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CRIMINAL AUTHORITIES AND THE STATE:
GANGS, ORGANIZED CRIME, AND POLICE IN BRAZIL

BY

MICHAEL JEROME WOLFF

Bachelor of University Studies, University of New Mexico, 2002
M.A., Political Science, University of New Mexico, 2009

DISSERTATION

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of

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DEDICATION

To André

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Abstract

Drug gangs and organized criminal groups rarely evolve into structured authorities governing their resident communities. Where this occurs, however, they may effectively replace the state in its most basic functions, and consequently exclude subject populations from the rights and protections supposedly guaranteed by the state. Employing qualitative research methods, this study compares criminal development and state public security policies in Rio de Janeiro and Recife, Brazil. The research is primarily concerned with the development of criminal authority structures, and asks when, where, why, and how they develop. Arguing that the extant literature on organized crime fails to adequately explain this phenomenon—particularly in the case of drug trafficking gangs—I draw from the civil wars literature to theoretically explain the rise of non-state authority structures. The parallels are compelling. In Rio de Janeiro, concentrated illicit wealth created by the cocaine boom in the 1980s attracted an international arms market that helped drug gangs dominate larger territories (i.e. opportunities), while indiscriminate and lethally violent state repression pushed non-criminal publics into a de facto alliance with drug traffickers (i.e. grievance). In this context gangs—and later,

militias—developed clear and structured governing functions. Other factors, such as inhibiting geography, also contributed to this authoritative duality. In Recife, by contrast, drug gangs have remained small, disorganized, and unengaged in local political structures. A smaller drug market, flat and vehicle-accessible slums, and a comparatively much less violent police force help to explain the failure of gangs and other criminal groups to develop broader authoritative functions.

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Preface

In June of 2008 it was still easy to find a place to live in Rio de Janeiro. That was before the Olympic Committee voted to select Rio to host the 2016 Summer Games, and still long before people began speaking of the 2014 World Cup, much of which would also take place there. Having received a small scholarship to enroll in an intensive Portuguese program, I arrived a month early without a place to live, and very little money to spend on finding one. But after just two nights at an international hostel, my constant hassling of locals landed me a room fitted with a desk and a mattress for 250 dollars a month near the top of the bohemian Santa Teresa neighborhood. I was to share an apartment that overlooked downtown Rio and the Bahia de Guanabara with two women, a Hungarian documentary maker and an Afro-Brazilian actress. I had yet to meet them when I moved in, which consisted of carrying a backpack up three flights of stairs. They had left me a key and a welcome note taped to the door.

It was perhaps eight o'clock that same evening when the weeknight calm outside my window was shattered by an eruption of rifle and machine gun fire. The clamor was tremendous. I figured that the firing was coming from less than a hundred yards away, and so in all my brilliance I rushed to the kitchen window to catch a glimpse of the kind of urban warfare I had until then only read about or seen in movies. Just as I peered out, a burst of machine gun fire sent five bright red tracers hissing across the sky above me. The sound of metal splitting the air at ballistic speed terrified me far more than the

combustion of gun powder, and I dropped immediately to the floor. I did not look up

again until some fifteen minutes later, after all the firing had ceased. When at last I did, I

saw the world exactly as it had been before the firefight. The lights in neighboring

homes illuminated people cooking, eating, and watching TV, and out in the streets the

dark calm returned almost completely, all but for the far-off barking of a dog and the

whining of an approaching taxi cab tumbling over cobblestones. There were no screams

or wailing sirens of police cars. It was if nothing happened at all. A minute later I heard

laughing in the street below. I was about to meet my roommates.

For the next several weeks I mused over the idea of visiting a *favela*, one of those

sprawling slums spotting the mountainous landscape of Rio de Janeiro. That is where all

the commotion had come from that first night in my new apartment. Favelas had a

mysterious allure to them. They seemed like looming and impenetrable fortresses of

poverty and violence, and I was determined to see what life was like on the inside. But

even though a fifth of the city's inhabitants lived in such communities, I strained to find

someone to take me in for a visit. I was afraid to go alone, and most of the middle class

Brazilians I met categorically refused to entertain the idea, convinced that it would mean

certain torture or death.   By the end of the month, however, I had persuaded my new

friend, Renata, to come with me to the favela of Santa Marta in the South Zone

neighborhood of Botafogo. I did this by showing her a back page newspaper story about

a tramcar that had just been inaugurated there, which according to the article, was meant

for *tourists* as well as residents. It must be safe, I thought.

Renata, who had grown up in a favela before marrying into the middle class,

began to panic as we approached the base of Santa Marta. She told me that if anybody

recognized her from her old neighborhood, which was controlled by a rival gang, they would surely kill her. She had seen that happen before. Refusing to step another foot forward, she sat down at a street side *birosca*[1] to drink a beer and calm her nerves. Meanwhile, I watched dozens of very normal looking people walking into and out of Santa Marta, and thus convinced myself that all this "divided city" talk was just paranoia. So I told Renata to wait for me, and I would be back in a short while. Then I went to stand in the long line of grocery bag toting people waiting to board the tramcar.

Cariocas (people from Rio de Janeiro) are typically very talkative, but everyone in the tramcar line was mysteriously silent that day, and apparently immune to my attempts to charm them. I tried to break the ice with a joke: "Hey, you're acting like I'm the first gringo to ride this thing!" A woman responded unsmilingly, "you are." Then I inquired, somewhat nervously, if the tram was not also meant for tourists, as the news article had stated. They laughed, finally.

A few minutes later I was packed into the tramcar with some fifteen other people, watching the beautiful South Zone of Rio de Janeiro open up below me as the tramcar slowly ascended the steep mountainside to the top of Santa Marta. I got off at the last station without any specific plan, so I just leaned on a nearby railing and stared off into the distance. The Atlantic Ocean was fading into a dark blue. That's when André, the smiley-faced tram operator, seemed to suddenly notice me. He struck up a most animated conversation, gleefully telling me the story of how Michael Jackson had once filmed a music video here in Santa Marta, and that one day he planned to take his wife and kids to Disney World. His warm and cheerful demeanor calmed my nerves, which

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[1] Small, usually mobile, vending booth.

had been tense throughout the tram ride and for some time prior. Now relaxed, I was

able to slow my breath and embrace the beauty before me. The air felt cleaner and cooler

up there. Night was falling, and the lights of the city below and the favela around me had

begun to glisten majestically. Everyone who had been afraid of this was wrong, I thought.

I praised my good wit. My righteousness was euphoric.

"So who are you here to see?" André asked.

"No one," I smiled. "I just wanted to visit a favela."

In an instant, André's cheerful smile left him, and an immediate and heavy

tension returned. The sky seemed to go black and the air suddenly frigid. André asked

me again if I was here to meet someone, and again I told him no. He insisted that I must

know *someone*, for otherwise why in the world would I be here? No, no one, is there a

problem? His face crumpled with concern. Dropping his voice to a whisper, he leaned in

close to me and said, "you *have* to know someone here. The guys [drug traffickers] are

crazy. It's not safe. You need a *friend*, someone *from* here." He looked as scared as I

suddenly felt.

I was at a complete loss as to what to do. Images of red-eyed men with guns

dragging me up the mountain to a burned-out oil drum and torturing me to death raced

through my mind. I saw that in a movie about Rio de Janeiro once. I thought about

running. I thought about asking André for a blanket to hide my identity in order to sneak

away. Maybe that would save me. Instead, I did the simplest thing. I asked André if *he*

would be my friend. He was *from* Santa Marta, after all.

A long and awkward pause hung between us. And then:

"AMIGOOOO!!!" André shouted out and embraced me with a tender force.

Just as suddenly as the tension and fear had come, it again vanished. I couldn't have felt safer, or more thrilled to be where I was. And I was terribly excited to see what I was about to see. That is because André was a good friend of the local drug traffickers, and they were the people I was most curious to meet. Now that he and I were friends, I asked him if this was possible. He said of course. In fact, since he had just finished his last run of the tramcar for the day, he could take me this very minute. I said okay, and moments later we were descending the steep labyrinth of homes by foot on our way to the favela's main *boca de fumo*.[2]

Funk music blared from loud speakers in the main plaza of Santa Marta, which was adjacent to the *boca*. As we approached it, André pointed out what looked like a writhing pile of emaciated zombies at the entrance of a community center. "That's *crackolandia*,"[3] he said. "They're lost souls." I estimated there were some thirty of them lying about. Moments later we were standing alone in the dead center of the plaza. But we were not alone for long. A column of five or six young men carrying assault rifles and backpacks with hand grenades hanging from the shoulder straps quickly filed into the plaza to greet us. They called out to André to ask what was going on. Who was *I*? That's what they wanted to know. André, cheerful as can be, exclaimed that I was his really good friend from the United States, and that I had come all the way from America to see how the *tráfico* (drug trafficking) works here in Brazil. "Welcome," they said, and offered a puff of the joint they were passing around, which I declined out of both habit and sheer terror.

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[2] Colloquial term for point of sale of drugs. There were several in Santa Marta in 2008.
[3] Colloquial term for areas where crack addicts wallow.

Despite my fear, however, I did make comment of their fantastic weaponry, which inspired them to show off more of their mobile arsenal. Out of their backpacks suddenly came more hand grenades, extra ammunition clips, and myriad handguns, one of which looked far too big to hold in one hand. Its owner removed the clip and passed the unloaded gun to me so that I might admire it up close. I declined, afraid they would notice me shaking. Then the magnificent display was interrupted by an incoming radio call. A lookout at the base of the favela had spotted an "unknown" walking into the favela. The column of armed youth apologized for their hurry, and then rushed off to verify the report.

André then guided me through a dark and narrow alley, up some stairs, and into a smoky room full of young men and boys who were sitting around a table, passing joints and wrapping up light and dark colored drugs into small plastic bags. A most random collection of handguns, Uzis, and shotguns were scattered about the table or leaning against the walls. André exclaimed excitedly again that I was his good friend from the United States, but aside from a few nods, no one seemed to notice this time. I suddenly felt like a voyeur, staring into a world of sin and unable to escape casting judgment on those trapped inside of it. This feeling, in turn, relit my spent nerves, and so I told André I was about ready to leave. He must have seen the look on my face. We left right away.

Back down at the base of Santa Marta, I introduced André to Renata, who had made some drinking buddies at the street side *birosca*. The two got along famously, and Renata thanked André profusely for having taken care of her gringo friend. The gringos *are* a crazy bunch, they agreed. After a round of goodbye hugs, Renata and I walked off towards the nearest metro station, and I excitedly recounted my adventures to her. Then,

about two blocks away from the entrance to Santa Marta, I noticed something strange. It was the Second Battalion headquarters of Rio's Military Police.

<center>*****</center>

About six months after I met André, in December of 2008, Santa Marta became the first of what would amount to nearly forty favela communities or complexes to be targeted by Governor Sergio Cabral's Pacifying Police program. Hundreds of police officers, supported by armored vehicles and helicopter gunships, rushed into the community of some 10,000 people, routing whatever drug traffickers had not already fled. Not a single shot was fired. Unlike previous interventions, this time the police were there to stay. They converted an abandoned daycare center[4] at the top of the favela into a permanent base for the new Pacifying Police Unit (UPP), and have since been conducting daily and nightly walking patrols for the first time in the favela's history. A municipal program called *UPP Social* then began promoting economic development projects and fostering closer relations between police and community leaders. Life in the favela of Santa Marta was about to change.

In the beginning, tensions between the police and residents were high, and the two groups rarely fraternized. After a year or so, however, many residents had begun to warm up to the cops, and vice versa. It started with the older residents and young children. Then some of the younger adults began opening up, too. A number of local women even began dating the UPP officers who patrolled their neighborhood, something

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[4] It had been abandoned due to frequent shootouts.

unthinkable a year earlier. For a long time, André—who by now had become my friend

in a very real sense—feared being seen doing so much as saying hello to a police officer.

In the past, that would have been tantamount to treason, and could be punished

accordingly. Ever so slowly, however, he began to believe the unbelievable: that the

UPP was actually going to stick around, and the old drug bosses were not going to come

back. If the ousted *dono do morro*,[5] (who they call "The Mexican" for his enormous

mustache) ever did return, André was certain he would be killed for collaborating with

the police. But as time passed, and the Mexican sat impotently in prison, André

eventually ventured to risk an alliance with the new boss. Her name was Pricilla, and she

was the local UPP commander.[6]

Over the next four years I observed the gradual transformation of life in Santa

Marta, and I remained close to André throughout. Towards the end of 2011, with the

Pacification program in full gear and firmly established in most of Rio's South Zone

favelas, André became increasingly open about his growing "friendship" with the UPP

police, and increasingly hostile towards the remaining micro-level drug traffickers who

occasionally made threats against him and his family. Working closely with Captain

Pricilla, he obtained permission to convert what had been an informal trash dump into a

commercial paintball field. Within a few months, his new business had inspired

numerous news stories, which had in turn attracted thousands of tourists and, ironically,

police officers from all over the city, all of whom were excited to get a virtual experience

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[5] Colloquial term for favela drug boss.
[6] (*Now*) Major Pricilla Azevedo was later selected to receive the International Women of Courage Award in 2012, which was presented personally to her by Michelle Obama and Hillary Clinton.

of the favela warfare that had become one of the most romanticized hallmarks of Rio de Janeiro over the past three decades.

By the time I last visited André in Santa Marta in March of 2012, the community seemed to have been completely transformed. Although the physical space had remained virtually unchanged, I strained to believe that it was the same place in which I had once trembled in fear. Instead of young men with assault rifles, columns of foreign tourists of all ages marched up the maze of stairwells to a spacious plaza adorned with a huge bronze statue of Michael Jackson. Middle class college students employed by various research institutes walked from house to house, conducting surveys about energy consumption or quality of life issues. *Crackolandia* was long gone, and the old community center now housed constant social events. New businesses had opened. And the craziest thing of all: police officers and residents mingled (well, at least some of them). André was happy to admit it.

<center>*****</center>

The story of André is certainly not meant to glorify the UPPs, and there is more than plenty of cause to criticize or doubt the long-term potential of Governor Cabral's Pacification program. What I hope to demonstrate is, rather, that what has been most exceptional and most important to understanding criminal violence in Rio de Janeiro is its logic of territorial control. Once drug gangs had consolidated territorial control and had begun to develop elaborate and deep reaching authority structures in the city's favelas as far back as the 1980s, nothing short of the state's re-taking physical control of that

territory could have effectively addressed criminal violence. This is because effective

policing is highly dependent on the cooperation of civilian populations, which is

impossible where an opposing armed force exercises its own permanent control of

territory. The risk of *collaboration* is far too great under such circumstances. In this

sense, the UPP's strategy to saturate favela communities with police is very much an

appropriate one.

The main problem, of course, is the cost. In Rio's UPP communities, for example,

the ratio of police officers to residents ranges from about four to nearly forty times the

average for industrialized nations (see Cano 2012). At this writing, Governor Cabral is

near to reaching his promised goal of inaugurating forty UPPs. This, however, still

represents only seven percent of Rio's total favela population, the rest of which continues

to live under the authoritarian tutelage of drug gangs or police-based mafias (Zaluar and

Barcellos 2013). These are clearly serious issues that policy makers in Brazil will have to

address in order to deal with the ongoing crisis of public security that in recent decades

has become one most salient political issues in the nation's history.

The good news is that Rio de Janeiro is a very exceptional case. In 2009, when I

first stepped foot in the northeastern seaboard city of Recife, already keen on conducting

comparative research in what was then Brazil's most murderous city, everything seemed

dramatically foreign once again. It was nothing like Rio. Although, similarly, I saw

poverty, inequality, guns, drugs, and violence, I was unable to identify any of the same

structures of criminal violence or informal authority that were so elemental to navigating

political and social structures in Rio de Janeiro. There were no drawn-out firefights with

machine guns and hand grenades, no helicopter gunships or armored cars, no drug bosses

or kingpins, and although there was still sharp contrast between slum and formal neighborhood, there was no sense that one territory or another *belonged* to anyone in particular, much less a criminal gang.

At first, this caused me a great deal of consternation, for I had learned to work within the structures of power in Rio de Janeiro, which allowed for a certain degree of predictability (and therefore safety) when operating in conflict zones.   In Recife, by contrast, nothing was predictable, because criminal violence and informal authority structures were not organized or stable enough to lend to predictability.   And there was a lot of violence. Indeed, I saw far more of it than I needed to in order to understand that murder was driven more by cultural norms and impunity than territorial imperatives. The effect of all this made Recife seem to be, at least initially, a much more dangerous place to conduct research than Rio de Janeiro.

The very bright side to the seemingly random nature of criminal violence in Recife, however, is that its potential solutions in terms of public security policy may be far cheaper and far more realistic. This is because the state does not have to waste precious resources on the permanent armed occupation of territory in order to secure civilian loyalty, which is prohibitively expensive in the long run.   Instead, it can concentrate its allocation of resources on professionalizing the institutions of the justice system, including the police, as well as more effectively addressing the structural conditions that drive criminal behavior in the first place.   In the long run, this is precisely what an occupying police force would have to do anyway in order to truly control violent crime, but without the cost of occupation.

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More than one person has asked me, somewhat suspiciously, why I chose to conduct this kind of research. It is a question that I always find extremely difficult to answer, because any explanation I give, true though it very well might be, can never be complete. It is true, for example, that I feel a deep vocational drive to produce knowledge that will somehow and to some degree help make the world a more peaceful and pleasant place for humans to survive out what time we have left on this planet. I think my father taught me to be like that. It is also true, however, that I find it very exciting to be around guns and amid uncertainty. That is, I believe, the residue of adolescence that age fails to shed. What I believe to matter more than any single version of the truth, however, is that a structured and theoretically guided study of violence can serve as at least a partial guide to better understanding how our world is changing, what kinds of issues we should expect of our future, and how to best deal with them in a way that benefits the most and harms the least. This dissertation project is an attempt to do just this. I dedicate it to my really good friend from Brazil, André.

Introduction

This is first and foremost a study about armed criminal groups and their relationship with each other, with unarmed civilian populations, and with the physical territories within which they operate. Empirically, I focus on drug gangs, mafias, and the state in two major Brazilian cities that have long been affected by extremely high levels of violence but which exhibit strikingly different patterns of criminal and state violence. The spatial focus within these cities is on *favelas* (or slums), for it is in these informal and typically impoverished urban settlements where the majority of conflict between armed actors is played out. In Rio de Janeiro, favelas have been controlled and governed by well-armed drug gangs or police-based mafias since the 1980s. In Recife, criminal groups of similar origins have largely failed to consolidate stable territorial control anywhere, and therefore have not developed significant authoritative functions in their host communities. The state's response to criminal violence in each city has also been substantially different. Until recently, public security police in the favelas of Rio de Janeiro was highly militarized and uniquely violent. In Recife, by contrast, the police have been relatively benign in their application of violence. Historically both have been incompetent to curb increasing rates of criminal violence.

The development of what I refer to here as "criminal authority structures" is the central issue driving this study. Throughout the manuscript I make frequent reference to authority structures of various kinds, but the key puzzle concerns criminal groups that

succeed in monopolizing violence territorially and develop structured and consistent authoritative relationships with residents inhabiting those territories. My primary questions, then, are the following: Why do criminal groups achieve this in some places but not in others (indeed, most others)? What conditions or circumstances are most or least favorable to this type of development? Finally, how can the state reassert its own authority where it has been effectively replaced by that of criminal groups, or prevent it from happening where conditions might be propitious for such development? I draw on three major bodies of literature to orient my approach to answering these questions: that of gangs, organized crime, and importantly, civil wars.

By themselves, the aforementioned questions are analytically compelling because criminal authority structures rarely develop to the extent that they have in Rio de Janeiro. It is especially rare that common street gangs develop such extensive authoritative capacities, although traditional mafias perhaps have come much closer to it. The questions are also fundamentally important for the consolidation and health of democracy in Latin America. Guillermo O'Donnell (1993) suggested that authoritarian practices persist in much of Latin America because state institutions have been unable to extend the rule of law to large segments of national populations, and have instead delegated authoritative power to private entities that are not accountable to constitutional oversight. Political dynamics in the favelas of Rio de Janeiro epitomize this notion, and the rule of drug gangs has been appropriately referred to as a system of "privatized sovereignty," (Silva 2010) or a matter of "authoritarian enclaves" (Arias 2004) where very few of the benefits of democratization have ever reached.   In order to reverse the expansion of privatized or criminalized authority structures, and to improve the quality and stability of

democracy, it is necessary to understand the mechanisms by which criminal gangs develop in the first place.

Numerous scholars have turned their focus to the case of Rio de Janeiro, which for its exceptionality provides fantastic grounds for researching criminal organization and development. Very few of these studies, however, have looked at criminal development comparatively (i.e. variation within Rio de Janeiro or in other cities), and as a result have presented many plausible but un-generalizable and potentially incomplete explanations for why criminal authority structures should develop in some places and times and not in others. This study hopes to mitigate this methodological shortcoming by employing a comparative analysis on two levels: First, I compare criminal violence and state behavior in two major Brazilian cities, Rio de Janeiro and Recife, and; Second, I conduct a structured comparison of distinguishable regions within each city, evaluating conditions and outcomes by the same criteria.

