to become entrenched within the country (Zaluar, 2004: 13). Obstacles facing police reform dealt with in the first half of the paper, can be applied to Brazil’s historical police reform initiatives. The changing nature of governments and officials who inaugurate new and innovative policies, affect their implementation and outcome, as seen in both the GPAE and PRONASCI. When Governor Garotinho and President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva left office, they took with them the legitimacy of many such operations they had hoped to form part of a more accountable and transparent police force. Meanwhile, political campaigns in Brazil have continued to engineer a sense of ‘fear’, constructing a binary of the ‘us’ and the ‘them’ or the ‘other’. The ‘others’ are identified as those who reside in the favela communities and impoverished urban areas, this perception serves to further marginalise their communities, whilst also affording these politicians support to engage in more repressive policing operations. This has been highlighted in chapter 2 also pointing to media culture and films which portray favela life as dangerous and more relevantly, violent. The authoritarian legacy of the military police who govern the streets of the favelas has, furthermore, served only to encourage more violent behaviour and distrust. Military and civilian entities tend to overlap in dealing with crime and violence and therefore becoming less distinguishable thus making the discretionary use of violence seem more legitimate in police work. It is clear that the police mentality needs to be restructured if policy makers are to implement such ambitious programmes as the PRONASCI which mainly failed because of the continuous resistance it faced by police and state officials.

If policymakers fail to identify militaristic hierarchies in police forces then violence will remain part of police culture. In the case study of the UPPs, the principal agent theory helped to determine who the preceding principle group was – that being criminal groups – and by eliminating those networking groups helped to re establish an efficient police force. Using new recruits, financial incentives, and different training in the UPPs, these new units were able to occupy areas that had formerly been dominated by drug traffickers. However, the strategy imposed by the government to publicly announce an occupation before the BOPE operates in the first stage of ‘pacification’ has been criticized because it allows criminals to escape and invade other communities (Stahlberg: 9; Prado et al., 2012: 268).

The transition Brazil experienced in to democracy also called for the establishment of a new democratic police force. Since 1985 there have been numerous projects in response to increasing crime and violence that have included community oriented policing and civil rights’ organization groups. The UPPs were a game changer due to their effectiveness, receiving little internal or external resistance, and having demonstrated ideals that fit more closely with the criteria of a
‘democratic police’ force. But despite the positive feedback from the research on police operations on community policing and national statistics that show that Brazil is a much safer place than it was five years ago, the UPPs military approaches are still under scrutiny as to whether they can contain these larger issues. Without reform of other state institutions such as the judiciary system, this UPP initiative may only curb violence temporarily, as illustrated in a previous example; civilians are anticipating the return of drug traffickers. More research needs to be conducted on institutional life, the internal subculture of different police forces and the ways in which police tactics are implemented in different environments. Furthermore, the improvements the UPPs have made have come at a price, with increasing housing prices and costs for public services; displacement of violence and of residents has taken place. The rise of non lethal crimes and violence again increasing in pacified favelas demonstrate that the UPPs have to an extent contained the violence, but for how long, we do not know for sure.
Map 1. City of Rio de Janeiro and *favelas* with UPPs as of March 2012, in order of implementation. Source: Instituto Pereira Passos

1. Santa Marta
2. Cidade de Deus
3. Batan
4. Chapéa Mangueira/ Babilônia
5. Pavão-Pavãozinho/ Cantagalo
6. Tabajáras/ Cabritos
7. Providência
8. Borel
9. Formiga
10. Andaraí
11. Salguiero
12. Turano
13. Marcarcos
14. São João
15. Fallet-Fogueteiros/ Coroa
16. Escondidinho/ Prazeres
17. São Carlos
18. Mangueira
19. Vidigal
20. Rocinha
21. Complexo do Alemão
22. Complexo da Penha
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