Both Rio de Janeiro and Recife exhibit similar institutional and demographic characteristics and overall levels of violence, but differ dramatically both in the organization of criminal violence and police behavior. Homicide rates are high in both cities, although significantly higher in Recife. Rio de Janeiro, which had murders rates hovering over 70 per 100,000 inhabitants in the 1990s, had dropped to 23 per 100,000 in 2011. In Recife, the murder rate peaked at 94 per 100,000 in 2001, and by 2011 dropped to 57 per 100,000 (Mapa da Violência 2013).[7] Criminal violence in Rio de Janeiro, meanwhile, is highly organized and driven by a logic of territorial control, while in

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[7] According to the Government of Pernambuco, the Homicide rate in Recife was reduced to 31 per 100,000 inhabitants by the end of 2013.

Recife it is much less organized or rooted in territorial conflict. The state's response to violence has also been very different, particularly with respect to the application of lethal violence, despite the fact that the institutions of public security are organized almost identically in both places. The police, for example, are subsumed under the state-level government in all of Brazil's twenty-six states, and are organized into two administratively separate institutions, the *Polícia Militar* (preventative police) and the *Polícia Civil* (investigative police). By systematically comparing criminal violence in two cities with broadly similar institutions and demographics but with very different outcomes, supported by a comparison of multiple sub-cases within each city by the same criteria, we can more reasonably tease out the main structural conditions and causal mechanisms that drive criminal gangs to develop authority structures in general.

The Rio-Recife comparison is also particularly useful because it enables us to also evaluate the role of the state in two important ways: 1) How state behavior shapes criminal development, and; 2) How the state can effectively address problems of social violence, organized crime, and democratic failure where there are different logics driving criminal violence.

With respect to the former, it is important to realize that the state was never completely absent from favela communities, but rather the way in which it is present has been very different than in formal neighborhoods (Arias 2006). In fact, favelas have been highly integrated into the rest of society since their inception, economically above all (Moreira and Evanson 2011). The informality that defines them, further, is part and parcel of the pathological development of the state in a highly unequal society. According to Brodwyn Fischer (2008: 219), "for the wealthy, the poor, and everyone in

between, the existence of urban areas that did not play by officially constituted rules offered an escape from the contradictions wrought by laws that conformed only patchily to the ambitions, material capacities, and social practices of Brazilian society." From very early on, therefore, the style of state presence in favelas helped shape local political dynamics. Later on, the police would come to play an increasingly important role in shaping these dynamics, especially with regard to criminal development.

With respect to the state's role in addressing violence effectively, the in-depth case analyses of Rio de Janeiro and Recife allow for a comparison of two very different but equally novel and ambitious public security initiatives, both of which have been lauded internationally as potential models for other major cities suffering crises of criminal violence. In Rio de Janeiro, the now world famous Pacifying Police Units (UPPs) (2008 to present) have been associated with a dramatic decline in violence, particularly that caused by armed confrontations, and they have broken the authoritative structures of drug gangs where they have been established (Rodrigues et al. 2012). In Recife, the *Pacto Pela Vida* (PPV) initiative (2007 to present) spearheaded by Pernambuco state Governor Eduardo Campos, today claims responsibility for reducing homicides by 37 percent statewide and by as much as 58 percent in Recife alone.[8] Clearly, both the UPPs and the PPV have been dramatically successful, at least on the surface and in the short term. Comparing them in the context of the specific criminal systems to which they respond allows us to better understand the reasons for this success,

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[8] "Agosto registra o menor índice de homicídios dos últimos anos," Sept. 3, 2013, at: http://www.pactopelavida.pe.gov.br/agosto-registra-o-menor-indice-de-homicidios-dos-ultimos-anos/

the likelihood of continued success, and the appropriateness of exporting either model to other places.

Drug Gangs and Organized Crime in Rio de Janeiro and Recife

By the late 1980s it was clear that drug gangs in Rio de Janeiro were different than their counterparts in most other large Latin American cities. Favela based gangs affiliated with the *Comando Vermelho* prison gang had consolidated territorial control and monopolies on crime in some seventy percent of the city's slums (Penglase 2008). They created "parallel polities" governed by young drug traffickers armed with military grade small arms and a flush with cash from the booming cocaine trade (Leeds 1996). By the early 1990s, the Comando Vermelho had split into rival factions which have been at war with each other ever since. The state, meanwhile, has gone to war with drug traffickers in an ever-escalating campaign of violence that has earned Rio de Janeiro's police the notoriety of being the most lethal in the world (Moreira and Evanson 2011). The resulting violence has resembled modern urban warfare much more than the typical social violence associated with many of the world's most violent cities. Scores of rifle- and hand grenade-wielding drug traffickers invade favelas controlled by rival factions, leading to open conflict that sometimes lasts weeks.[9] The police, for their part, regularly mount what have been called "mega-operations" in which hundreds of officers, supported

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[9] Itamar Silva. 2009. Community leader, Santa Marta, Rio de Janeiro. Author interview, June 23.

by armored attack vehicles and helicopter gunships, rush into drug gang strongholds amid indiscriminate gunfire (Amnesty International 2009).[10]

Recife is also no foreigner to criminal violence. Homicides and other types of violent crime rose steadily throughout the 1980s and into the first half the 1990s, but remained relatively low in comparison to the crime waves of Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo at the time. Then, around the middle of the 1990s, crack cocaine first appeared on the streets, and quickly spread across the city. As when refined cocaine consumption exploded in Rio de Janeiro a decade and a half earlier, crack cocaine in Recife also led to a dramatic increase in violence as young entrepreneurs of drugs fought over turf and money in a lucrative new market. As a result, homicides nearly doubled between 1995 and 1999, and within a few years Recife had overtaken Rio de Janeiro as Brazil's most violent city (Nobrega 2008).

Despite comparable levels of violence, however, crime developed in a much different way in Recife. Instead of coalescing around structured prison gangs, consolidating territorial control, and establishing elaborate governing functions in favelas, drug gangs in Recife remained small, unorganized, and politically marginalized. Whereas the infusion of cocaine money helped drug gangs build little empires in Rio de Janeiro, the sudden influx of cash from the much less stable crack cocaine market appeared to signal a movement in the opposite direction: Criminal authority structures were truncated. As result, violence between gangs left many dead, but otherwise looked very different than in Rio de Janeiro. Instead of high profile and long lasting gunfights with automatic rifles and hand grenades, gang violence in Recife could be more

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[10] I personally witnessed several such police incursions between 2008 and 2009.

accurately described as an endless series of assassinations in a tit for tat style of warfare that had very little to do with territory control per se.[11]

What explains this dramatic difference in criminal development? Very little has been written about the organization and behavior of crime in Recife. The much more notorious and dramatic organization of crime in Rio de Janeiro, however, has inspired a great many studies, which allows for a good start to begin understanding our question why criminal gangs should develop authority structures in some places and not in others. Among these studies, there are two broad schools of thought to explain criminal authorities in the favelas of Rio de Janeiro: The "Divided City" approach and the "Neoclientelism" approach (Arias 2006).

The "Divided City" approach portrays a highly antagonistic relationship between the state and the middle classes on one hand and favela communities on the other. According to this view, Favelas are politically, socially, and economically excluded areas that the state has virtually abandoned to the whims of armed criminal gangs that make and enforce their own laws. The state then reinforces these social divisions by treating favelas as a whole as enemy territory and giving the police implicit permission and encouragement to practice extreme violence, a treatment which is not only tolerated but largely supported by middle and upper classes who elect reactionary politicians (Ahnen 2003; Caldeira 2001). Favela populations, in response, begin to see the police—and also the state, as a logical extension of the police—as just another illegitimate actor in the milieu of illegal and extralegal violence that oppresses them (Soares 1996). The preferences and allegiances of favela communities then come to align more closely with

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[11] Alexandre Freitas. 2012. Sociologist, UFPE, Recife. Author interview, May 16.

the rule of the drug gangs who at least offer some semblance of protection and welfare. In this context of stark social divisions, drug gangs further enhance their power by cultivating a "narco-cultura" in favelas that orients residents, especially youth, towards a different set of norms and values than in formal neighborhoods (Penglase 2008).

The neo-clientelist approach argues that while disparities between favelas and formal neighborhoods (or between *morro* and *asfalto*, as the division is often referred to in Rio de Janeiro) are huge, the "divided city" approach fails to see the very important interconnectedness of political and economic structures between them. Long before drug trafficking became a source of income and power in Rio de Janeiro, for example, public officials had established strong clientelistic links with community leaders and local institutions to exchange public goods for votes. By the 1960s, many favela based Residents' Associations (*Associações de Moradores*) had become enmeshed in unequal but reciprocal exchange with politicians, a situation that intensified during the democratization of the 1980s (Gay 1994). These clientelist relationships were then inherited by drug gangs when they usurped control of the Residents' Associations. Although they were visibly at war with the state, then, drug gangs were actually well integrated into its larger political structures (Dowdney 2003; Arias 2007).

Both of these theoretical frameworks are compelling and reflective of social and political realities as they appear on the ground. But they fail to answer three fundamental questions regarding the development of criminal authorities. First, how did drug gangs in Rio de Janeiro achieve the degree of territorial control necessary to develop stable authority structures in the first place? Second, having achieved physical control of entire communities, what compelled them to "give back" to those communities in the form of

dispute resolution, allocation of resources, and the guarantee of order? Third, why did

this happen in Rio de Janeiro but not in most other Brazilian cities, many of which are

characterized by a similar distribution of wealth and stark disparities between formal and

informal communities and economies? Lastly, can the same factors that explain variation

from one city to the next also explain the very significant variation in criminal

development within these cities? Comparing Rio de Janeiro and Recife against one

another and within themselves can help uncover general causal mechanisms that until

now have been assumed by exceptionalist theories.

The broader literature on gangs and organized crime offers a helpful set of

frameworks to start answering these questions. In his seminal 1927 study, *The Gang: A*

Study of 1,313 Gangs in Chicago, Frederick Thrasher defines a gang as:

 "an interstitial group originally formed spontaneously, and

then integrated through conflict. It is characterized by the

following types of behavior: meeting face to face, milling,

movement through space as a unit, conflict, and planning.

The result of this collective behavior is the development of

tradition, unreflective internal structure, esprit de corps,

solidarity, morale, group awareness, and attachment to a

local territory" (Thrasher 1927: 46).

While Thrasher's definition begins to capture the bare essence of gangs today, it

falls far short of describing the extensive territorial control and elaborate authoritative

structures of favela based gangs in Rio de Janeiro. John Hagedorn (1998) made a clear distinction between the industrial-era gangs of Thrasher's time and up through the 1960s, and the "post-industrial gangs" of today.   He argues that the major economic restructuring that occurred in the 1980s expanded the dependence of poor populations on the informal economy at the same time that illegal drug consumption boomed, thus providing an alternative income source in the face of a rapidly diminishing formal labor market. As a result, gangs grew in size and numbers, commercialized, and became far more violent than their industrial-era counterparts. In Hagedorn's words, "many gangs now operate as well-armed economic units inside a vastly expanded informal economy, replacing factory work for young males with jobs selling drugs" (1998: 368).

By the turn of turn of the century, some gangs in the United States had indeed become large commercialized and hierarchically organized units. A study by Steven Levitt and Sudhir Venkatesh (2000) revealed the economic and organizational structure of a crack-selling gang consisting of hundreds of members operating a franchise-like network of drug distribution. The gang leaders, a third of whom directed operations from inside prison walls, strategically ordered their subordinate members to go to war with rival gangs, and seize new territory in order to expand their consumer base. In a later publication by Venkatesh (2008), he described how a large drug gang in Chicago had come to control an area of housing projects in Chicago, and made regular attempts to be gain favor among the resident population by distributing some of their wealth to neighbors in need.

This description of contemporary American gangs is reflected in no small degree in the development of gangs in both Rio de Janeiro and Recife.   The retreat of the state

that resulted from economic crises and structural adjustment policies in the 1980s led to a similar increase in the urban poor's dependence on informal labor markets, while a booming drug trade offered an alternative path to economic survival, which was easily capitalized on by existing gangs (Leeds 1996). The extent of territorial control and the elaborate structures of criminal authority that typified favelas in Rio de Janeiro, however, far exceeded comparable movements of gangs in the United States.

Diego Gambetta's seminal study on the Sicilian Mafia begins to more adequately explain why criminal groups might establish and maintain territorial. He describes the mafia as "a specific economic enterprise, an industry which produces, promotes, and sells private protection" (Gambetta 1993:1). The lack of an effective state in protecting property rights and economic transactions during post-feudal era in Sicily caused landowners and merchants to seek out private entities who could provide such protection. Recognizing a profit potential, these entities then nurtured social distrust and fear in order to compel continued payment, and thus evolved into the protection racketeering criminal "families" now known as the Mafia.

The logic of competition in Gambetta's private protection market causes mafia families to strive for territorial monopolies. This is because the very basis of their success in convincing clients to continue paying for a passive service is their reputation, which can easily be destroyed if territorial control is incomplete or contested (1993: 68). Drug gangs have a similar incentive to control territory insofar that they need to protect both themselves from rival gangs and protect their clients who respond to the relative safety of drug distribution points (See Levitt and Venkatesh 2000). It is far more difficult for drug gangs to establish, however, because of their significantly lower social

and legal status. While the Sicilian Mafia has long cultivated at image of itself as an honorable society and has traditionally dealt in the illegal provision of a legal good (Paoli 2003), drug gangs tend to remain socially marginalized even within their local communities, and much more regularly pursued by the police (Arias 2006). Explanations for how drug gangs establish stable territorial monopolies and elaborate authority structures in some places and not others are therefore still inadequate. To account for this, I turn to another body of literature that has focused deeply on questions of armed conflict and territorial control: The study of civil wars.

Civil Wars and Criminal Authorities

For the last decade and a half, much of the scholarly debate on the causes and duration of civil war has been anchored in Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler's (2004) world bank funded study, *Greed and Grievance in Civil War*. According to Collier and Hoeffler's model, rebellion is an "industry that creates profit from looting," and is best explained by "greed," or in other words, conditions conducive to an economically rational incentive for individuals to take up arms against the state. Insurgents, on this view, are analytically "indistinguishable from bandits or pirates" (Grossman 1999), and insurgency is therefore a "quasi-criminal activity" (Collier 2000). By contrast, "Grievance" theories explain civil war by looking at questions of social identity, injustice, inequality, and state legitimacy. On this view, the behavior of the state is key to understanding civil wars, as it often provokes rebellion by repressing other more peaceful forms of protest and political representation (Goodwin 2001).   Even in combating seedling rebel groups, the state may inadvertently create much larger insurgencies by

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alienating or threatening the livelihoods of previously apolitical populations (Kilcullen 2009; Felbab-Brown 2010).

The "greed" approach can best be understood in terms of opportunity costs of rebellion. Where the expected material returns on rebellion outweigh the expected costs, civil war is likely to happen. Poverty and unemployment are particularly important factors, because these conditions reduce the expected forgone income of rebel recruits (Collier 2000). But rebels are also driven by material prizes, which increase the expected benefits of rebellion. For example, sources of lootable wealth, whether in the form of fluvial diamonds, gas/oil pipelines, or illegal drugs, provide attractive prizes with relatively immediate returns. Perhaps more importantly, lootable resources may also provide the necessary financing for arming and maintaining insurgency in the first place (Collier 2000; Ron 2004; Snyder and Bhavnani 2005; Peceny and Durnan 2006).

James Fearon and David Laitin (2003) aptly bridge elements of both "greed" and "grievance" approaches by reframing rebellion as an outcome of the interaction between state capacity and behavior on one hand and rebel fears and opportunities on the other. They argue that "where states are relatively weak and capricious, both fears and opportunities encourage the rise of would-be rulers who supply a rough local justice while arrogating the power to 'tax' for themselves and, often, for a larger cause" (Fearon and Laitin 2003: 76). Without discounting the rationality of rebels in committing to raise arms, they refocus their attention instead on the state, which for its limited capacity to govern fairly, effectively, or evenly across national territory, thereby invites armed contestation of power. The principle indicators with respect to state weakness and incentive to rebel include poverty and political stability on one hand, and corruption, state

violence, and perceived state legitimacy on the other. An important additional variable concerns geography. Mountainous terrain or extensive forests or jungles impede the efforts of central governments to assert their authority in an effective way. Homegrown insurgent movements, conversely, may benefit from their familiarity of local terrain.

Once insurgency has begun, the state is often thrust into a very difficult position, for at this point its repressive actions can easily backfire. That is, its use of violence in efforts to reassert its authority can easily provoke a greater conflict, especially where its authority was never firmly established in the first place. In his seminal work, *The Logic of Violence in Civil War*, Stathis Kalyvas (2006) elaborates a theory of irregular warfare in which the imperatives of territorial control are the central drivers of violence. In order to win power, armed groups (the state or insurgents) must secure the collaboration of local populations in order to eliminate or at least substantially reduce the risk of defections or denunciations to the opposing side. This can be achieved via effective repression or via loyalty, but it is the former that allows the latter to develop. In Kalyvas' words, "fear operates as a first-order condition that makes the production of loyalty possible" (Kalyvas 2006: 115).

The problem that states often have in establishing a credible fear of repression is that it can be prohibitively expensive in areas that they do not already control. To reduce this cost, which poor states suffering civil war in their hinterlands often cannot afford, states may opt for the practice of indiscriminate repression to deter rebellion. Indiscriminate violence, however, undermines the logic of deterrence in the first place, as its "sheer unpredictability makes everyone fear lethal sanctions regardless of their behavior: innocence is irrelevant and compliance is impossible" (Kalyvas 2006: 143).

States would therefore be much wiser to practice selective violence, but this requires information available primarily through civilian collaboration, which "requires a level of control sufficient to reassure those who can supply that collaboration" (Kalyvas 2006: 145).

There are analytically important parallels between insurgency and organized crime, and between counter-insurgency and states' repression of organized crime. Inverting Collier's (2000) statement that insurgency is a quasi-criminal activity, I argue here that organized crime is a quasi-insurgent activity. Or at least it *can* be. The dynamics of criminal gangs and organized crime vary significantly from one place or market to the next, and certainly not all organized crime resembles insurgency. The difference largely depends on the relationship between criminal markets and territorial control. Where territorial control is *not* necessary to protect illegal markets, criminal organizations might resemble business enterprises (see Liddick 1999) or anarchic trade networks (Koivu 2014).[12] Where criminal organizations do depend on territorial control, however, they may be driven by very similar logics of violence and control as those that constrain and orient the behavior of states and insurgents in civil war. It is in these cases where the civil wars literature can be most helpful in furthering our understanding of how gangs and other criminal groups develop authority structures in some places but fail to in others.

The drug gangs and mafia-type organizations that are the focus of this study clearly fall into this camp, at least insofar that they have a rational incentive to control territory, and if they achieve this, they are also rationally driven to nurture residents'

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[12] Forthcoming.

loyalties in order to decrease the cost of control. Their ability to do this, I argue, is tied to a very similar set of conditions and factors that help determine the likelihood and duration of civil war.   Likewise, the potential effectiveness of different state responses to violent crime depends on whether or not criminal systems have become embedded in territorial control and authority structures.

According to Collier and Hoeffler (2004), rebellion entails substantial start-up and maintenance costs in consideration of the need to arm and train enough recruits to control and protect territory, and it is therefore more likely when there is some form of lootable wealth available.   The same is true of drug gangs locked in territorial dispute with one another. It is, for example, no small task for one gang to take and maintain control of entire communities of upwards of 200,000 inhabitants, as has occurred in Rio de Janeiro, especially when the state also claims that territory. To do so requires numerous recruits and advanced and plentiful weaponry at the very least, and this in turn requires an exceptional source of income. Because poverty decreases the opportunity costs of recruitment, and poverty is a defining characteristic of favela communities, I assume that gang recruitment is potentially high in any favela, and therefore cannot explain differences in criminal behavior from one favela to the next. Criminal income varies significantly, however, and I therefore evaluate the sources of "lootable" wealth available to criminal groups in different areas. For gangs, drug trafficking operates as a lootable wealth, and highly profitable local markets can attract more powerful weaponry, which facilitates territorial control and expansion.   For mafia-type groups, certain kinds of local economic structures make for more or less lucrative protection rackets, and power capabilities of these groups will thus vary accordingly.

High income and the resulting acquisition of high-powered weapons itself is not enough to explain how single criminal groups could control territory claimed by the state, however, because the state in most cases has incomparably superior resources do draw from. I therefore refer to Fearon and Laitin's (2003) state-centered model, which evaluates conditions that limit the willingness or ability of the state to exercise effective control or contain rebellion. Two conditions are particularly important with respect to state presence in favelas: Geography and the perceived legitimacy of the state.

Geographical barriers, such as high-density slums built into steep mountainsides with little or no vehicle accessibility, can impede the effective exercise of state power in a similar way that distant mountainous areas can do. This is principally because the police are less willing to patrol or respond to criminal activity in informal settlements (i.e. ones where often there are only vague jurisdictional commitments) when they would have to walk to get there and be more vulnerable to ambush. The failure to respond to criminal activity, particularly gang warfare, then allows for the initial conquest of territorial control to take place. But geographical barriers also decrease the ability of the police to effectively respond even when they choose to, as gang members with intimate knowledge of complex local terrain can more easily fight back, hide, or escape. For example, during the police and military occupation of the mountainside Vidigal favela in the South Zone of Rio de Janeiro in November 2011, drug traffickers prevented the advanced of military armored personnel carriers through the community's only roadway simply by laying down oil slicks. No drug traffickers or weapons were captured despite a sweep by more

than five hundred police officers.[13] By contrast, favelas that are flat, lower in population density, and accessible by motor vehicle are much more easily policed, and so even though other state institutions might be equally ineffective or absent, the territorial consolidation of gangs and their armed opposition to the police will be more difficult.

Finally, state weakness, understood here as a deficit of legitimacy, also facilitates the development of criminal authority structures. This is an integral part of Luis Eduardo Soares' (1996) theory that the violent and thuggish behavior of the police put them on the same playing ground as the drug gangs they were fighting, which led residents to see them as just another band of criminals. Following Kalyvas' (2006) logics of territorial control and indiscriminate violence, however, a more rationalist perspective can be applied. First, where the state cannot impose a credible fear of repression or a credible promise of protection, residents will prefer to turn to whichever entity can do that better. Given that drug traffickers are often a permanent presence in favelas and the police are not, default loyalties may fall upon them, especially once one group has consolidated territorial control. Secondly, where the state appears to practice indiscriminate violence (whether because it is cheaper or because public opinion supports it), defection may seem more rational even when it is towards the disadvantaged side. This dynamic is particularly important for young males who might feel targeted by police repression independently of their relationship to crime.

When these factors (Criminal income/resources, Geography, and state capacity/legitimacy) are evaluated comparatively in the context of favelas in Rio de

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[13] Participant observation and interviews. 2011. Pacification of Vidigal and Rocinha, Rio de Janeiro. November 13.

Janeiro and Recife, very interesting correlations are revealed. In broad view, drug gangs

in the favelas of Rio de Janeiro have become powerful political entities that maintain

territorial control and exercise elaborate authority functions, while in Recife they have

remained small, disorganized, and unable to control territory, much less develop authority

structures. This difference correlates cleanly with our variables: Rio de Janeiro has a

much more lucrative illegal drug market, a host of geographic barriers in its many

mountainside favelas, and a policing strategy that for the last three decades has consisted

of extremely violent but periodic and unpredictable assaults in favelas.   In Recife, by

contrast, the drug market is less lucrative and less stable, most favelas are smaller, flatter,

and less dense in population, and the state has been far more benign in its application of

lethal violence.

Perhaps more compelling, however, is the fact that these factors appear to

correlate also with variance in criminal development within Rio de Janeiro and Recife.

This is most apparent in Rio de Janeiro, where the city's four major geographical zones

(North, South, Center, and West) have characteristically distinct geographical and

economic features. Rio's strongest and most stable drug gangs have developed in the

mountainside favelas that hug the city's (and the country's) wealthiest neighborhoods in

the South and Center Zones, where cocaine consumption is greatest. In the variously flat

and hilly favelas surrounding the industrial parks of the North Zone, drug gangs have

been strong but less stable and less capable of consolidating control over entire

communities. In the hot, flat expanses of the impoverished West Zone, drug gangs have

been much weaker, evinced by their expulsion en mass by militia groups during the last

decade. In Recife, these internal differences are much less obvious, but also appear to correspond to a variance in criminal development.

Figure (1) below provides a basic illustration of the proposed relationship between local conditions, state behavior, and criminal development outcomes. I assume here that the consolidation of stable territorial control by a criminal group is a necessary precondition for the development of elaborate authority structures, and that this is likely where a) there is a high degree of illicit wealth concentrated in low-income communities, and; b) there are significant geographical barriers to regular and effective police intervention (see embedded 2x2 table).

Once a criminal groups establishes stable territorial control, the response of the state may shape or constrain further development. With respect to police action, the police can occupy that territory permanently (as in the case with the UPPs) and thereby reestablish state authority; it can ignore the problem, and in such a situation the controlling criminal group should have less incentive to increase its own legitimacy by developing elaborate governing functions, or; the police can confront criminal groups militarily without occupying the controlled territory, and consequently push residents and criminals into a de facto alliance, while creates the necessary condition for complex criminal authority structures to develop. Following the neo-clientelist model of crime (see leeds 1996; Dowdney 2003; Arias 2006), previous entrenched informal authority structures can also be inherited by criminal groups or simply criminalized. Depending on the style of clientelism practiced by the state, then, different structures of delegated authority should affect criminal development in different ways. Territorially

monopolized clientelist networks more likely lead to criminal authority development than

diffuse clientelist networks.

Figure (1): The Development of Criminal Authority
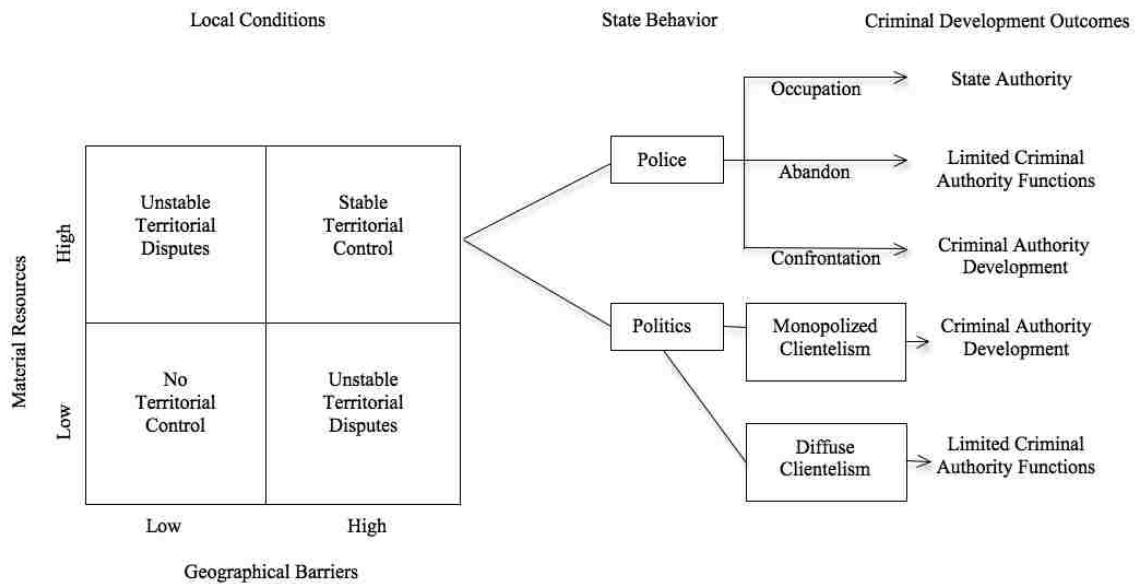
Militias

By the mid 2000s, police-based mafias called "militias" had begun to usurp power from

drug traffickers and run criminal protection rackets in many of Rio de Janeiro's favelas,

mostly in the West Zone (Zaluar and Conceição 2007).   They have continued expanding,

and by some estimates, militias today exert control over some 45 percent of Rio's entire

favela population (Zaluar and Barcellos 2013). Militias are popularly understood to be a

new phenomenon, and in some ways they very much are. The word "militia" itself, for

example, did not appear in the media in reference to criminal groups until 2006, shortly

after which its use saturated political and popular discourse (Cano and Looty 2008).

More importantly, their sophistication and reach of power as autonomous criminal

organizations that exercise extensive and complex authoritative functions in the communities they control had rarely been seen before the turn of the century.

That said, clandestine criminal groups composed of police or other security agents have been, in some form or another, a part of Brazil's social and political fabric since the creation of the military police in the first half of the nineteenth century (see Holloway 1993). From very early on, police vigilante groups called *Polícia Mineira* developed some degree of extralegal authority in their home communities (Burgos 2002). In the 1960s, clandestine police death squads were institutionalized by the military regime to hunt down subversives, and once the threat of insurgency had disappeared, they continued their practices of torture and disappearance in the pursuit of common criminals (Pinheiro 1991). In much of Brazil and particularly in the Northeast, moreover, the employment of death squads to eliminate political or business rivals had long been an engrained cultural habit, and is still common today (Sousa 2001).

Despite significant differences between the various kinds of police-based criminal groups with respect to their size, strength and sophistication, degree of autonomy, and their relationship to territorial control, today they are typically lumped together into one broad analytical category denominated "militias," especially within the context of Rio de Janeiro. This has resulted in a sort of conceptual stretching that has created problems for the study of an entire genre of organized crime in Brazil: that of criminal police. In order to improve our understanding of this phenomena, then, it is important to construct a typology of criminal police groups that identifies their specific characteristics and behaviors, especially with respect to autonomy and territorial control (see Chapter 3).

I argue that police-based criminal groups that are autonomous (i.e. not simply paid hit men) and who develop territorially entrenched protection rackets—which according to my typology are *militias*—are affected by the same factors and conditions that shape and constrain the behavior of drug gangs. The key difference, however, is that the state's willingness and ability to prevent militias from developing is significantly reduced for the following two reasons: first, as state agents themselves, militia members not only "know" the system but also often operate with the complicity of state institutions (Cano and Duarte 2012), and; second, as illegal entrepreneurs of mostly legal markets, they tend to attract much less state repression than drug gangs who deal in explicitly prohibited and highly stigmatized goods (Misse 2007). Taken together, this means that: a) militias rely less on conditions that reduce the ability of the state to repress them, such as mountainous terrain, and; b) their resources are extracted from a different kind of market. Thus militias, which very often prohibit the use or sale of drugs altogether, do not benefit from proximity to wealthy neighborhoods as drug gangs often do, but instead from their proximity to low middle class commercial hubs characterized by high levels of cash exchange and informality. It is for this reason, I argue, that the Rio de Janeiro's South, Center, and North Zones belong to drug gangs, while the West Zone is now ruled by militias.

Police-based criminal groups that are not invested in territorial control or that are not autonomous organizations, by contrast, operate by a different logic altogether. This is particularly true with respect to so-called death squads, which are common in Recife and much of the Brazilian northeast, as well as in Rio de Janeiro. Death squads respond to an industry of violence in which elites of various classes and social sectors employ murder

to regulate markets and address political conflicts (Ratton and Alencar 2009). They are, in essence, a tool of control of existing power structures rather than structures of power or authority unto themselves, and are therefore analytically distinguishable from their militia counterparts.

Public Security and the Logics of Violence

For most of the last thirty years public security policy in both Rio de Janeiro and Recife has been characterized by poorly institutionalized initiatives in reaction to specific and acute political crises (Cano 2007).[14] In other words, there was very little policy per se, other than that of muddling through, and decisions were often based on heated media scandals following dramatic news of violent crime, and consequently they lacked any long-term rationale for reducing crime. That said, there has been a general trend to increase police firepower and discretionary violence in both cities, as public opinion tended to lean that way (see Caldeira and Holston 1999). In Rio de Janeiro, this trend led to a dramatic increase in police killings that earned the police the notoriety of being the world's most violent (Moreira and Evanson 2011). In Recife, it destabilized existing power structures, which led to even more violence (Freitas 2003).

The gubernatorial elections of 2007, however, marked the beginning of a period of dramatic change in public security policy in both Rio de Janeiro and Recife. By the end of his second year in office, Rio Governor Sergio Cabral had inaugurated the first of his now nearly forty Pacifying Police Units (UPPs), the intent of which is to break the

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[14] Jose Luiz Ratton. 2012. Public Security Advisor to Gov. Eduardo Campos. Author interview, Recife. June 8.

authority of criminal gangs and reduce armed confrontations by establishing a permanent police presence in favelas. The previous year, just five months after taking office, Pernambuco Governor Eduardo Campos launched his highly ambitious *Pacto pela Vida* (PPV) initiative, the explicit objective of which was to decrease homicides by 12 percent per year.   With respect to their state goals, both initiatives have been profoundly successful, at least on the surface, and have been touted by their proponents as exportable models of public security (Macedo 2012; Rodrigues et al. 2012).

What is most interesting for this study, however, is that the UPPs and the PPV clearly respond to two very different logics of violence. Violence in Rio de Janeiro has long been driven by a logic of territorial control, resembling Kalyvas' (2006) theory of irregular war. According to this view, previous public security policies were inevitably ineffective because the state, since it did not control favela territories, could not count on the collaboration of local populations in repressing crime. The UPPs solve this problem by sheer police saturation, which makes credible the state's threat of repression and guarantee of protection, and therefore produces the ground conditions for civilian loyalty to the state (rather than to drug gangs) to develop.   Perhaps the biggest potential problem with this approach, however, is the cost of maintaining and expanding such an intensive police presence. To illustrate, six years into the Governor Cabral's initiative, police recruitment has increased by some 30 percent, yet UPPs still directly affect only 7 percent of Rio's favela population (Zaluar and Barcellos 2013).

The *Pacto pela Vida,* for its part, responds to an epidemiological pattern of violence, which is driven less by imperatives of territorial control, and instead resembles the spreading of infectious diseases. Also known as "hot spots" policing, this approach

seeks to identify outbreaks of violence and directly address it before it spreads elsewhere (Sherman 1995). In Recife, where more than 30 percent of homicides are attributed to a "revenge motive,"[15] and criminal gangs exercise very little territorial control, this may very well be the most appropriate philosophical orientation for public security policy. It is certainly not fool proof however. For example, as a results-oriented policy designed after New York's Compstat, it is equally susceptible to data manipulation that might heavily skew actual outcomes.

Despite the potential drawbacks and long term unintended consequences of either public security initiative, both represent a significant shift in policy orientation with respect to violent crime. This is not only because the UPPs and the PPV are far more ambitious and more deeply institutionalized than any of their predecessor policies, but also because they represent a fundamentally different philosophical view of the state's role in fighting crime than earlier policies and practices. This is most evident in that the "protection of life" is now explicitly prioritized while the repression of drug trafficking is significantly downplayed or even ignored. Whether either of the new approaches stick is another question altogether.

Field Research

The field research for this study was carried out in Rio de Janeiro and Recife during two periods between 2009 and 2012, the latter of which (September 2011-July 2012) was generously funded by a Social Science Research Council fellowship. During this time nearly one hundred formal interviews were conducted with community leaders, political

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[15] Information Source: *Delegacia de Homicídios e Proteção à Pessoa* (DHPP-PE).

candidates or established politicians, journalists, academics, NGO representatives, business owners, police officers/officials, military personnel, penitentiary agents, former drug traffickers and prison inmates, alleged criminal bosses, and others who were deemed to be intimately familiar with local criminal and political dynamics. In addition to interviews, uncounted hours were spent in direct observation of police and military patrols, homicide investigations, tactical police operations, public security board meetings, community meetings and events, and very carefully, drug trafficking operations and gang-organized events.

Data from interviews and observations form the empirical base for this study, although I also draw deeply on the findings of earlier studies. Field research was particularly elemental to the sections on Recife, for there has been very little published on criminal organization and policing there, despite its notoriety for violence. Although scholars have paid close attention to Rio de Janeiro for decades, the field research was also elemental there, especially for evaluating the dynamics and impact of the more recent phenomena of criminal militias and the installation of Pacifying Police Units. For these reasons I hope and expect that the original research behind this project should contribute positively both to our specific knowledge of Rio de Janeiro and Recife, and more generally to our understanding of criminal and political dynamics elsewhere.

Manuscript Outline

This dissertation is organized in the following way. Chapter One evaluates two important conditions derived from the civil wars literature to explain the consolidation of territorial control by armed criminal groups in Rio de Janeiro and Recife: material

resources/capabilities and geography. Here I consider the effect of drug market wealth on gangs' capabilities for waging war, and geographical barriers to effective policing. Chapter Two builds upon the previous chapter by looking at the social and political dynamics of territorial control, and the processes by which armed groups can develop elaborate authoritative functions even when they are largely perceived as illegitimate by outsiders. Chapter Three breaks with the earlier chapters to focus specifically on police-based criminal groups. I create a descriptive typology in order to differentiate these groups, and then propose a set of conditions to explain where and how they are likely to evolve in different ways. Chapter Four asks how the state can reassert its authority where it has lost it to criminal groups or where it never imposed it in the first place. Here I evaluate Brazil's two most ambitious and far-reaching public security initiatives with respect to the differing logics of violence they respond to, as well as the impact they have had thus far on violence and social relations. Finally, in the Conclusion, I discuss the directions in which crime and public security might be heading in Latin America, and some ideas for future research.

Chapter 1

Markets and Mountains:

Conditions for the Consolidation of Territorial Control

Drug gangs have wreaked havoc in the favelas of Rio de Janeiro and Recife for decades, and have been responsible for much of the increased violence in both cities since the 1980s. Despite provoking similar levels of overall violence, however, they have developed in very different ways in each city. In Rio de Janeiro, drug gangs were able to monopolize territorial control and subsequently developed local governing functions in most of the city's favelas by the late 1980s (Leeds 1996). In Recife, by contrast, there have been very few cases in which drug gangs monopolized territorial control at all, and fewer in which they developed significant governing functions or authority structures within that territory.[16] This chapter attempts to explain this difference by evaluating two conditions drawn from the civil wars literature—material capabilities of armed groups and the physical geography of their host communities—that affect the initial consolidation of territorial control, which is a prerequisite for the development of authority functions later on.

Street gangs have long been defined by their inclination to identify with and defend territory (Thrasher 1927). As gangs in the United States became increasingly dependent on their involvement in the drug trade in the 1970s and 1980s, the control of territory became a matter not only of success in a competitive market but also of survival (Hagedorn 1998).   The larger and more tightly controlled a territory is, the higher profits will be, as customers will feel safer seeking drugs there (Levitt and Venkatesh 2000).

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[16] Fabinet and Bruno. 2012. DeNarc-PE detectives, Recife. Author interview, May 7.

Secondly, following Stathis Kalyvas' logic of control in civil war, armed groups can minimize the risk of defection and denunciation—and therefore increase their chance of survival—by intensifying and widening territorial control (Kalyvas 2006).

The same incentives and pressures have driven gangs in Brazil to identify with and attempt to control territory as well, which has resulted in unprecedented levels of violence as gangs entrench themselves in turf wars.   The importance of territorial control in favelas, the area of focus for this study, is even greater than in formal urban areas due to a lack of regular and effective state presence. With respect to markets, territorial control where the state is absent dramatically increases the profit potential of street-level drug trafficking (Misse 2006).   With respect to survival, territorial control creates a unique buffer against the conspiracies of rival gangs where the state has proven unwilling or incapable of protecting its citizens (i.e. where the state fails to investigate or prevent homicides and related violence).

Despite incentives to do so, however, gangs are rarely able to establish stable monopolies of control over entire communities. There are several reasons for this. First, as illegitimate armed actors, gangs face a constant threat from the state, which claims a monopoly on the use of force for itself. Even minimal police repression, if relatively frequent and effective, may be enough to keep gangs too disorganized and on the defensive to achieve or maintain territorial monopolies. Secondly, the material resources are often minimal. Despite potentially high gross profits from street level drug sales, for example, there may be relatively little left over after the cost of theft, paying police bribes, legal expenses, and myriad other "overheads" associated with illicit markets (Levitt and Venkatesh 2000).   Further, the recruitment of committed gang members may be difficult.

It has been estimated that in Rio de Janeiro only about one percent of favela populations are typically employed by the drug trade (Zaluar 1996), suggesting that resources might be too limited to arm and maintain a gang large enough control territory. And following Jeremy Weinstein's theory of rebel endowments and recruit quality, the immediate benefits with which individuals are attracted to the drug trade in the first place bode poorly for their quality as a committed member of an armed group (Weinstein 2005). Even if there are enough gang members, their loyalties a larger group and commitment to collective action may be compromised.

Nevertheless, gangs sometimes do succeed in establishing relatively stable territorial control over entire communities.[17] By comparing favelas in Rio de Janeiro, where this has been strikingly apparent, and in Recife, where it has not, we can attempt to uncover the conditions that facilitate such outcomes. I argue that two conditions that have frequently been associated with the onset and duration of civil wars—material capabilities/wealth and physical geography (see Collier and Hoeffler 2004, Fearon and Laitin 2003) are also highly relevant for understanding the capacity for drug gangs (or other criminal groups) to dominate territory. First, where local drug markets are highly lucrative, and much of the profits are concentrated in street-level sales, drug gangs will be able to develop a greater material capability with which to assert power over the communities within which they operate. The most important element of this capability is military power, embodied in weapons and active "soldiers." Wealth can also be invested

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[17] Some noteworthy cases in which this has occurred are the cities of Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo, Medellin, San Salvador, Tegucigalpa, and Guatemala City.

in the distribution of public goods in order to increase the loyalty of local populations as well as to purchase protection from the repressive arm of the state.

The second condition, physical geography, has an indirect effect on the consolidation of territorial control by non-state actors. In the case of civil wars, mountainous or wooded terrain, particularly where it is far from major urban centers, creates obstacles for effective state presence, and is therefore propitious for the development of other armed actors keen on establishing themselves as a local authority (Fearon 2005). Geography can also help shape the development of urban drug gangs by increasing the cost of regular and effective state presence. Particularly in favelas that are built upon steep mountainsides and are endowed with little or no infrastructure to permit vehicular traffic, the state (especially the police) might be less willing to commit to regular patrolling and crime control necessary to maintain social order. In their absence, drug gangs are freed of the primary obstacle to their consolidation of territorial control.

With respect to these conditions, Rio de Janeiro and Recife differ rather dramatically. The cocaine boom of the early 1980s in Rio de Janeiro (and which continues at similar levels of consumption today) set in motion a series of high profile gang wars that culminated in the consolidation of just a handful of powerful criminal factions and a distribution of power characterized by monopolistic territorial control and local governance in nearly all of the city's favelas (Arias 2006). The first criminal monopolies, and by far the strongest of them, were consolidated and maintained on the steep mountainside favelas of Rio's Center and South Zones, high density labyrinths that

were inaccessible by motor vehicle, where the police were less willing to enter on foot to provide any form of public security, much less confront warring factions.[18]

In Recife, by contrast, a late-blooming drug trade was traditionally dominated by the much less lucrative sale of marijuana, which failed to attract a significant weapons market. When crack-cocaine consumption spread across the city in the mid to late 1990s, small firearms appeared in large numbers for the first time, and drug traffickers immediately went to war with each other. But crack cocaine proved to be a far less lucrative and far more volatile drug than its refined counterpart in Rio de Janeiro, and intense, small scale competition destroyed any order that the resulting resources might otherwise have created.[19] Furthermore, most of Recife's favelas are smaller and flatter than in Rio de Janeiro, and are typically gridded with vehicle-accessible roads and various entry and exit points. These geographical conditions have facilitated a more rapid and regular intervention by police, which has resulted in the early disarticulation of criminal gangs seeking to establish or expand territorial control.[20]

Within each city case there is also significant variation with respect to the material capabilities of drug gangs and geographical composition of favelas, particularly in Rio de Janeiro, which for purposes of categorization along these conditional

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[18] Itamar Silva 2009. Community leader, Santa Marta, Rio de Janeiro. Author interview, June 23.

[19] Luis Andrey. 2012. Division Chief, DeNarc-PE (*Delegacia de repressao ao narcotrafico of Pernambuco*), Recife. Author interview, May 3.

[20] Jilmar. 2012. Military Police Sergeant, Brasilia Teimosa, Recife. Author interviews, June-July.

dimensions can easily be divided into its four principles "zones." Although criminal outcomes in individual favelas are partly interdependent because of behavioral norms learned and enforced through prison gangs (Penglase 2008; Lessing 2010), there are still clear differences that correspond to the conditions of wealth and geography. To a lesser extent this variation exists within different sections of Recife as well.

Drug Economies Compared

Rio de Janeiro has long been the trendsetter of illicit drug use in Brazil, and continues to be its epicenter of consumption. The use of marijuana had been common in favelas since the early nineteenth century, and became popular with middle class youth in the 1960s (Misse and Vargas 2010). Then, in the early 1980s, cocaine shipments en route to Europe and the United States found their way onto the streets of Rio de Janeiro, and local consumption exploded, especially among middle and upper class youth, whose disposable income now infused illegal markets with cash during a time of severe job loss, hyperinflation, political instability, and government fiscal austerity (Leeds 1996; Arias 2006).

Meanwhile, prison gangs oriented their members to establish strongholds in favelas and take over the drug trade there because of the relative safety provided the lack of an effective police presence (Silva 1991). Much of the unprecedented wealth created by multi-class cocaine consumption was therefore funneled through favela-based gangs, who quickly came to represent one of the most important sources of income in their communities. They invested heavily in their war making capabilities to consolidate and expand their markets, and by the end of the decade a series of bloody gang wars

culminated in the control of some seventy percent of Rio's favelas by just one criminal

faction, the *Comando Vermelho* (CV) (McCann 2006). Notwithstanding the use of

violence, gangs also invested in developing better relations with their communities. By

distribuiting part of their wealth in the form of parties, food baskets, emergency services,

and even public works projects, drug traffickers themselves became influential

community leaders.[21]

In Recife, trends in drug consumption differed substantially. Most importantly,

the use of cocaine was never popularized at all, and even today represents only a tiny

portion of the overall drug use.[22] Instead, the drug market was dominated by marijuana

until the late 1990s, and was not centralized in favelas themselves. Although marijuana

traffickers based in favelas did on occasion become influential in their communities, they

did not have the resources to consolidate territorial control or to provide any consistent

type of public good as their counterparts in Rio had done.[23] This comparative lack of

resources is partly due to the much lower profit margins associated with street level

marijuana sales in comparison to cocaine (see OAS 2013). It is also because favela-

based drug traffickers did not have a monopoly on marijuana sales to middle class

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[21] Carlos. 2009. AM president, Chapéu-Mangueira, Rio de Janeiro. Author interview,
June 26.

[22] Fabinet and Bruno. 2012. DeNarc-PE detectives, Recife. Author interview, May 7.

[23] Residents. 2012. Bode, Coque, Santo Amaro, and Isla do Rato Favelas. Author
interviews, May-July.

consumers, who represented the strongest base of drug consumption during until the turn of the century.[24]

When crack cocaine flooded the market in the mid to late 1990s, it superseded marijuana as the primary drug in Recife. But unlike cocaine in Rio de Janeiro, crack use was highly tabooed among the middle and upper classes, and made few inroads into that most lucrative market. Instead, crack consumption tended to concentrate in and around favelas, attracting primarily poor consumers who at least initially could afford crack, which is much cheaper than refined cocaine.[25] On one hand, then, crack cocaine profits were limited by the class bias of consumption trends. On the other, the financial instability of a poor addict population increased levels of violence associated with the drug trade, which frequently interrupted the concentration of drug wealth. For example poor dealers and addicts (and addicted dealers) easily accrued debts, and to avoid being killed for nonpayment, they turned to theft and armed robbery to recover lost income.[26] This attracted increased police attention, resulting in a more rapid turnover of drug traffickers or otherwise lost profits.[27]

Because of the illicit nature of drug trafficking, it is impossible to know specific or overall profits of drug gangs. This preliminary assessment of drug consumption in Rio de Janeiro and Recife, however, provides some indication of the vastly different overall

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[24] Eduardo Machado. 2012. Chief reporter, *Jornal do Comercio,* Recife. Author interview, May 5.

[25] Fabinet and Bruno. 2012. DeNarc-PE detectives, Recife. Author interview, May 7.

[26] Drug trafficker. 2012. Santo Amaro, Recife. Author interview, June 11.

[27] Homicide detectives. 2012. DHPP-PE, Recife. Author interviews, June-July.

income (and concentration of income) generated by street level drug sales between the two cities, and begins to suggest how this difference might affect the development of criminal organizations. A second indicator of this wealth disparity, and one that has had a profound impact on criminal behavior and organizational outcomes, can be deduced from the type of weapons acquired by drug gangs.

In Rio de Janeiro, cocaine profits concentrated in the hands of favela-based gangs attracted an international arms market replete with military grade weaponry. Assault rifles, hand grenades, and even anti-aircraft weapons were smuggled in from as far as Eastern Europe and Russia (Souza 2009). In the 1990s, weapons left over from the end of Cold War civil conflicts found their way in to the hands of gang members, often smuggled in by corrupt police.[28] Weapons produced in Brazil but prohibited for sale there are frequently exported to neighboring countries such as Paraguay, only to be smuggled back in.[29]

The regular use of automatic weapons and hand grenades by drug traffickers caused considerable panic in Brazil, and in 1994, the federal government sent military forces to occupy much of Rio de Janeiro for several weeks. "Operation Rio" not only failed to dismantle the power of drug gangs, however, but also led to an increased militarization of the drug wars themselves, as police in Rio de Janeiro were later universally issued assault rifles (Resende 1995). By the end of the decade homicides and

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[28] Alessandro Molon. 2009. State Legislator (PT), Rio de Janeiro. Author interview, July 1.

[29] Jose Luiz Ratton. 2012. Public Security Advisor to Gov. Eduardo Campos. Author interview, Recife. June 8.

police killings had nearly doubled (Cano 2007), and the open carrying and regular use of such military grade weaponry had become ubiquitous in Rio's favelas.[30]

Unlike in the United States, the purchase or ownership of assault-type rifles by civilians is illegal, and the use of smaller firearms is highly restricted.[31] This means that weapons can only be purchased on the black market, where the cost of acquisition is often many times the market value in countries where these weapons are legal for private owners. According to the Weapons and Explosive Division of the Civil Police, the most common automatic rifles seen among drug traffickers (Belgian-made FAL .762s/G-3s, AK-47 variations, and American made AR-15s) range from $10,000 to $30,000 USD per weapon.[32] Depending on the size of the area being defended and the wealth of the drug market surrounding it, the actual number of these weapons in the hands of drug traffickers varies significantly. Police estimate, however, that any medium to large favela

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[30] Since 2009, more than thirty *Pacifying Police Units* (UPPs) have been installed in Rio's favelas, including nearly all of Rio's South and Center Zones, as well as parts of the North Zone, effectively ending drug traffickers' use of automatic rifles and explosives in those areas. In much of the rest of the city, however, high-powered weaponry continues to be the signature of Rio's drug gangs, distinguishing them from street gangs in most other cities and shaping the dynamics of violence in a particularly deadly way.

[31] Coronel Ibis Silva Pereira. 2011. Military Police, João VI Academy, Rio de Janeiro. Author interview, December 28.

[32] Hugo, Mario. 5/19/2010. "Preço alto de fuzis leva traficantes a atacar polícia no Rio de Janeiro." *R7 Notícias*: http://noticias.r7.com/cidades/noticias/preco-alto-de-fuzis-leva-traficantes-a-atacarem-a-policia-no-rio-de-janeiro-20100529.html

community, drug gangs may possess between 150 and 200 automatic rifles alone,[33] to say nothing of handguns, hand grenades, or even bazookas. At black market prices, the net worth of such arsenals ranges well into the millions. Drug gangs in Rio appear to be able to afford such expenditures. According to estimates of the Civil Police, the Amigos dos Amigos faction that controlled the Rocinha favela until its Pacification in 2011 brought in a gross of $60 million per year in just one South Zone favela.[34]

In stark contrast to the situation in Rio de Janeiro, drug traffickers in Recife typically carry (and can afford) only handguns, the black market price of which typically varies between $500 and $2,000 USD.[35] Before the introduction of crack in the 1990s, which brought with it increased income, drug dealers and other criminals almost exclusively carried simple .38 caliber revolvers and an occasional shotgun.[36] There was a move towards the use of magazine-loaded pistols once the crack cocaine economy flooded the drug market with quick cash, but in general drug trafficking never became lucrative enough to even attract a larger arms market.[37] Although particularly successful street level drug traffickers might earn as much as $2,000 per week, most do not come close to that. In any case, the black arms market has not made larger weapons available

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[33] Major Batista. 2011. BOPE (Batalhão de Operações Policiais Especiais), Rio de Janeiro. Author interview, October 17.

[34] Ruth de Aquino. 2011. "My meeting with Nem," *Epoca Magazine*, November.

[35] "Renato." 2012. Drug trafficker, Paulista, PE. Author interview, May 23.

[36] Residents. 2012. Favelas of Coque, Ilha do Rato, Peixinhos, and Bode, Recife. Author interviews, May-July.

[37] Fabinet and Bruno. 2012. DeNarc-PE detectives, Recife. Author interview, May 7.

to drug traffickers in Recife, which is an indication that the wealth for such transactions is simply not there.

The impact that different types of weapons have on the organization and behavior of armed groups can be highly significant. Logically similar to Geoffrey Parker's (1996) thesis that the advent of siege weapons in the fifteenth century made vertical defense obsolete and compelled political entities to expand defensible territories (and eventually evolve into what we know as modern states), the introduction of high-powered automatic rifles in the favelas of Rio de Janeiro led to dynamic changes in gang warfare and territorial control. Simply stated, the greater effective range of rifles facilitated the control of larger territories, while necessitating greater territorial control to create buffer zones against rival gangs and police.

In the early stages of adoption of high-powered weapons, they might be more of a liability than a competitive advantage because they might evoke envy among other criminals or ire among the police, resulting in the specific targeting of the weapon owner. In the late 1980s, for example, a young drug trafficker in the Santa Marta favela purchased an AK-47 from a corrupt police officer, the first of such weapons to be seen in the favela. While it increased his esteem among his drug trafficking peers (and eventually he would become the "dono" of the favela), he was almost immediately placed on a "most wanted" list and subsequently forced into hiding (Barcellos 2003). A few years later, however, Santa Marta was saturated with similar weapons, and carrying them became essential for the control and defense of the favela.[38]

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[38] Residents. 2012. Santa Marta, Rio de Janeiro. Author interview, January 17.

In Recife, criminals have not reached the threshold beyond which carrying an automatic rifle increases rather than decreases an individual's security. Given the estimated income of "particularly successful" drug traffickers (refer to above), there is certainly a potential market in Recife, but the very few who could afford to purchase heavier weapons have a rational incentive *not* to, because such an exhibition would make them easy targets of police and rival traffickers.[39]

Geography

Scholars have long emphasized the importance of geography for the organizational development and behavior of gangs. Frederick Thrasher argued in the 1920s that gangs were a phenomenon of "interstitial areas," or spaces that intervene between one thing and another. As he put it, "The gang may be regarded as an interstitial element in the framework of society, and gangland as an interstitial region in the layout of the city*"* (Thrasher 1927: 20). Later theorists have devised that the spatial organization of specific neighborhoods influences patterns of gang violence and the social networks gangs create in their communities (Venkatesh 1997; Papachristos et al. 2013).

As informal settlements defined by social, economic, and political exclusion, favelas certainly have some "interstitial" quality that makes gang activity in them unsurprising. High population density and want for infrastructure also arguably influence the relationships gang members form with each other and their communities. I argue, here, however, that geography can have a more profound impact on gangs' organizational development and behavior in two important ways: First, physical geography can affect

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[39] "Renato." 2012. Drug trafficker, Paulista, PE. Author interview, May 23.

the cost (real or perceived) of policing, and consequently facilitate or impede organized criminal development. Secondly, the geographic distribution of wealth within a city can affect gangs' endowment of material capabilities. Where drug gangs dominate the street level drug market, proximity to wealthy neighborhoods may translate into high profits from drug sales. For protection racketeering mafias (discussed in Chapter 4), proximity to semi-informal and bustling commercial districts mean high levels of extractable wealth.

With respect to the physical geography of favelas, Rio de Janeiro and Recife differ substantially as a whole. First, Rio's favelas, which represent about one fifth of the city's population, are both larger and more densely populated than those of Recife (IBGE 2010 Census).[40] Secondly, many of Rio's favelas—and importantly, those where drug gangs first succeeded in monopolizing territorial control and where they were strongest—are complex labyrinths built into the steep mountainsides of the city's Center and South Zones, and are difficult or impossible to access by motor vehicle. In Recife, by contrast, most favelas are physically flat and are gridded block by block by dirt, cobblestone, or paved roads with multiple entry and exit points that are easily accessibly by motor vehicle.

The inaccessibility of many of Rio's favelas by car does not, of course, mean that is impossible for the police to conduct regular patrols or effectively repress crime. That is, in fact, what the Pacifying Police Units have been doing very effectively since 2009 (Cano 2012). It does, however, significantly increase the cost (again, real or perceived) of conducting them, and there are two important explanations for this. First, because favelas are informal settlements often without full legal recognition, police often do not

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[40] According to the IBGE, six percent of Brazilians across the country live in favelas.

feel compelled to patrol areas of ambiguous jurisdiction.[41] Second, police officers do not

like to walk (Sherman 1995).[42] Walking patrols and repressive actions are particularly

difficult and even dangerous in mountainside favelas because of the steep inclines and a

lack of structural organization, as well as the relative ease with which ambushes can be

set up.[43] Likewise, drug traffickers who might be born and raised in the favela can more

easily escape police pursuit, and the absence of roads and the mountainous terrain also

made for more defensible positions (Souza 2009). In short, therefore, lacking any

specific policy of on-foot community policing, police will rarely leave their vehicles to

regularly patrol or pursue crime, as doing so not only makes them more vulnerable to

attacks but also requires more physical energy they may not be willing to expend.

This is precisely the case in many of Rio's favelas, particularly in the city's

Center and South Zones, where drug gangs had become strongest (prior to pacification).

By reducing the willingness of police to patrol or intervene, geography that impeded easy

motor vehicle access facilitated the incubation of drug gangs who were able to openly sell

drugs (make money) and wage war (consolidate territory) with little interference by the

state. This was particularly evident during the early stages of criminal organization in the

1980s, when a series of gang wars, often lasting weeks with no direct police intervention

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[41] Itamar Silva 2009. Community leader, Santa Marta, Rio de Janeiro. Author interview,
June 23.

[42] Although this statement is plainly a stereotype, it is corroborated by interviews with
police in Rio de Janeiro, Recife, and even Albuquerque, New Mexico (2011-2012).

[43] UPP patrol squad. 2012. Sao Carlos favela, Rio de Janeiro. Author interviews,
February 27.

at all, reordered the distribution of power in Rio de Janeiro's favelas in favor of territorial consolidation.[44] This dynamic of high profile open warfare between gangs, characteristically involving scores of gunmen, continues today, although it now occurs almost entirely in communities without UPPs.

With respect to the geographical distribution of wealth within a given city, proximity of wealthy neighborhoods to favelas where drug markets are centralized can significantly increase the material capabilities of drug gangs. This is particularly important in Rio de Janeiro, where consumption of illicit drugs has been high among middle and upper class youth (Arruda et al. 2009). This relationship is much less obvious in Recife in part because middle and upper class drug consumption there is less dependent on favela-based drug gangs. Nevertheless, the proximity of favelas to Recife's Center Zone seems to correspond to increased drug activity and more powerful criminal networks. In both cases, then, a closer look at the internal variation further supports the thesis that criminal wealth and geography matter.

The Anatomy of Rio de Janeiro

The city of Rio de Janeiro is divided into four distinct geographic "zones" (Center, South, North, and West), which are easily distinguishable by their unique economic, social, historical, and topographical characteristics. Likewise, favelas within each geographic zone tend to reflect the characteristics of their surrounding areas, and for analytical purposes can reasonably be lumped together with other favelas of the same zone and

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[44] Itamar Silva 2009. Community leader, Santa Marta, Rio de Janeiro. Author interview, June 23.

compared against those of other zones. The geographical configuration of favelas, and the economic configuration of surrounding formal neighborhoods or districts, both matter. With respect to the behavior of drug gangs, even though a larger "criminal system" in Rio de Janeiro does act as a conforming agent in favelas across the all of Rio de Janeiro,[45] significant differences still exist that can be at least partly attributed to the structural characteristics of the city's specific geographical zones.

Until the early 1900s, most of Rio's poor lived in small street settlements called *cortiços*, which dotted street sides and courtyards in and around Rio de Janeiro's Center Zone.[46] Wealthy residents of the city often saw them as a scourge, however, and created intense pressures on the government to tear them down. By the 1920s most of the *cortiços* had been destroyed, and their inhabitants fled to the nearby hills, forming the first favelas. The very first favela, called "Morro da *Favela*" for the type of wood commonly used in the construction of shacks, was established in the early 1900s on a steep hilltop in the Rio's historic Center Zone,[47] which was the heart of commercial exchange at the time. During the *Estado Novo* era of President Getulio Vargas (1937-1945), favela settlements began to sprout in and around the industrial parks of the low hills and flatlands of Rio's North Zone. Simultaneously, favelas expanded upward on the

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[45] See Chapter 3 for an elaboration on how "criminal systems" orient and constrain criminal behavior in Rio de Janeiro independently of neighborhood-level structural factors.

[46] For an excellent description of this type of informal settlement, read Aluízio Azevedo´s novel, *O Cortiço*, published in1890.

[47] Now called Morro da Providência.

steep mountain slopes of the South Zone as the development and maintenance of the wealthy beachside neighborhoods below attracted cheap labor (Fischer 2008).

Like the cortiços before them, there had always been pressure to forcefully remove favelas, particularly those most proximate to the middle and upper class neighborhoods of the Center and South Zones. During the democratic era (1946-1964), removal efforts more often than not failed, thanks both to popular mobilization to resist (Arias 2006) and elite political and economic interests in exploiting the poor (Fischer 2008). After the military coup of 1964, however, various removal and relocation programs were successfully carried out by the military regime. Between 1964 and 1972, an estimated 139,218 favela residents were forcefully relocated to publicly financed housing districts on the city's outskirts, the beginning the expansion of new favelas into Rio's swampy, flat, and impoverished West Zone (Gay 1994).

These crude descriptive characteristics are still very applicable to the favelas in Rio de Janeiro's distinct geographical zones today. Favelas in the Center Zone are invariably built upon steep mountain slopes or over pinnacled hilltops, and are encircled by wealthy residential neighborhoods and commercial districts below them. Favelas in the South Zone also stretch skyward on steep mountain slopes that hug the five wealthiest neighborhoods in all of Brazil.[48] Some South Zone favelas are also much larger than their Center Zone counterparts. The Rocinha favela alone is home to more than 150,000 people. The favelas of the North Zone, which are perhaps still larger on average, stretch

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[48] Tavares, Karine. 2/26/2013. "Os cincos bairros mais caros do pais estão na Zona Sul do Rio." *O Globo*. http://oglobo.globo.com/economia/imoveis/os-cinco-bairros-mais-caros-do-pais-estao-na-zona-sul-do-rio-7677088

across the variously hilly and flat industrial expanses between Rio's Port Area near downtown and the Galeão International Airport. And in the flat and expansive West Zone, favelas continue to grow within and around low-income suburbs.[49]

The graph (figure 1) below illustrates the basic distribution of a sample of favelas in all four zones of Rio de Janeiro as they fall along the dimensions of geography (scale of mountainous incline) and proximity to wealthy neighborhoods (scale of drug market wealth). With the exception of only a handful of outliers, the stability of drug gangs' territorial control increases in accordance with increases along these dimensions.[50]

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[49] See Landmann et al. (1999) for income inequality statistics by municipal administrative zones.

[50] Unlike most West Zone favelas, Cidade de Deus is proximate to the wealthy coastal district of Barra de Tijuca.

(figure 1) Dimensions of Geography and Proximate Wealth of Favelas in Rio de

Janeiro
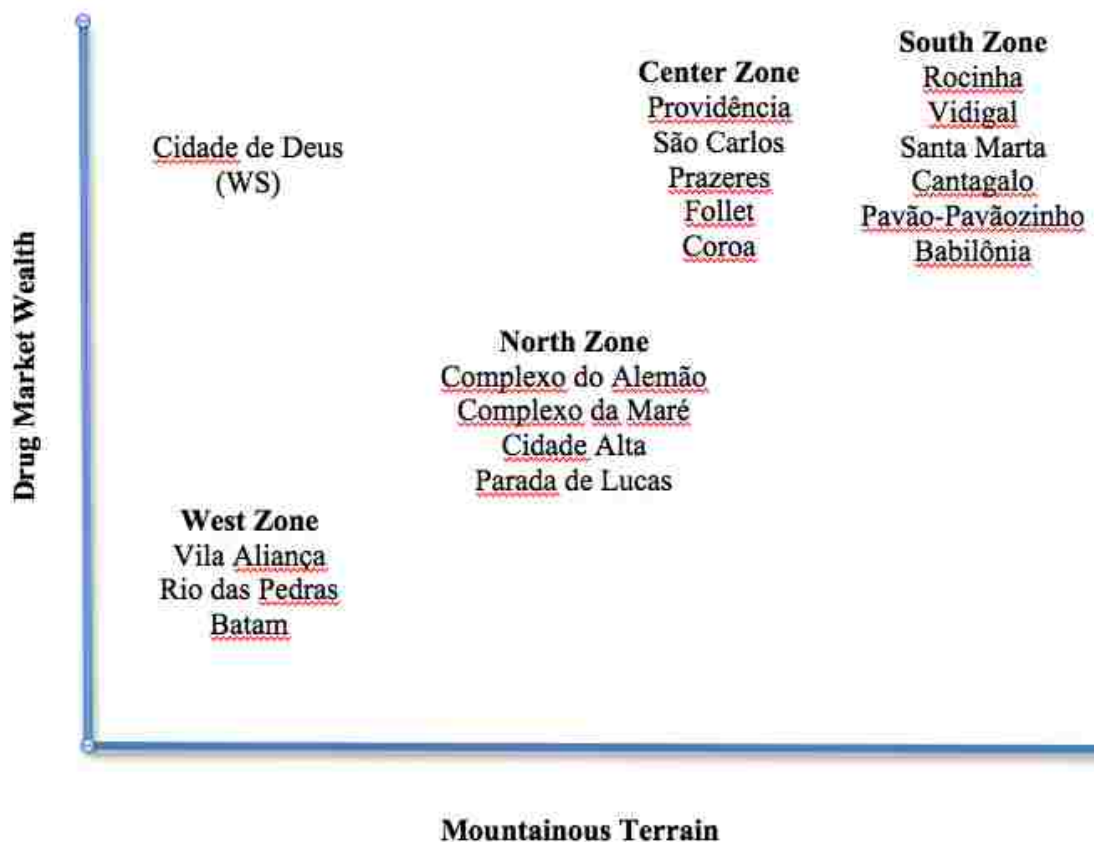
As the material resources/geography thesis would expect, drug gangs established greater

and more stable territorial control in the wealthy and mountainous Center and South

Zones (prior to the installation of UPPs) than anywhere else in the city.[51] For example,

the South Zone sister favelas of Rocinha and Vidigal, which together are home to more

than 200,000 people did not experience any serious factional warfare between 2004 and

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[51] Alberto Araujo. 2011. Court of Justice summons officer, Rio de Janeiro. Author

interviews, October-November.

their eventual Pacification in November of 2011.[52] Both favelas hug two of the wealthiest

neighborhoods in all of Brazil, São Conrado and Leblón, and have been a major drug

distribution center for middle class youth in much of the South Zone. The *Amigos dos

Amigos* (ADA) faction that controlled the two favelas even developed cocaine refinement

capabilities, and according to the Civil Police, had since become one of the primary

wholesale sources for ADA and even some rival controlled favelas across Rio de Janeiro,

although typically each faction coordinates wholesale purchasing independently.[53]

Much of the rest of the South Zone favelas, such as Santa Marta, Cantagalo,

Pavão-Pavãozinho, Babilônia, and Chapéu-Mangueira, have been under relatively stable

control by the *Comando Vermelho* faction since at least the early 2000s.[54] Most of the

Center Zone favelas, including São Carlos, Providência, Prazeres, Follet, and Coroa, have

experienced similar trends of relative stability, but have been involved in more violent

conflict recently than most South Zone favelas. This might be due to differing trends in

drug consumption in the Center Zone, or because of the exceptional proximity of favelas

themselves.[55]

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[52] AM presidents. 2011. Rocinha and Vidigal favelas, Rio de Janeiro. Author interviews,

October-November.

[53] Marcia Brasil. 8/31/2007. "Polícia encontra refinaria de cocaina em favela do Rio."

Folha de São Paulo: http://www1.folha.uol.com.br/fsp/cotidian/ff3108200725.htm

[54] Residents. 2009-2012. Santa Marta, Cantagalo, Pavão-Pavãozinho, Babilônia, and

Chapéu-Mangueira, Rio de Janeiro. Author interviews.

[55] For example, drug traffickers in the favelas of Follet and Coroa, which were controlled

by rival factions and faced each other from nearby hilltops, frequently fired upon one

Favelas in the North of Rio de Janeiro differ significant from those of the South and Center Zones. Drug gangs in the North Zone continue to exercise their power and make war with each other in many favelas, even as UPPs or Federal Army troops have occupied their territory. Where the Pacification program has yet to be implemented, favelas in the North Zone tend to be characterized by a higher level of territorial contestation, and a lower degree of territorial control. In many favelas, gang territorial control is entirely split between two or more gangs. For example, the flat North Zone favela complex of Maré, which constitutes sixteen different favela entities, is cleanly divided by all of Rio de Janeiro's major criminal factions: the *Amigos dos Amigos* faction, the *Comando Vermelho*, the *Terceiro Comando*, and even a militia (police-run mafia) group (Sousa 2012). Many other favelas in the North Zone continue to change hands frequently, or are engaged in regular offensive and defensive warfare with rival factions.[56]

As a whole, Rio de Janeiro's West Zone stands out in starkest contrast to the rest of the city. Located far from the commercial districts of the Center Zone, the touristic causeways and wealthy neighborhoods of the South Zone, and the industrial and lower middle class areas of the North Zone, it seems to be the forgotten half of Rio de Janeiro. Nevertheless, it continues to grow, expanding horizontally up the low and flat river basin of the *Baixada Fluminense*. Large favela communities have grown out the public works

another from behind their respective fortifications. (Witnessed during the first phase of the research period (2009-2010)).

[56] Residents. 2012. Parada de Lucas, North Zone, after an early morning invasion by 30+ *Comando Vermelho* soldiers. Author interviews, March 8.

projects of the 1960s (Gay 1994). Others have sprouted within and around mostly low income or lower middle class suburbs, and it is often difficult to distinguish one type of settlement (formal) from another (informal).

Like favelas elsewhere in the city, drug gangs in the West Zone acquired high-powered weapons and went to war for territory frequently since the 1980s, and as they were affiliated with the same major criminal factions centralized within the state prison system, they organized and behaved in similar ways. And as long as the state or other armed rivals paid little attention to them, they were often able to establish a considerable degree of territorial control in some areas. With little access to wealthy drug consumer markets, however, they had far fewer material resources than their counterparts in other geographical zones of the city, and when their existence was threatened by police incursion or other armed groups, they quickly fell apart.[57]

Beginning in the early 2000s, another type of armed group, known as *milícias* (militias—see Chapter 4), sought to challenge the power of drug trafficking gangs across Rio de Janeiro, particularly in the West Zone where drug gangs were weakest. Militias, which are predominantly protection racketeering organizations composed of police and other state agents, often worked by themselves or in conjunction with official police operations to root out and kill local drug traffickers, and then replace the gangs' territorial

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[57] Valeria Aragao Sadio. 2012. DCOD Chief (*Delegacía de Combate às Drogas*), Rio de Janeiro. Author interview, February 15.

control with their own in order to capture and exploit those communities economically.[58] Between 2006 and 2008 alone, militias captured as many as ninety-two favelas from drug gangs in the West Zone (Cano and Looty 2008). Today, according to a recent study funded by the *Instituto de Estudos Sociais e Politicos* (IESP), militias have usurped power in some 454 favelas, or nearly 45 percent of all favelas in Rio de Janeiro, the vast majority of which are in the West Zone (Zaluar and Barcellos 2013).

Militias also advanced on the North Zone, but were much less successful in ousting drug traffickers or maintaining territorial strongholds. In the *Cidade Alta* favela, for example, a militia group succeeded in routing drug traffickers from the Comando Vermelho faction in 2008, but then fled a few months later when neighboring CV gangs lent support to retake the community.[59] Within the favela complex of Maré, the northernmost community and the smallest of sixteen, has been controlled by a militia group since 2008. Protected by highways bordering it on three sides and a Military Police base, the local militia has successfully fended off attacks from drug traffickers but has not expanded its territory (Sousa 2012). Several other small favelas and low-income suburbs have been affected by some type of militia encroachment, but the vast majority of North Zone favelas as a whole continue to be dominated by drug gangs, who for their part continue to fight viciously among themselves.

In the favelas of Rio's wealthy Center and South Zones, by contrast, militia groups have made almost not appearance at all, which can explained by the relative

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[58] Major Batista. 2011. BOPE (Batalhão de Operações Policiais Especiais), Rio de Janeiro. Author interview, October 17.

[59] Residents. 2012. Parada de Lucas, North Zone. Author interviews, March 8.

strength of drug gangs there, as well as their entrenched relationships with their host communities.[60] In other words, the success of militia encroachment in favelas is inversely related to the strength of drug gangs, and the strength of drug gangs is a function of both material capabilities and of geographical conditions that facilitate or restrict the interference of other powers, whether they be the police or other armed criminal groups. Militias, for their part, typically depend on different economic structures than drug gangs, which gives them a particular advantage in West Zone of Rio de Janeiro, but less so in other zones. The practice of residential or commercial extortion relies much more on semi-informal economies with high levels of cash flow and little state oversight (refer to Chapter 4), while the local drug market relies more heavily on middle and upper class consumption trends typical of areas where the state has a stronger presence.

Inside Recife

Favela-type informal settlements in Recife, as in Rio de Janeiro, also began to appear around the turn of the Nineteenth Century, although they only earned the name "favela" some decades later. Earlier settlements were typically bi-products of the sugar industry or other agricultural production industries, and were often informally granted permission to settle on lands owned by sugar refineries, slaughterhouses, or on unclaimed or disputed lands, much of which were hardly inhabitable marshlands (Freitas 2003). Highly

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[60] Several interviewees suggested this explanation, including Major Batista of BOPE, (October 17, 2011), Councilwoman Andreia Gouveda (November 22, 2011), and Cel. Ibis Pereira, Military Police (December 28, 2012).

ambiguous and often contradictory property laws in Brazil encouraged such informal settling as a cheap way for elites to provide their labor pools housed (Fischer 2008).

In the 1930s and 1940s, as many of the old sugar refineries began to close, other small industries began to sprout in and around Recife, such as textiles and food production.[61] These industries attracted increasing numbers of rural poor who had begun leaving their lands in the inland *sertão* region, which had been experiencing drought since the early 1900s (Buckley 2010). The continuing flood of rural to urban migrants during the years of the Second Republic (1946-1964) was accompanied by increased organizational activity among the poor, and strategic land invasions were organized all over the city, thus dramatically expanding the favela population in Recife. As in Rio de Janeiro, the government institutionalized favela removal and relocation programs during the dictatorship years (especially 1964-1972), and likewise (as in Rio) those same communities soon became known as favelas themselves as subsequent land invasions filled their public spaces and expanded them.[62] Today, some 14 percent of Recife's territory is composed of favelas, comprising nearly 60 percent of the city's population (Koster 2009).

Geographically, there is only subtle variance in the layout of favelas in Recife, and they are not easily categorized by reference to distinct geographic zones. Like Rio, Recife is also divided into Center, North, South, and West Zones, but these areas have less meaning for the development and character of favelas. This is in large part because

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[61] Osana. 2012. Director, "Galpao," Santo Amaro, Recife. Author interview, May 10.

[62] Orisvaldo 2012. Director, Grupo Comunidade Assumindo as Crianças, Peixinhos, Recife. Author interview, May 28.

the city is almost entirely flat, excepting a few small hills in the North Zone. To the extent that geographical differences between favelas matter for gang behavior, it is more appropriately measured by infrastructural disparities that affect regular and affective police intervention. For example, the disorganized labyrinth of tiny roads bisecting the downtown favela of Santo Amaro impede the transit of even small vehicles. In the sprawling expanses of the South Zone favelas of Jaboatão, flooding has carved impassible gorges into the earthen streets. Most other favelas within the metropolitan area of Recife, however, are easily traversed by any type of motor vehicle.[63]

With respect to proximity of favelas to middle and upper class neighborhoods, Recife's geographical zones follow similar trends as in Rio de Janeiro. The proximity of wealth and poverty is much less consequential for the behavior and development of drug gangs, however, because middle class drug consumption in Recife is not closely wed with favela-based gangs. Although it has been increasing in recent years, cocaine consumption is still very low in Recife, and primary drugs consumed by middle and upper class (marijuana, cocaine, ecstasy, etc.) youth are typically acquired by sources that are independent of favela gangs.[64] Perhaps where the economic dynamic of bordering formal neighborhoods most matters is in Recife's downtown or Center Zone, where there are particularly high levels of crack cocaine addiction within and around favelas.[65] The Center Zone favelas of Santo Amaro and Coelhos are particularly impacted by this.

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[63] Participant observation (ride-a-longs) with DHPP homicide detectives (June-July 2012).

[64] Fabinet and Bruno. 2012. DeNarc-PE detectives, Recife. Author interview, May 7.

[65] Participant observation and interviews with members of the state funded *Atitude* program for drug rehabilitation treatment (June 2012).

If variance in geography and external drug markets only marginally affect gang behavior and development in Recife favelas, two other factors clearly do: the size and density of favelas on one hand, and their degree of poverty or precariousness on the other. Logically, the larger a territory is, the more difficult it should be to control, and this is consistent with gang outcomes in all of Recife's largest favelas, which average between 30-50,000 inhabitants each. For example, the Center-South Zone favela of Coque, with a population of around 40,000, has been disputed by at least five distinct gang sets since the 1990s when crack cocaine flooded the market.[66] The Santo Amaro favela in downtown Recife is home to around 30,000 people, and its territory is violently contested by three umbrella gangs.[67] By contrast, in the Ilha do Rato favela, a community of 2,500 in the Espinheiro neighborhood that originally formed during the post-war land grabs, one loose but cooperative network of drug traffickers has been able to maintain control for several years.[68]

Referring back to Koster's (2009) estimate that 60 percent of Recifenses live in favelas, this number, if true, is deceiving. The attribution of "favela" or "slum" is often applied to broad range of community types, all of which imply "subnormal and irregular settlements" (IBGE)[69] and are characterized by informality and social exclusion (Burgos 2002), but nevertheless may vary beyond reasonable common classification. This is especially the case in Recife, where small and spontaneous settlements constructed of

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[66] Alexandre Freitas. 2012. Sociologist, UFPE, Recife. Author interview, May 16.

[67] Osana. 2012. Director, "Galpao," Santo Amaro, Recife. Author interview, May 10.

[68] João José. 2012. AM president, Ilha do Rato, Recife. Author interview, May 25.

[69] Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatistica

scrap wood and metal frequently appear under bridges, between buildings or roads, on empty lots, tucked into wooded areas, or extending into waterways on stilts, while many other "favelas" are hardly distinguishable from or integrated into low-income formal neighborhoods called suburbs, and consist of much more permanent dwellings. Perhaps most favelas consist of a mixture of both types of settlements, thus demonstrating clear class stratification among the poor. While older and more stable families invest in more permanent structures, new homeless families continue to move in, building with whichever materials are available.

Although violence certainly occurs at both extremes of the favela, there is a common prejudice in Recife that the shanty settlements of the extreme poor frequently "bring" violence to the rest of community.[70] With respect to actual homicides, however, there does not appear to be any significant difference in where people are killed, although recent squatter communities tend to be less trusting of, cooperative with, or reliable for police investigations.[71] Further, due to both the extreme poverty and the high level of instability of shanty settlements, gang development is often truncated or otherwise small in scope. More developed favelas (or the more developed areas of favelas), by contrast, provide the stability and relative wealth necessary to incubate criminal gangs more often. As a whole, however, drug gangs have been unsuccessful in consolidating stable and complete territorial in any major favela, and in stark contrast to their counterparts in Rio de Janeiro.

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[70] AM presidents 2012. Ilha do Rato, Brasilia Teimosa, and Bode favelas, Recife. Author interviews, May-June.

[71] Homicide detectives. 2012. DHPP-PE, Recife. Author interviews, June-July.

Conclusion

The first step in establishing effective and stable authority is to control territory. Gangs, like any other armed group, such as insurgent organizations or agents of the state itself, often have a rational incentive to control territory in order to decrease the risk of citizen denunciation or gang defection, and consequently increase their potential for both survival and profit. It is often very difficult for gangs to do this, however. As generally small units of individuals operating with few resources in a highly competitive market, they often do not acquire the material capabilities to take and maintain control of large areas. Furthermore, as illegal actors, they often must compete for territorial directly with the state itself, which for its vastly superior resources and its more effective claims to legitimacy can easily truncate the development of territorially embedded organized crime. Nevertheless, gangs have in some cases established territorial control, and from there have gone on to develop full-fledged authority structures in their host communities, thus dominating political and social life.

In this chapter's comparison of drug gangs in the favelas of Rio de Janeiro and Recife, two of Brazil's most violent cities, I evaluate two structural conditions that help explain the great variance in outcomes at the early stages of gang territorial expansion and control: Drug economies and geography. In Rio de Janeiro, high levels of middle class drug consumption that is intimately tied to favela-based distribution networks helped to concentrate profits among drug gangs who could, for their part, convert their wealth into the material capabilities necessary to control large swaths of territory. The

establishment and maintenance of this control was facilitated further by mountainous terrain and high population density, which discouraged or impeded regular and effective police intervention.   Drug gangs in Recife, by contrast, had far fewer resources and were more easily targeted by police intervention, and only on very rare occasion were they able to consolidate territorial control.

Image Bank[72]

The South Zone Rocinha favela in Rio de Janeiro (population est. 150,000) is only minimally accessible by motor vehicle. It was under the stable control of the Amigos dos Amigos drug faction until its "pacification" in November 2011. Today nearly 700 UPP (Pacifying Police Unit) officers conduct regular foot patrols for the first time in the favela's history.

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[72] All photos in this manuscript were taken by the author between 2011 and 2012.

The hilly Alemão favela complex in Rio de Janeiro's North Zone (population est. 150,000-200,000) was the power center of the Comando Vermelho drug faction until it was occupied by the military in 2010.

The Mangueira favela in Rio de Janeiro's Center Zone was painted green on orders of the local drug boss in an effort to confuse police and rival gang members in the São Carlos favela, which stands on an opposite hilltop (where this photo was taken).

The West Zone favela of Rio das Pedras, Rio de Janeiro (populations est. 40,000) is known as the "birthplace of militias." The militia group that has controlled the favela since the late 1990s, has expanded its control over numerous other West Zone favelas.

At least five rival drug gangs and many subgroups vie for territorial control in the Coque favela (populations est. 40,000) in Recife's Center Zone.

Stilted shanties called *palafitas* border the favela of Bode in Recife's South Zone.

The Santo Amaro favela in downtown Recife (populations est. 30,000) has earned notoriety for being the city's most violent area. Three umbrella gangs and many subgroups vie for control of the favela.

Chapter 2

Building Criminal Authority

Authority structures can exist independently of territorial control, although the two concepts are intimately related. Authority itself only assumes that one has the power to make decisions that others feel obligated to comply with, and this can happen without physically controlling territory as long as no one else controls it either. If a power broker with coercive capacity begins to dictate law in contradiction to the will an authority figure without it, however, territorial control then becomes elemental to the practice of effective authority. It is in part for this reason that power struggles often manifest in territorial disputes, in which the consolidation of territorial control becomes central.

But controlling territory and the population living within it can be expensive. To reduce the cost of this control, armed groups often seek mechanisms to decrease their reliance on purely coercive means of control, investing instead in identity-based norms of acquiescence. People or institutions in power, for example, make great efforts to appear "legitimate" so that their populations adhere to laws voluntarily rather than having to be forced to (Smith 2007). Gangs, too, will often attempt to improve their image among their host communities in order to reduce the likelihood that residents will cooperate with the police or with rival gangs (Venkatesh 2008).

In Rio de Janeiro, drug gangs not only succeeded in consolidating territorial control in favelas, but also established elaborate self-legitimating authority structures that significantly reduced the cost of control, and likewise, increased their chances of survival.

The opposite is true of Recife, where drug gangs neither achieved any real territorial control nor made consistent efforts to nurture positive relations with their host communities.   To understand this difference in criminal behavior and outcomes, this chapter compares the history of informal authority construction in the favelas of Rio de Janeiro and Recife, asking why and how drug gangs strove to establish a parallel governance in one place and not another.

To begin with, I argue that the lack of regular and effective state presence in a given community is the *primary* condition under which some form of non-state entity will develop authoritative functions, whether is sought out by residents seeking order and material welfare or it is imposed upon them.   It is not necessary, however, that this informal authority be criminal, violent, structured, or monopolistic.   Indeed, perhaps most communities lacking regular and effective state presence are characterized by diffuse and overlapping authority structures that are predominantly *non*-criminal.   The tendency for such authorities to be criminalized, or be created out of armed criminal groups that succeed in monopolizing territorial control is a matter of exceptionality.

The criminalization of authority structures does happen, however, as is illustrated by the case of the favelas of Rio de Janeiro.   In order to better understand this type of development, I argue that it is important to evaluate two interrelated factors that affect local political organization in areas with irregular or ineffective state presence: 1) The structure of different criminal systems, and; 2) the policy and behavior of the state as represented by the police.

In Rio de Janeiro, a criminal system centralized around highly organized prison gangs created mechanisms by which gang leadership could control street level drug

traffickers, who they strategically oriented their street-level members to be more responsive to community needs. Meanwhile, the state's policing strategy, which was characterized by sporadic and extreme violence, helped to fuse the identity of favela residents with that of drug traffickers in the face of what was perceived as a common enemy. Criminality in Recife, by contrast, remained decentralized and organizationally undeveloped both inside state prisons and in the streets, such that there has been no effective incentive or mechanism for criminal gangs to control the behavior of others outside of their immediate circle. The police in Recife, furthermore, have been far more benign in their application of lethal violence (at least while on-duty), which I argue here has allowed them to avoid alienating non-criminal populations to the same extent as in Rio de Janeiro. Because of this, favela residents have not sought alliance with drug traffickers, who for their part remained relatively isolated from local political life.

I make three rationalist assumptions about the behavior of human communities and the criminal organizations that operate within them. First, citing a long history of political philosophers,[73] people have a preference for both social order and material welfare over disorder and destitution, and they will tolerate or attempt to seek out some form of political authority to provide such benefits where these are lacking. Secondly, criminal enterprises will seek to establish political and social control of territory in the absence of an effective authority that can mitigate the costs of illicit market competition

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[73] This with respect to Hobbes, Lock, Weber, as well as Huntington, Tilly, and countless others who have studied the development of political authority recently or in centuries past.

(see Gambetta 1993).[74] Specifically, where the state is incapable or unwilling to effectively investigate and punish homicide, criminal groups will attempt to protect themselves by securing territorial sovereignty, creating a safe zone for market activity as well as physical survival.   To the extent they achieve this, they may resemble primitive forms of predatory states (Tilly 1985: Skaperdas 2001). Lastly, criminal groups that control territory will invest in improving their relationship with their host communities in order to reduce the cost of that control (i.e. minimize risk of defection), which by coercion alone is exorbitant. Providing public goods, like Olson's (2000) stationary bandit, is one way to achieve this.   Promoting a perception of legitimacy is another (see Smith 2007), and territorially embedded authorities of any type are likely to do both.

Taken together, these assumptions allow us to understand how criminal groups might rationally decide to "give back" to their communities in the form of local governance and public goods provision, rather than pursue only short-term goals of wealth maximization. It also helps us understand why non-criminal publics might acquiesce to (refrain from defecting from or even be complicit with) a criminal authority that is willing and able to guarantee order, which then creates a mutually reinforcing system of authority and acquiescence.

The provision of effective order in the first place, however, is only achievable once territorial control is secured, which is no small feat for criminal gangs in a highly competitive market. To explain this process, it is therefore necessary to explore intervening variables that might facilitate territorial control. In the previous chapter I

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[74] According to Gambetta, the Sicilian Mafia developed as a third party guarantor of market transactions in the absence of effective state authority.

discussed the role of material resources and physical geography in facilitating territorial dominance. Here I explore the effects of systemic criminal organization and the role of the police in fusing the fates of non-criminal publics and criminal groups.

Inadequate State Presence and Informal Authority

Despite myriad claims to the contrary, the state is present in the favelas of Rio de Janeiro and Recife (Arias 2006; Freitas 2003). State presence, however, is typically not adequate to meet the most basic needs of favela populations, particularly with respect to guarantees of security, welfare, and dispute resolution. For want of these things, favela residents have often sought out non-state entities to provide them.. The structures of authority born out of such reciprocal relationships may evolve to be centralized and hierarchical (resembling the state itself) or remain diffuse and overlapping.

Authority structures in the early favelas of Rio de Janeiro were at best diffuse and overlapping, but were nonetheless present (Fischer 2008). In the post-war era favelas grew substantially as migrants moved in from poorer regions to meet the needs of industrial growth in the Brazilian Southeast, which sparked both external opposition to favelas themselves and created a greater demand within favelas for order and material welfare. Numerous authoritative entities developed in response to those needs. The most important associative organization among these were the Residents' Associations (*Associações de Moradores*, or AMs), which were originally organized to block favela removal efforts and lobby the state for scarce resources (Arias 2006). Partly for fear that the rapidly growing AMs would be drawn to the Communist Party, the state colluded with liberal elements of the Catholic Church to promote and orient their growth, and by

the 1960s they had become the primary direct link between favela residents and the state (Gay 1994).

By virtue of their ability to mobilize political action and of their de facto recognition as the legitimate representative bodies of favela communities, the AMs developed various proto-governance roles, including basic dispute resolution and the distribution of state goods (Diniz 1982). Since the AMs lacked any coercive capacity, however, various other forms of authority developed along side of the AMs to ensure a semblance of order. Few of these ever developed a monopoly of authority. In many favelas, independent vigilante groups known as *Policia Mineira* formed to regulate social behavior and enforce local norms (Arias 2006). By the turn of the Twenty-first Century, some of these groups evolved into what today are called *Milícias*, which describe a range of criminalized police groups that operate sophisticated protection rackets (Zaluar and Conceição 2007 (see also chapter 3)). With the rise of *jogo de bicho*[75] in the 1950s, another type of authority developed. Local bosses known as *bicheiros* came to control one of the most important economic resources in favelas, and consequently also became influential to social and political organization. (Misse 1999; Dowdney 2003).

Recognized from the outside as community leaders, many of these informal authoritative entities developed clientelistic relationships with local politicians or with other government officials, who provided patronage and protection in exchange for a promise of the votes (Gay 1994). These relationships, which depended on local leaders persuading entire communities to vote one way or another, effectively territorialized informal authority structures in Rio de Janeiro's favelas, even while they remained

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[75] An illegal but semi-tolerated gambling game that is very popular in Rio de Janeiro.

diffuse and overlapping. As democratic processes were phased back in during the early 1980s, the territorial imperatives of political success intensified further as local power brokers and larger political actors increasingly engaged in clientelist exchange. The drug traffickers who succeeded in monopolizing and consolidating control in Rio's favelas later in the decade inherited this territorially embedded structure of authority (Dowdney 2003).

In the favelas of Recife, the state was never significantly more or less present in any official capacity than in those of Rio de Janeiro, and likewise favela residents in Recife began to coalesce around informal authority figures early on. However, there were significant differences in the structures of authority that appeared in Recife, even if many of actors were similar in nature. For example, the Catholic Church also helped to organize and orient Residents' Associations (AMs) in Recife, which played a significant role in mobilizing favela residents to resist removal efforts and lobby for state assistance from the 1960s through the 1980s.[76] But the AMs never became a political force comparable to their counterparts in Rio de Janeiro, and today play a much more restricted political role in most of Recife's favelas. *Jogo de Bicho* gambling circuits existed in Recife, too, but the game was much less popular than in Rio de Janeiro, and its bosses did not establish their influence within the geopolitical context of favelas, but instead in the old urban center of Recife.[77] As a result, bicheiros rarely developed political or

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[76] Orisvaldo 2012. Director, Grupo Comunidade Assumindo as Crianças, Peixinhos, Recife. Author interview, May 28.

[77] Luciano Oliveira. 2012. Faculty, Political Science, UFPE, Recife. Author interview, June 28.

authoritative functions in favelas.   Also similar to the Policia Mineira in Rio de Janeiro, death squads operated all over Recife, but differed in that they were generally contracted by local elites rather than developing organically out of a community's appeals for someone to establish order.[78]

Probably the earliest informal kind of "law" in Recife's favelas was that which was created and enforced by so-called *capangas*,[79] a term that refers to informal armed guards or thugs who are hired by local political bosses, large landowners, or businessmen for matters such as private protection and labor control.[80]   The use of capangas to informally control labor and resolve property disputes has a long history much of Brazil, dating back to early days of slavery.[81]   Capangas played a significant role in the historical development of Recife's favelas, too, as local elites gave them privileged access to land in exchange for protecting property and commercial interests, as well as keeping the resident labor pools in line.[82]   The development of authority structures in Recife's favelas therefore differs from those of Rio de Janeiro insofar that they were created by an oligarchy seeking hierarchical social and labor control.

In the favela of Coque, for example, capangas were hired by local producers of sugar cane and shipping companies to protect lines of trade in the early 1900s. Due to its

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[78] Paulo. 2012. Journalist, Jornal de Comercio, Recife. Author interview, April 26.

[79] See Perrisse, Gabriel (2010). *Palavras e Orígens: Considerações Etimológicas*, 2ª ed, Sao Paolo, Editora Saraiva.

[80] AM president. 2012. Alto do Pascoal, Recife. Author interview, July 8.

[81] Idalício. 2012. Former owner of a sugarcane plantation. Author interview, May 4.

[82] Alexandre Freitas. 2012. Sociologist, UFPE, Recife. Author interview, May 16.

proximity to the city's port, the capangas settled on the island of *Joanna Bezerra* (the community on which is called Coque) near downtown Recife along with hundreds of poor working families, many of whom were employed by the same industry. As privately sanctioned wielders of coercion, and in the absence of state authority, the capangas quickly developed broad authoritative functions over Coque's other inhabitants early on, thus forming a crude network of de facto governing families. These families became known for violent feuding and none of them ever consolidated power over the whole island community. The feuds themselves, however, were relatively stable, often lasting several generations and to some extent still affecting social dynamics today (Freitas 2003).[83]

Similarly, when the hilltop favela of Alto do Pascoal in Recife's North Zone was occupied in the early twentieth century by poor laborers employed by a local sugar refinery upon whose land they settled, the refinery foremen (or capangas) were given privileged access to land their in exchange for maintaining order. Known for violence, the capangas rode around on horseback armed with clubs and revolvers, policing the community of laborers both in the refinery and on the hilltop.   In the absence of any other coercive force or effective associative entity, they were the only authority to speak of in Alto do Pascoal.[84]

Most of Recife's early favelas were established on or near the properties of the industries that attracted and employed their populations, often in agreement with the

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[83] Alexandre Freitas. 2012. Sociologist, UFPE, Recife. Author interview, May 16.

[84] "Nelsinho." 2012. Military Police sergeant, Alto do Pascoal, Recife. Author interview, July 8.

owners of those industries.[85] It was therefore a common strategy of those industries to extend their coercive practice of labor control from the workplace to the home, and capangas were the resident agents of that control. Furthermore, the "illegal" settlement status of favelas in Recife—and all over Brazil—meant that local populations had very little recourse against abuses (see Fischer 2008). Capangas, therefore, were given broad discretion to govern as they pleased.

But the power of capangas never became fully embedded territorial control, nor did they develop sophisticated authority structures. This can be explained for two reasons. First, although capangas were a privileged class among the poor, they had few resources to draw from to dominate territory or to provide any kind of welfare to residents. Secondly, their relationship with local political elite was much less developed. Unlike Policia Mineira, bicheiros, or AMs in Rio de Janeiro, capangas were not autonomous actors who sought out to engage in reciprocal exchange (votes for goods) with clientelist politicians, but rather thuggish employees of the economic elite who were paid a minimum to help maintain an oppressive social order. Their power was intimately tied to specific industries, and it extended primarily over corresponding labor communities instead of territorially bound populations as a whole. This meant that when those industries fell into decline, so did the capangas' authority.[86]

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[85] Osana. 2012. Director, "Galpao," Santo Amaro, Recife. Author interview, May 10.

[86] Alexandre Freitas. 2012. Sociologist, UFPE, Recife. Author interview, May 16.

Indeed a number of major economic and social changes in the 1970s and 1980s eroded the power of capangas, and a new set of actors superseded them.[87] Residents' Associations flourished for a time in many favelas, and their success in mobilizing favela populations bypassed traditional authority figures altogether. Capangas fell further into the shadows when informal court systems were set up by police *comissarios* to resolve civil and criminal disputes in many favelas (Oliveira 1987). Usually reflecting alliances between police and local business owners, these informal courts circumvented or even targeted the authoritative power of the *capangas*.

Far more devastating to any previous informal authority structure in Recife's favelas, however, was the introduction and rapid spread of crack cocaine during the mid-to-late 1990s. Unlike in Rio de Janeiro, refined cocaine did not flood market in the 1980s, and even today represents on a miniscule portion of the illicit narcotics market in Recife. Instead, marijuana continued to be the primary drug available on the streets.[88] During this time drug-related violence increased steadily but remained relatively low by Brazilian standards, and therefore did not dramatically upset existing authority structures. By 1998, however, crack cocaine had overwhelmed the marijuana market, and due to the sudden influx of illicit wealth and the social instability associated with crack addiction, it had brought with it an unprecedented increase in criminal and lethal violence.[89]

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[87] Orisvaldo 2012. Director, Grupo Comunidade Assumindo as Crianças, Peixinhos, Recife. Author interview, May 28

[88] Luis Andrey. 2012. Division Chief, DeNarc-PE (*Delegacia de repressao ao narcotrafico of Pernambuco*), Recife. Author interview, May 3.

[89] Fabinet and Bruno. 2012. DeNarc-PE detectives, Recife. Author interview, May 7.

Registered yearly homicides alone jumped from 714 in 1996 to 1,115 just two years later (Nobrega 2008). Now hovering over 90 per 100,000 habitants, Recife's homicide rate began to exceed those of Brazil's previously most violent cities, Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo, which at the turn of the century were 56 per 100,000 and 64 per 100,000, respectively (Mapa da Violência 2013).

Responding to the public scare provoked by increased crime and violence, successive state governors, Miguel Arraes de Alencar (1995-1999) and Jarbas Vasconcelos (1999-2006), authorized in late 1990s a series of repressive police crackdowns in favelas across Recife, during which numerous gang leaders and drug traffickers were arrested or in some cases killed.[90] These reactive policies were similar in nature to the policies in Rio de Janeiro, although they were much less lethal. Nevertheleses, they were disastrous, as they served to alienate favela populations who felt indiscriminately targeted by the police while provoking even more youth violence.[91] Once the authority of more established drug traffickers was compromised, younger and more violent drug traffickers went to war with one another.[92] Between police sweeps and gang wars, there was little opportunity for authority structures to develop amidst the expansion of crack. One "system" of informal authority collapsed, and no other was able to take its place.

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[90] Coronel Paolo Roberto Cabral. 2012. Military Police Chief, Comando de Policiamento da Capital (CPC), Recife. Author interview, June 4.

[91] Jose Luiz Ratton. 2012. Public Security Advisor to Gov. Eduardo Campos. Author interview, Recife. June 8.

[92] Alexandre Freitas. 2012. Sociologist, UFPE, Recife. Author interview, May 16.

In sum, informal authority structures developed early on in the development of favelas in both Rio de Janeiro and Recife, but they did so in different ways and to different degrees. In Rio de Janeiro, Residents' Associations, vigilante groups, and gambling bosses became increasingly invested in territorial control to facilitate both popular mobilization and clientelist exchange. When cocaine consumption exploded in the 1980s, drug traffickers in Rio de Janeiro at least partly inherited these imperatives of territorial control, out of which it made logical sense to attempt to consolidate political power in order to survive. In Recife, where *capangas* continued feuding violently in most communities up through their eventual demise, no other entity came close to monopolizing territorial control. There drug traffickers inherited a relatively much weaker, more fragmented structure of authority (Freitas 2003).

But drug trafficking gangs in Rio evolved into something much more organizationally elaborate and socially invasive than their predecessors, which is something *inherited* authority structures cannot fully explain.   This is of particular concern because in most places and times, youth gangs seldom assert power over communities as a whole. To explain this anomaly, it is important to dig deeper into the mechanisms that drive the construction of authority, which in the case of *criminal* authority I posit should be evaluated along three dimensions: a) societal demand for order and welfare, and the gangs' credible ability to provide it; b) the structure and agency of criminal actors, and; c) the policy and behavior of the state. In Rio de Janeiro's favelas, all three of these dimensions aligned to favor the catapulting of otherwise common street gangs to a position of (semi) organized political authority. In Recife they did not.

Legitimating Crime in Rio de Janeiro

Communities need mechanisms to resolve conflicts, allocate scarce resources, and enforce contracts. Armed to the teeth and a flush with cash, drug traffickers in Rio de Janeiro during the 1980s were among the most capable of providing necessary services, especially as recession devastated the Brazilian economy. Drug traffickers also had a rational incentive to provide such services in order to decrease the cost of territorial control upon which their livelihoods (and lives) depended. Understanding, however, that the rationality of criminal behavior is often bounded by high degrees of uncertainty, judgment error, and conflict between short and long term interests (Brezina 2002), the fact that drug traffickers actually did do this, in apparent convergence with the interests of residents seeking order and material welfare, is still somewhat puzzling. For example, in Recife, and perhaps most other cities in Brazil, drug traffickers have typically not engaged in long term strategic efforts to improve their image among local populations, and instead have been guided by the more short term interests of immediate gain.

Here I argue that the openly armed monopolies of violence that drug traffickers established in Rio de Janeiro's favelas helped convince residents that gangs could credibly guarantee order, while at the same time it eliminated alternative sources or local maintenance of order. Secondly, the centralization of prison gangs allowed imprisoned gang leaders to strategically orient and constrain the behavior of their favela based members, compelling them to respond to community needs. Finally, the exceptionally violent and sporadic nature of Rio de Janeiro's police helped to push non-criminal residents into a de facto alliance with drug traffickers.

Order and Welfare

A series of propitious conditions converged during the initial phase of Brazil's democratization to make drug traffickers a centerpiece of favela life in Rio de Janeiro. At the same time that cocaine consumption first exploded, attracting new recruits and more weapons, Rio de Janeiro's first organized prison gang, the Comando Vermelho (CV) sought to establish bases of power in favelas, and began eliminating or incorporating independent drug traffickers and local power brokers (Silva 1991). Although the resulting gang wars were often high profile and dangerous, the police took a largely hands-off approach to this violence, thus allowing the consolidation of power of victorious gangs. Gang battles sometimes lasted weeks without police intervention.[93]

The police had never maintained a regular presence in favelas, but their absence was particularly important during the first years of the new republic. After Leonel Brizola (1983-1987) was elected Governor, he pushed a human rights-focused public security agenda that explicitly prohibited certain kinds of police action in favelas. Nighttime incursions, for example, were halted in order reduce the likelihood that innocent bystanders might be caught in crossfire between drug gangs and police.[94]

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[93] Itamar Silva 2009. Community leader, Santa Marta, Rio de Janeiro. Author interview, June 23.

[94] Coronel Ibis Silva Pereira. 2011. Military Police, João VI Academy, Rio de Janeiro. Author interview, December 28.

Angered by constant criticism and poor working conditions, the police protested by leaving favelas alone altogether.[95]

Rightwing opponents have long nurtured a now popular myth blaming the rise of organized crime on Brizola for not letting the police do their job of repressing crime (see Magalhaes 2008), a claim that is politically motivated and based on faulty and simplistic assumptions.[96] Nevertheless, the consistent absence of police in favelas during the early to mid 1980s, whether by government decree or because of police protest, meant that drug traffickers could openly carry weapons and go to war with each other virtually unimpeded by state intervention.[97] A community leader from the Complexo da Maré favela explains:

> "There were good and bad things about it [Brizola's policy], and I don't
> mean to do anything here but make an objective critical judgment. But
> essentially what happened is that the police, who were upset with
> Brizola's policy, took a very hands-off stance and said, 'well, let the
> traffickers do what they want,' and they stayed out of favelas after 1982.
> Coincidentally, the local cocaine trade exploded, and crime organized to a
> dizzying degree, especially since there was no longer a regular police

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[95] Eliana Souza. 2012. Director, Redes da Maré, Complexo da Maré, Rio de Janeiro. Author interview, January 25.

[96] Cecilia Ritto, "Na trajetória da Rocinha, uma história carioca," *Veja*, 11/13/2011.

[97] Coronel Ibis Silva Pereira. 2011. Military Police, João VI Academy, Rio de Janeiro. Author interview, December 28.

presence that could stop gangsters from openly selling drugs and carrying weapons."[98]

From the perspective of favela-based drug traffickers, now awakening to a booming arms market that followed drug profits, this "open carry" facilitated the establishment of territorial monopolies. As symbols of power, weapons could be flaunted to deter potential competitors. And once guns were carried in the open, territorial control became ever more important for mere survival. From the perspective of favela residents, on the other hand, the man who carries a gun can arbitrate a dispute more effectively and more immediately than anyone else around. Whether loved or hated, a gunman will eventually be called upon to involve himself in the milieu of community conflicts.

> "Look, it's like this. A woman gets in a fight with her husband and wants
> him to leave, but he won't go. And so she goes to talk to the traffickers
> about it, and they then send a message over to the husband to get out of
> the house, and because they are armed and dangerous, he obeys."[99]

After Governor Wellington Moreira Franco (1987-1991) took office, he largely reversed Brizola's human rights oriented public security policies, opting instead for a heavy-handed repressive policing strategy. He increased the weapons and tactics

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[98] Eliana Souza. 2012. Director, Redes da Maré, Complexo da Maré, Rio de Janeiro. Author interview, January 25.

[99] Eliana Souza. 2012. Director, Redes da Maré, Complexo da Maré, Rio de Janeiro. Author interview, January 25.

capabilities of the police, as well as their discretionary powers in combating drug gangs and violent crime, which led to sharp increase of people killed by police (known as *autos de resistência*) in Rio's favelas.[100] Despite increased repression and its resulting violence, however, the police still did not maintain any regular presence or conduct routine patrols in favelas, and drug traffickers continued to openly carry weapons and sell drugs with little constraint.[101] The governorship of Rio de Janeiro continued to swing back and forth between liberals and conservatives with opposing views on public security through the 1990s, and yet the fact of irregular and violent policing strategies which left both drug traffickers and favela residents to fend for themselves only intensified.

Until the initiation of Governor Sergio Cabral's (2007-present) Pacifying Police program in 2008-2009, virtually all of Rio de Janeiro's favelas had become increasingly dominated by heavily armed drug traffickers or criminal militias, such that the same dynamics of authority continued to guide resident behavior. On the eve of the "pacification" of the massive Rocinha favela, for example, a young woman who recently moved into new apartment spoke of how she dealt with the a conflict with a previous resident who refused to move out of the space she had just paid for:

> "The woman was being evicted because she hadn't paid rent in months,
> but she refused to leave, and I couldn't move in until she was gone. I went

[100] Coronel Ibis Silva Pereira. 2011. Military Police, João VI Academy, Rio de Janeiro. Author interview, December 28.

[101] Itamar Silva 2009. Community leader, Santa Marta, Rio de Janeiro. Author interview, June 23.

first to the resident's association, and they said they would talk to the

woman, but they never even came by. So I decided to talk to the guys at

the *boca de fumo*.[102] They said, 'we'll send someone over tomorrow to

take care of it.' By the next day, the woman was gone, and I was able to

move in."[103]

If this day-to-day arbitration of disputes was the foundation of criminal authority

structures, it was the punishment of local norms violations and the provision of welfare

that solidified their "social contract" with favela residents. Incidents of theft and rape

were of particular concern to favela residents, but were almost completely ignored by the

police.[104] By the late-1980s, guided in part by the Comando Vermelho's prison ban on

theft and rape, a general norm developed among Rio's drug traffickers to severely punish

such crimes (Amorim 2003), as illustrated by the example below:

"Some time back there was the case of a man called 'Cisso Sapateiro,'

who had a small shoe repair shop here. What happened is that he had the

habit of messing around with the young daughters of residents, all of them

very young. He would try to touch them and get them to come into his

shop. And since the parents couldn't do anything about it themselves,

they went and complained to the traffickers. But since he had not yet

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[102] Popular term for points of sale of narcotics.

[103] Resident 2011. Rocinha, Rio de Janeiro. Author interview, October 23.

[104] Amendoim. 2009. Former AM president, Rocinha, Rio de Janeiro. Author interview,
June 18.

actually raped anyone yet—because *bandidos* won't tolerate that—they instead gave him a beating, made him wear women's panties and a brassiere and walk through the favela repeating to everyone as he passed by, 'I'm Cisso Sapateiro, rapist of little girls.' Then the *bandidos* took him straight to the Police Department [4th Battalion in Botafogo, near Santa Marta], and turned him in, explaining to the police that if he came back, they wouldn't bother turning him in again. From there he spent a long time in prison, and I haven't heard anything of him since."[105]

With respect to welfare, residents often sought the assistance of drug traffickers because they were the only people financially capable of providing it. Often in conjunction with residents associations, for example, drug bosses helped organize and pay for *mutirões* (collective labor parties) to build infrastructure, such as drainage ditches and walkways.[106] They also controlled and "subsidized" access to electricity, internet, and cable TV via piracy.[107] On a day-to-day basis, drug traffickers typically provided "money for an ambulance or taxi to the hospital, money for medicines, soup kitchens, daycare centers, parties for children on special occasions and other emergency funds in

[105] Residents. 2012. Santa Marta, Rio de Janeiro. Author interview, January 17.

[106] Carlos. 2009. AM president, Chapéu-Mangueira, Rio de Janeiro. Author interview, June 26.

[107] Itamar Silva 2009. Community leader, Santa Marta, Rio de Janeiro. Author interview, June 23.

cases of extreme hardship" (Leeds 1996). An example is presented here by a resident of Santa Marta favela:

"The traffickers helped you out when you were in need. They gave food baskets to families who were really struggling. I asked for help a couple of times, too. When my father was sick and needed asthma medicine— which was really expensive—a friend convinced me to go ask the depot chief. I was nervous about it because I thought he might demand favors of me later on, but I went anyway. When I went in to talk to him, he asked me for the prescription, and then told me to go home. An hour later one of his guys came by house and dropped off the medicine. He never asked anything in return. He just asked if my father had gotten better. I said that he had."[108]

Drug traffickers also organized various types of parties and community social event replete with food and entertainment, which although not welfare per se, were nevertheless often perceived as a public good and an act of benevolence.[109] These included children's parties, *samba* or *pagode* shows,[110] and massive weekly rave parties known as *baile funks*. Although abhorrent to many residents, *baile funks* were particularly important to the construction and maintenance of drug gangs' authority. Economically, they brought in substantial profits from drug sales, much of which is

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[108] Residents. 2012. Santa Marta, Rio de Janeiro. Author interview, January 17.

[109] Marcelo. 2011. AM president, Coroa, Rio de Janeiro. Author interview, September 15.

[110] Popular styles of music in Rio de Janeiro.

shared with the police in exchange for not intervening.[111] Symbolically, they served as a showplace for the local gang's weaponry and manpower (not unlike a military parade). Culturally, they serve to fuse favela youth culture in general to that of drug traffickers (Penglase 2008).

Prison Gangs and Good Neighbors

Brazil's "first organized crime syndicate," the *Comando Vermelho* (CV), formed between 1979 and 1982 in the Candido Mendes prison complex on Ilha Grande, in the state of Rio de Janeiro (Amorim 2003). As the popular version of the story goes, leftist political prisoners who had been mixed with common criminals following statutes of the National Security Law (LSN) of 1969, "taught" some of the common criminals the organizational strategies of the urban guerilla (Silva 1991). Although ideology fell upon deaf ears, organizational mechanisms to enforce collective action and loyalty were successfully adopted by the emerging Comando Vermelho. Once the prison system in Rio de Janeiro was controlled largely by the CV, these mechanisms of control could be projected outside of prisons and onto the streets (Lessing 2010).   Later on, when the CV split into various rival factions, the policy of prisons to of isolate prisoners according to their gang identity only intensified this dynamic.

In order to avoid recapture, CV members who were released or escaped from prison often set up operations in Rio's favelas (Lima 1991). When the CV sought to monopolize the booming cocaine market of the early 1980s, favelas then became the base of sales to be conquered and protected. In order to facilitate conquest and maximize the safety and utility of new territory, the prison-based leadership created and enforced a

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[111] AM president. 2012. Vila Aliança, Rio de Janeiro. Author interview, March 23.

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policy, known as *boa vizinhança*[112], to guide and constrain criminal-resident relations (Penglase 2008).

Today *boa vizinhança* is more popularly referred to as the *Lei do Tráfico* (Law of Drug Trafficking), an unwritten code of ethics that has been emulated by all of Rio's drug trafficking factions, and despite wide variance in the behavior of individual drug bosses, it is generally understood and respected in all favelas. Its most basic and severe statutes prohibit "talking too much" and being a "rat" for the police,[113] which are vague enough to allow for high discretion in punishment and thus terrify a population into silence. However, it also includes obligations for criminals to respect residents and impose constraints on their behavior. Residents must behave in accordance with the exigencies of crime, but criminals also must behave as good neighbors, avoiding arbitrary abuses and compensating for infringements and damages that may occur.

> "The *Lei do Tráfico* meant that the traffickers had to respect community
> members and leave us alone, but we were also obligated to have an open
> doors policy in our homes. If there was a police invasion, and a trafficker
> came knocking at your door, you had to let him hide inside, or otherwise
> they would come back later and make you pay for it. They have come in
> here [our home] several times. Once on my way home, I noticed a trail of
> blood down the alleyway leading to my door. I went inside my house to
> find a kid in my bed who had been shot in the butt. He had torn up some

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[112] "Good Neighborliness"

[113] Former drug trafficker 2011. Santa Marta favela, Rio de Janeiro. Author interview, circa October.

of my clothes to use as dressing for his wound, and the house was a mess

of blood. The next day, some men came over and gave me money for the

clothing that was destroyed."[114]

A common phrase heard in favelas across Rio de Janeiro is that the drug

traffickers "leave you alone if you leave them alone." The *Lei do Tráfico* awhile not

always consistently practiced, demands that *trabalhadores* and their families be respected.

In other words, there are "punishable" and "non-punishable" individuals, identified

loosely as *trabalhadores* (workers) and *marginais* (marginals), respectively. The

selective distribution of goods or meting out of punishment must distinguish between

these groups in order preserve what Arias and Davis (2010) call the "myth of personal

security." If this distinction is violated, the perpetrator may be punished.

> "The traffickers respected residents. One time, when our son *X* was little,
>
> a *bandido* sent him to go buy some crackers and bring them back to
>
> him. When he told his mom about it, she got really upset, and went
>
> straight down to *boca de fumo* [point of drug sales], and demanded to talk
>
> to the manager. She said, 'I don't want you guys to make a little courier
>
> out of my son!' The manager apologized, and asked who was it that sent
>
> him to buy crackers. She pointed him out, and he ordered him to be beaten
>
> right in front of her."[115]

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[114] Residents. 2012. Santa Marta, Rio de Janeiro. Author interview, January 17.

[115] Residents. 2012. Santa Marta, Rio de Janeiro. Author interview, January 17.

Although favela based drug bosses do exercise significant autonomy with respect to how they treat residents in their own communities, the high likelihood that they will be imprisoned at some point, where their security will be in the hands of organized criminal factions, means that the *Lei do Tráfico* will have some enforceability. Prison gangs, for their part, have an incentive to restrain the excesses of their street-level members in order to maximize the profits of drug sales that they tax (Skarbeck and Marcum 2011). As a consequence of this type of centralized criminal system, there is more pressure on individual drug traffickers to adhere to certain norms of reciprocity and governance that might otherwise be atypical of the common criminal.

A Common Enemy

The actions and behavior of the police help shape criminality for the better or worse (Sherman 1995). In Rio de Janeiro, policing favelas since the late 1980s has been characterized by ever more militarized and deadly confrontations with drug traffickers, often combined with an unwillingness or inability to discriminate between criminals and non-criminals (Amnesty International 2009). I argue that this approach to policing, which has earned Rio de Janeiro's police institutions notoriety worldwide, has effectively forced non-criminal residents into a de facto alliance with drug traffickers by increasing the cost of cooperation with the state while reducing the benefits.

The reality of police violence in Rio's favelas has been widely reported by both national and international organizations, including Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, and the United Nations. Common abuses include random beatings, forceful entry

without warrants, theft, and even kidnapping, torture, disappearance and murder.[116]

Perhaps the most devastating factor driving the wedge between favela residents and the

state, however, is the sheer number and frequency of on-duty police killings.

Today the police in Rio de Janeiro have been accused of being the most lethally

violent in the world.[117] During its peak year of violence in 2007, the police killed a

registered total of 1,330 civilians, representing some 26 percent of total homicides.[118]

Although the absolute numbers have declined precipitously since then, police killings still

accounted for over ten percent of total homicides in 2012. By contrast, police in the

United States killed an estimated 607 civilians across the country in 2011, which account

for about four percent of total homicides.[119] In Europe, police kill far fewer still. Police

in the UK kill around two people per year. In 2013, Icelandic police killed a civilian for

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[116] See "Lethal Force: Police Violence and Public Security in Rio de Janeiro and Sao

Paulo." Published by *Human Rights Watch*, December 2009, New York, NY.

[117] Interview with sociologist Vera Malaguti Batista published in *Instituto Humanitas

Unisinos*, 9/07/2011.

[118] Data from *Instituto de Segurança Pública do Rio de Janeiro*.

[119] Fisher, Jim. 2013. "Police Involved Shooting Statistics: A One-Year Summary." *Jim

Fisher True Crime:* http://jimfishertruecrime.blogspot.com/2012/01/police-involved-

shootings-2011-annual.html

(Note: Interestingly, the Albuquerque Police Department's ratio of killings to total

homicides in the city is comparable to Rio de Janeiro).

the first time in the nation's history.[120] Police killings in Latin America are typically

higher, but still do not approach the numbers seen in Rio de Janeiro, which alone

accounted for over half of police killings in all of Brazil every year between 2001 and

2008 (see Figure 1 below). Sao Paulo, where criminal gangs have also developed

sophisticated authority structures, comes in second place. Police killings in the state of

Pernambuco (including Recife), by contrast, averaged only 27 per year between 2004 and

2012, representing less than one percent of total homicides (FBSP 2013).   Although

there is no available data on the numbers of police killings in Pernambuco prior to 2004,

it is probable they did not significantly exceed those of later years, despite the police

crackdowns of the late 1990s and early 2000s. This is evinced by the fact that Governor

Jarbas maintained similar policies up through the end of his tenure in 2006,[121] and we can

see that there were actually less police killings than under his successor and author of the

Pacto pela Vida, Governor Eduardo Campos.

Figure 1: On-duty Police Killings in Brazil 2000-2012

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Brazil	1040	1083	1547	2028	1616	1452	1689	1901	1729	1824	2031	1803	1890
RJ	427	592	900	1195	983	1098	1063	1330	1137	1048	855	523	415
SP	595	460	610	785	573	300	546	401	397	543	510	461	563
PE	---	---	---	---	17	24	13	22	40	40	30	24	32

Source: Anuário Brasileiro de Segurança Pública 7th Ed. 2013 (FBSP)

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[120] The Associated Press. 2013. "Icelandic Police shoot, Kill Armed Man." December 2.

http://www.nydailynews.com/news/crime/icelandic-police-kill-time-article-1.1535309

[121] Jose Luiz Ratton. 2012. Public Security Advisor to Gov. Eduardo Campos. Author

interview, Recife. June 8.

Policework in Rio de Janeiro has long been popularly and institutionally conceived of as a matter of warfare: there is an enemy, and he must be either captured or destroyed.[122] Blaming the failures of the justice system and prison system described as a "university of crime," police often feel that destroying the enemy is preferable to arrest.[123] Governor Marcelo Alencar (1995-1998) epitomized this philosophy of public security in what was popularly called the *Faroeste* ("Far West") *Award*. Between 1995 and 1998, police officers received medals and pay increases for "acts of bravery," almost all of which were awarded following the killing of a criminal.[124] According to a study commissioned by the state Legislative Assembly, police killings in Rio de Janeiro doubled during this time, from 16 to 32 per month (Cano and Massini 1997), setting in motion a trend of lethal violence than continued to increase steadily through 2007, Rio's year of peak violence, during which the police killed a total of 147 people in just one month.[125]

The effect that police violence has had on the cultural and political development of favelas is profound. While a separate "narco-culture" has clearly been nurtured by drug traffickers (Penglase 2008), the fusion of this culture with a general community

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[122] Coronel Ibis Silva Pereira. 2011. Military Police, João VI Academy, Rio de Janeiro. Author interview, December 28.

[123] Military Police beat officers. 2012. Batam, Rio de Janeiro. Author interview, February.

[124] Coronel Ibis Silva Pereira. 2011. Military Police, João VI Academy, Rio de Janeiro. Author interview, December 28.

[125] Ignacio Cano. 2011. Sociologist, UERJ, Rio de Janeiro. Author interview, October.

resistance against state authority was largely a function of police violence and the rational and moral incentives this created for residents to turn away from the state. The practice of so-called "mega-operations" and the employment of helicopter gunships and armored attack vehicles in favela-based police operations over the last two decades has only further alienated favela populations from state authority.[126] Visually, the incursion of hundreds of police officers wearing face masks and firing assault rifles terrorizes local populations. Mega-operations also very often include multiple victims, the bloody bodies of which are typically carried away by the police themselves without any investigation. Furthermore, favela residents allege that the victims of police operations are frequently innocent, but that the police invariably report that they were criminals and justify their deaths as "autos de resistência."[127] In this environment of tense conflict, where so much in both media discourse and actual policing invokes warfare, it is perhaps reasonable that favela communities would establish strong bonds with drug traffickers in the face of a common threat.

Truncated Authority in Recife

Before the rise of the drug trade in the 1980s and 1980s, informal authority in the favelas of Recife took various forms. In the early years of favela development and up through the 1960s, capangas hired by local economic elites dominated social life. Later, Residents' Associations, informal police commissions, and criminal gangs would come to replace them. Very rarely, however, did any of these actors succeed in monopolizing or maintaining stable structures of authority, despite clear developments in that direction.

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[126] Amnesty International Report (2006)

[127] Legally a justifiable homicide: assumes victim resisted arrest, implying criminal guilt.

What informal authorities had begun to solidify by the 1990s, were soon wiped out by a dramatic upswing of violence following the introduction of crack cocaine on the streets of Recife. Given that the boom in refined cocaine consumption in Rio de Janeiro more than a decade earlier allowed drug traffickers to control "parallel polities" (Leeds 1996), this very different outcome is perplexing.

I argue here that drug gangs in Recife did not develop the elaborate governing functions of their counterparts in Rio de Janeiro for three reasons. First, they simply were not able to physically control or monopolize violence in entire favelas, and therefore could not credibly respond to community needs for conflict resolution, contract enforcement, or the allocation of scarce resources. Second, the lack of organized prison gangs in the state Pernambuco meant that there was little pressure on street-level gangs to adhere to strategic norms of behavior. Finally, thanks to a comparatively much less violent style of police repression in Recife, non-criminal residents were not pushed into alliances with drug traffickers.

The inability of drug traffickers to monopolize violence or consolidate their physical control over entire favelas stems in part from a lack of resources. This was particularly true prior to the introduction of crack cocaine in the 1990s, when the narcotics market was still dominated by marijuana. Significantly less lucrative than crack cocaine, street level marijuana trafficking did not attract enough recruits or weapons to wage effective wars for territorial control.[128] While cocaine profits in Rio de Janeiro called on an international arms market to equip drug traffickers with military-grade weapons, criminals in Recife continued to use .38 caliber revolvers and the occasional

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[128] Drug trafficker, Bode, Recife. Author interview, June 9.

shotgun, and there were still very few of them.[129] The difference in size and quantity weaponry is important in two ways.   First, effective range of handguns is far less than that of automatic rifles, which makes greater territorial control both more difficult and less important for day-to-day survival. Secondly, small weapons, which are often concealed, are a less imposing symbol of authority.

Because territorial control was rarely achieved, drug traffickers could not make credible commitments in matters of governance, and consequently were infrequently sought out to resolve conflicts or attend to other matters beyond a very small territorial domain. For example, disputes settled by one drug trafficker might spark conflict with a rival, thus putting the "collaborator" in danger of reprisals.[130] Furthermore, the inability to control entire communities meant that drug traffickers had to keep a low profile out of concern for their own safety.[131] Particularly before the rise of crack, drug use in general remained hidden, obscure, and on the fringes of social life, although this has since changed.[132] This "hiddenness" matters because without the clear exhibition of the symbolic authority associated with weapons, favela residents were less inclined to seek dispute resolution, redress, or welfare from drug traffickers simply because their image and presence did not by itself suggest or impose authority.

If residents in Recife's favela were less inclined to seek out drug traffickers to resolve their problems, drug traffickers themselves were also less likely to offer. This

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[129] Homicide detectives. 2012. DHPP-PE, Recife. Author interviews, June-July.

[130] "Novinho." 2012. Ex-convict, Coque, Recife. Author interview, July 4.

[131] "Renato." 2012. Drug trafficker, Paulista, PE. Author interview, May 23.

[132] João José. 2012. AM president, Ilha do Rato, Recife. Author interview, May 25.

difference can at least partly be explained by the different mechanisms of criminal organization and socialization in Rio de Janeiro and Pernambuco's respective prison systems. First, the decentralized and disorganized structure of gangs in the state of Pernambuco's prison system has meant that prison gangs cannot assert their power effectively over street level gangs.[133] Secondly, the criminal socialization processes that take place inside prisons reflect the same disorganization of prison life. Instead of being introduced to norms of gang loyalty and collective action, prisoners are socialized to simply become better criminals.[134] Any type of long-term strategic rationality of gangs is therefore sacrificed to the typically short term and highly bounded rationality of individual drug traffickers. Consequently, drug traffickers in Recife tend to pay less attention to improving their relations with residents, and are more inclined to maximizing their immediate interests on a precarious day-by-day basis.[135]

The absence of organization among prison gangs in the state of Pernambuco, in contrast to Rio de Janeiro or Sao Paulo, is puzzling. According to one former inmate, "we [criminals] just don't have the same sense of unity here."[136] One possible explanation, however, is that serious overpopulation in prisons did not become a problem in Pernambuco until only recently. Prior to the increased arrest rates associated with the Pacto pela Vida public security initiative, which was launched in 2007, state prisons housed around 11,000 prisoners. By 2012 the number of prisoners had increased to more

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[133] Drug traffickers. 2012. Coque and Paulista. Author interviews, May-July.

[134] "Renato." 2012. Drug trafficker, Paulista, PE. Author interview, May 23.

[135] Alexandre Freitas. 2012. Sociologist, UFPE, Recife. Author interview, May 16.

[136] "Renato." 2012. Drug trafficker, Paulista, PE. Author interview, May 23.

than 26,000.   Pernambuco's largest prison, the Anibal Bruno Complex, now contains

nearly 5,000 prisoners, or about four times its capacity, indicating that prison gang

dynamics could soon change.[137]

According to prison intelligence officials, the more recent prison overpopulation

combined with a lack of qualified agents has created propitious conditions for prison

gang development, although gangs are still far from achieving the organizational capacity

of their counterparts in Rio de Janeiro or Sao Paulo.[138]   An indication that they are still in

an early development is that the identities of most of the major prison gangs in

Pernambuco are tied directly to their current gang leaders. One of the largest gangs in the

Anibal Bruno Complex, for example, is identifiable only by the name of its leader,

"Junior Box," a drug trafficker from the Santo Amaro favela who allegedly continues to

command some allegiance there.[139]

Members of the much more organized prison gangs from Rio de Janeiro (the

Comando Vermelho, or CV) and Sao Paulo, the (*Primeiro Comando da Capital*, or PCC)

have also attempted to organize prisoners in Pernambuco in recent years, following

interstate prisoner transfers.[140] Their effect on overall prison gang dynamics, however,

has been minimal. In the "disunited criminal culture of the Brazilian Northeast,"

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[137] Roberto. 2012. Prison intelligence officer, G.I.S.O. (*Grupo de Inteligência da*

Segurança Orgánica da Secretaria de Resocialização), Recife. Author interview, May 17.

[138] Roberto. 2012. Prison intelligence officer, G.I.S.O., Recife. Author interview, May 17.

[139] Fabinet and Bruno. 2012. DeNarc-PE detectives, Recife. Author interview, May 7.

[140] Drug traffickers. 2012. Coque and Paulista. Author interviews, May-July.

outsiders have been unable to make significant organizational inroads.[141] For the time being, then, criminal behavior in favelas remains unconstrained by the organizational and socialization dynamics of prison gangs.

With respect to the factors that drive criminal authority development discussed so far, perhaps the starkest contrast between Rio de Janeiro and Recife concerns police behavior. As discussed earlier, policing in Rio de Janeiro during the three decades has been conceived as open war between the state and drug traffickers, which has resulted in an unprecedented level of state violence. By contrast, the police in Recife have been far less antagonistic or lethally violent with respect to crime control in favelas. This is not to say that police are well liked (a rarity in any impoverished community) or that they are less corrupt than their counterparts in Rio de Janeiro. The fact, however, that police in Recife very rarely kill civilians in their official line of duty is an extremely important one. It has meant that the state has not nurtured an image of itself as a common enemy to favela communities as a whole, and therefore has not compelled an alliance between non-criminal residents and drug traffickers.

Comparing the numbers of civilians killed by police alone illustrates the astounding difference between police behavior (refer to figure 1. Page 22). In 2007, the peak year of police violence in Rio de Janeiro, the police killed 1,330 civilians, representing more than a quarter of all homicides in the state that year. In 2009, the peak of police violence in the state of Pernambuco, by contrast, the police killed 40 civilians,

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[141] Roberto. 2012. Prison intelligence officer, G.I.S.O., Recife. Author interview, May 17.

representing only two percent of total homicides (FBSP 2013). In the capital of Recife, estimated police killings hover around ten per year.[142]

The police in Recife are also much less militarized than their counterparts in Rio de Janeiro, which arguably facilitates the rapprochement of police and communities, as suggested by the community policing literature (see Sherman 1995). While beat cops in Rio regularly carry automatic rifles and submachine guns, the police in Recife carry only pistols. While police operations in Rio frequently depend on the use of helicopter gunships and armored attack vehicles, police in Recife virtually never use such resources. Although a number of special "tactical" units have been created in Recife since the 1980s to confront specific and sporadic threats such as kidnappings or car-jackings, most of these have since been informally incorporated in to regular police battalions.[143] Significantly, the state of Pernambuco never created any special force comparable to Rio's notorious BOPE (Batalhão de Operações Policiais Especiais), a 450-man battalion lauded as the world's "finest urban combat troop" and outfitted with armored vehicles, helicopter gunships, and a wide assortment of automatic weapons.[144]

The causal relationship between levels of police violence and the authority structures of drug gangs, of course, is complex. By some accounts, the military approach to policing favelas in Rio de Janeiro is simply a necessary response to the military-style

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[142] Eduardo Machado. 2012. Chief reporter, *Jornal do Comercio,* Recife. Author interview, May 5.

[143] G.A.T. officers (Grupo de Açoes Táticas). 2012. Author inteviews, June.

[144] Major Batista. 2011. BOPE (Batalhão de Operações Policiais Especiais), Rio de Janeiro. Author interview, October 17.

violence perpetrated by drug traffickers,[145] and conversely, the more benign policing of

Recife reflects the lesser danger that police there face when confronting criminals.

Comparing numbers of police killed while on duty, however, this thesis is only weakly

supported. Although police in Rio de Janeiro are four times more likely to be killed on

duty than in Pernambuco, they kill an average of ten times more, suggesting that despite

the heightened dangers of policing in Rio, the use of force is still disproportionately

excessive (see FBSP 2013).

Another potential problem with assessing this causal relationship is the fact that

clandestine death squads formed largely by off-duty police have been killing civilians in

Recife for decades. According the Pernambuco's homicide division, these represent

about seven percent of total homicides in the state.[146] The accuracy of these statistics is

questionable, however, as the determination of motive is recorded prior to the actual

investigation of homicides (Nobrega 2012). Others have estimated that death squads are

responsible for as much as a third of all homicides.[147] Whichever the case, however, on-

duty police violence appears to have a much more profound impact on state-society

relations than the violence perpetrated by clandestine police groups. This is partly

because homicides committed by clandestine groups are not easily attributable.[148]

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[145] Claudio. 2011. Military Police, Rio de Janeiro. Author interview, November 20.

[146] Osvaldo Morais. 2012. Chief, DHPP-PE, Recife. Author interview, June.

[147] Williams, Evan. 2009. "Death to Undesirables: Brazil´s Murder Capital." The

Independent, May 15. http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/death-to-

undesirables-brazils-murder-capital-1685214.html

[148] Homicide detectives. 2012. DHPP-PE, Recife. Author interviews, June-July.

Perhaps more importantly, they are not explicitly state sanctioned, and therefore do not create perceptions among favela residents that the state is at war with them.

Again, none of this is to say that the police Recife are well liked among favela residents, or that they have been effective at controlling crime and violence. The dramatic comparison is suggestive, however, that police behavior has been far less alienating of the public in general than in Rio de Janeiro. And the effect of all this is that the police have not come to be seen as a common enemy to favela communities.

Conclusion

An absence of effective and regular state authority is the first necessary condition for informal authority structures to develop. In the favelas of Rio de Janeiro and Recife, this occurred from the very outset of favela development, but the distribution and depth of power achieved by authority figures differed substantially. In Rio de Janeiro, the power of vigilante groups, bicheiros, and Residents Associations was driven by territorial imperatives as these actors established relationships with clientelist politicians looking to buy community votes. In Recife, capangas (thugs) hired by local economic elites were given a private permission to govern labor populations tied to specific industries, and were not drawn to territorial control. After the rise of drug consumption in the 1980s and 1990s, drug gangs in Rio de Janeiro inherited territorially dependent structures of authority, and took these to a new level by monopolizing power and authority over entire favelas. Likewise, drug gangs in Recife inherited more diffuse and territorially benign authority structures, and therefore rarely sought to control territory.

How gangs in Rio were able to achieve this, and why gangs in Recife failed where they attempted to, however, cannot be explained so simply. To better understand this difference in outcomes, I evaluated three factors of particular influence: a) the credibility of territorial control and how this affected residents' behavior towards drug traffickers; b) the structure of prison gangs and their relationship to street level criminality; and c) the behavior of the police.

In Rio de Janeiro, the consolidation of territorial control increased the likelihood that residents would seek them out to resolve disputes or provide welfare. Meanwhile, highly organized gang leaders in Rio's prisons was able to compel their street level members to adhere to strategic norms of community governance and control. Finally, the extremely violent and often indiscriminate behavior of the police forced residents and drug traffickers into a de facto alliance. Opposite conditions in Recife served to truncate the incipient authority structures of drug gangs. Unable to consolidate territorial control, gangs could not credibly protect the people over whom they may have imposed authority, and so few sought them out to do so. Further, the small and disorganized prison gangs in Pernambuco did not devise strategic norms to impose upon street level members, and even if they had, would not have had enough leverage to enforce them. Lastly, the police have been comparatively benign in their use of deadly force in Recife's favelas, and have therefore avoided the "common enemy" effect that was deeply rooted in Rio de Janeiro.

Brazilian army soldiers on routine patrol in Complexo do Alemão, North Side of Rio de Janeiro. The army occupied the favela complex in November 2010, and was replaced by a Pacifying Police Unit (UPP) a year and a half later.

A Military Police officer patrols with a Brazilian manufactured FAL automatic rifle in Morro da Providência, near downtown Rio de Janeiro.

An armored truck used by BOPE (*Batalhão de Operações Policiais Especiais*) during an operation in Comlexo da Maré, North Zone, Rio de Janeiro.

BOPE on patrol in Rocinha during its initial "Pacification" phase, South Zone, Rio de Janeiro, November 13, 2011.

One of many homes in the São Carlos favela in downtown Rio de Janeiro that has been rendered uninhabitable by frequent combat between rival gangs or with police.

A UPP officer in the Santa Marta favela in Rio de Janeiro watches a soccer game on television alongside residents, a virtual impossibility prior to the community's "pacification" in 2008.

Criminal Police:

Death Squads and Militias in Rio de Janeiro and Recife

Heavily armed drug trafficking gangs have dominated social and political life in the slums of Rio de Janeiro since the 1980s, functioning in many ways like a parallel state (Leeds 1996; Arias 2007; Penglase 2008). Since the mid-2000s, however, an apparently new model of organized crime, typified by the so-called *milícia* (or militia), has seriously challenged both the old paradigm of drug trafficking and the authority of the state itself. Composed primarily of police and other security agents who use violence to control communities and exploit them for financial gain (Zaluar and Conceição 2007), militias have usurped power in hundreds of communities across Rio de Janeiro during the last decade, particularly in the city's impoverished west zone.[149]

The concerted objectives by these modern militias to establish territorial control, adopt diversified economic extractive activities, and even pursue political power electorally—as they have done in Rio de Janeiro—represent a recent phenomenon, and one that clearly distinguishes these groups from other types of organized crime. But there is a long history of police involvement in extralegal violence and organized crime in much of Brazil (Pinheiro 1991). More primitive police-based criminal organizations, such as the so-called *grupos de extermínio* (police death squads) and the *polícia*

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[149] Secretary of Public Security of Rio de Janeiro

mineira,[150] became commonplace in many Brazilian cities as early as the 1960s, and continue to operate today. Since the popularization of the term *milícia* in 2006-2007 (Cano and Looty 2008), however, virtually all police-based criminal groups have fallen under the new label, thus confounding efforts to understand the variety, origins, structure, and consequences of criminal police in Brazil.

The purpose of this chapter is therefore two-fold. First, I develop a conceptual typology of police-based criminal groups in Brazil in order to clarify and define the various manifestations of this particular class of organized crime. I am particularly concerned with distinguishing criminal groups that develop clear and effective authoritative functions over territorially bound populations (i.e. modern militias) from those that do not (i.e. death squads). Secondly, I develop a theoretical explanation for the origins and growth of these different types of criminal police, and compare the cases of Rio de Janeiro and the Northeastern seaboard city Recife as a basis of empirical analysis. Like Rio de Janeiro, Recife has a long history of police involvement in organized violent crime, but police-based criminal groups there tend to be comparatively much less organized, smaller, and limited in their scope of criminal activity. The comparison serves to illuminate which conditions shape and constrain the development of organized crime.

I argue that the development of police-based criminal groups is both historically embedded *and* dependent on structural conditions that affect the official and unofficial coercive activities of police officers. Historically, the police in Brazil have been used

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[150] "Polícia Mineira," discussed in detail below, refers to bands of police officers who run small, localized and unsophisticated protection rackets, typically in their own resident communities.

both as enforcers of elite domination (Holloway 1993) and as counter-insurgent forces with little concern for the rule of law (Pinheiro 1991), one legacy of which is a propensity for extralegal violence. The police have also been traditionally employed as assassins by the political and economic elite in much of the country, particularly in the Northeastern region, which has in some cases led to the development of semi-autonomous death squads (Barreira 1998). But police-based criminal groups do not exist everywhere, and where they do exist they vary substantially in their behavior, organizational structure, and scope of activity. I argue, then, that certain structural variables account for this observed variation.

Three factors are of particular importance: 1) the relative strength or weakness of other armed organizations, including the state as well as competing criminal gangs; 2) the degree of exploitable economic opportunities in that community, and; 3) the concentration of resident police officers or other security personnel in a given community. In the next section I will relate these factors to a proposed typology of police-based criminal organizations exhibiting analytically delineable characteristics.

A Typology of Milícias

Table (1) below identifies four analytically distinct types of police-run criminal groups in Brazil along two dimensions: "Functional Legitimacy" refers to the extent to which the authority and related actions of the group are condoned by members of the community in which it operates, and understands the development of legitimacy as an intentional strategy employed by the group. "Low" assumes that a majority of residents oppose the criminal group on moral or ideological grounds, even though they may not

actively defy it. "High" assumes that most residents prefer the group's presence over probable alternatives, and therefore either actively or passively support it. The second dimension, "Professionalization," refers to the degree of sophistication of both the structure and activities of the groups. Here "Low" assumes a loose, informal, and fluid organizational structure, as well as limited overall functions. "High" suggests a sophisticated and at least minimally stable organizational structure, as well as diversified economic, social, and political functions.

Table (1): Descriptive Framework for Militia Types

Functional Legitimacy

		Low	High
Professionalization	Low	Death Squads	Polícia Mineira
	High	Predatory Militias	Stationary Militias

Given the base condition that no other coercive authority has already established a strong presence, police-based criminal groups or authority structures may develop organically from within a community or be imposed from the outside. Where such groups do form, I argue that the specific ways in which they develop should be shaped by (a) the concentration of police or other security personnel residing in a given community, and (b) the exploitable economic opportunities (EO) in that community. Table (2), below,

illustrates the relationship between these dimensions and the different ideal type militia groups.

Concentrations of resident police are difficult to calculate numerically, as there are no official data available to indicate where officers live.[151] High and Low concentrations are therefore determined by the accounts of residents and community leaders. The second dimension, economic opportunities, refers principally to the prevalence of a cash economy, which is more vulnerable to extortion and theft than electronic transactions. High EO exists where there are bustling low-income commercial or market districts. Low EO is found in low-income or impoverished residential communities with little or no commercial activity.

Police-based criminal groups may exist anywhere along these dimensions, but will not look the same in each case. Where there is a high concentration of resident police (Table 2: right column), militias with a high degree of functional legitimacy are likely to form organically as other residents look to resident police officers to resolve problems for them. As discussed below, these militias are referred to colloquially as *polícia mineira*. In places where there are highly exploitable economic opportunities,

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[151] Census data and other estimates of population are notoriously inaccurate in favelas, such that even data on police residence were available, it would be difficult to numerically calculate the concentration of resident police in a meaningful way.

they may evolve into a more formalized and politically influential "stationary militia" (Table 2: bottom row). By contrast, where there is a low concentration of resident police, militias are likely to remain simply guns for hire ("death squads") who have some degree of local sponsorship, or, where they lack any local buy-in, become what I term "predatory militias".

Table (2): Explanatory Framework for Militia Types

Concentration of Resident Police

		Low	High
Economic Opportunities	*Low*	Death Squads	Polícia Mineira
	High	Predatory Militias	Stationary Militias

Death Squads

What are commonly called *grupos de extermínio*, or death squads, are typically groups of police officers (or other individuals associated with the police) that commit murder for financial gain. They do not respond to the security needs of their own resident community per se, rather to those of groups or individuals willing to pay for protection or services that they feel the state is unable or unwilling to offer (Ratton 2009). Typically, groups of businessmen will pay for the disposal of thieves, drug addicts, or rivals, or in other cases political bosses or loan sharks may hire them for protection, to

attack opponents, or to enforce payment obligations.[152] Transactions are primarily monetary rather than moral, and although death squads may utilize a legitimizing discourse to justify killing, their primary motive is profit.[153] They may be more or less organized, and vary in size, but their functions are typically limited to contract killings and related forms of intimidation and violence. In this sense, they may be understood as employees rather than business entrepreneurs or mafias, as they take orders from elites willing to hire them rather than acting on their own initiatives. They do not represent any kind of parallel governance.

In the case of death squad killings, the assassins are generally not well known in or visible to the communities where their victims reside. They do not benefit from any real perception of legitimacy. Like all police-based criminal groups, however, they may be protected by elements within their own institution and their knowledge of the criminal justice system.

Because death squads are typically clandestine groups that do not have any authoritative functions, they also do not need much manpower or money to survive. As Table (2) suggests, then, the ideal type death squad should be able to exist and/or operate in low-income communities and favelas where there is a low concentration of resident police and minimal opportunities for economic extraction.

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[152] Paulo. 2012. Journalist, Jornal de Comercio, Recife. Author interview, April 26.

[153] Williams, Evan. 5/5/2009 "Death to Undesireables: Brazil's Murder Capital," *The Independen*t.

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The Polícia Mineira

Police-based criminal groups have existed in Brazil at least since the 1960s, although the phenomenon likely dates back to the creation of Brazil's military police in the nineteenth century. In perhaps their simplest form, current or active police officers, by virtue of their being armed and trained in maintenance of public order, occasionally and informally band together in their own communities to punish or dispose of individuals who in some way or another threatened local social norms.[154] The type of punishment carried out in this context is generally also consistent with local norms, even when they are inconsistent with legal codes (e.g. corporal punishment or execution of a "bad element") (Cano and Duarte 2012).

These rudimentary organizations have been referred to as *polícia mineira*[155] all over Brazil, and are particularly prominent in the West Zone and Baixada Fluminense of Rio de Janeiro, as well as throughout the metropolitan area of Recife. Being of and from the communities over which they levy their power and influence—and often sought out

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[154] Several interviewees indicated that no militia per se existed in their communities, but that groups of residents, most police officers themselves, exercised the use of lethal violence in cycles. After drug traffickers or other criminals were executed or expelled, the vigilante residents would remain inactive for long periods of time. Eventually, new groups of criminals would emerge, provoking a renewed cycle of vigilantism.

[155] I have come across two explanations for the origin of the name "policia mineira." The first suggests that this form of extralegal justice originated in the state of Minas Gerais, and later spread throughout Brazil. The second explains that "mineira" refers symbolically to the illegal spying and extortion characteristic of these groups.

by those communities to provide a protective service—*polícia mineira* exercise

authoritative functions in their communities and typically benefit from a high degree of

functional legitimacy in those communities. That is, they enjoy the tacit support of a

substantial part of the local population for providing some sort of governance, even if

minimal and sporadic. Some form of legitimizing discourse helps to secure this status.

Although in their inception they are unlikely to directly tax the resident population, they

may make monetary arrangements with local business owners, thus creating a tendency

towards extortion and protection racketeering.[156]

Militias

The more professionalized militias that have spread rapidly over the West Zone of

Rio de Janeiro since 2004, by contrast, tend to resemble autonomous and multi-faceted

business enterprises in pursuit of both profit and political control. Among their chief

attributes is territorial control, which in many cases is secured through a strict regulation

of social behavior within their territories, (Cano and Duarte 2012). Once this is achieved,

militias might seek a variety of methods to extract wealth from a community. Like death

squads and *polícia mineira* , militias attempt to justify their authority through an explicit

legitimizing discourse which condemns their victims as threats to social order while

selling themselves as social protectors, or at the very least, a "lesser evil" to that of the

reign of drug traffickers (Cano and Looty 2008).   Their business model, however, has

departed from that of their predecessors. Militias seek out new markets of various kinds

instead of merely responding to a need for security. In advanced stages, they might seek

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[156] Andreia Gouvea. 2011. City Councilwoman, Rio de Janeiro. Author interview,

November 22.

to control and/or tax the entirety of all types of commercial activity in a given area.[157]

They may also use their power of coercion to literally extract resources from the ground,

as in the case of an illegal clay and sand mine discovered in 2011 in Rio's West Zone.[158]

Stationary Militias

It is useful to identify two primary types of militias. What I have labeled

stationary militias evolved directly from *polícia mineira*, such that they tend to benefit

from a strong functional legitimacy that facilitates and justifies their economic expansion

and political control. Their behavior closely resembles Olson's (2002) metaphor of the

stationary bandit. Having an "encompassing interest" in the community's productivity

and stability, they tend to limit the burdens they impose on residents, and even provide

public goods, in order to ensure greater long term rewards.

This situation is most likely to develop where there is both a high concentration of

resident police and high EO. In the first instance, residents may look to resident police to

resolve disputes that state officials ostensibly responsible for the community are

unwilling or unable to attend to, thus driving the organic development of a *policia*

mineira. If, in the second instance, a given community is endowed with high EO—

particularly in bustling commercial districts dependent on cash exchange—a pre-existing

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[157] Residents. 2012. Rio das Pedras favela, Rio de Janeiro. Author interviews, February

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[158] Athos Moura and Vera Araujo. 9/1/2011. "Operação visa desarticular milícia

comandada pelos irmãos Natalino e Jerônimo Guimarães." *O Globo:*

http://oglobo.globo.com/rio/operacao-visa-desarticular-milicia-de-natalino-jeronimo-

guimaraes-2667841.

policia mineira may develop characteristics of a stationary militia (i.e. high degrees of

functional legitimacy and professionalization) by exploiting local businesses and

profitably diversifying its economic extractive functions without alienating large portions

of the resident population in the process.   In such areas where cash exchange is

targetable and plentiful, protection racketeering can produce substantial rents at low cost.

By contrast, the kind of door-to-door coercive panhandling characteristic of rackets in

poor residential areas requires much more manpower than the targeted taxation of

businesses, and is more likely to alienate larger portions of the population. This latter

scenario is more typical of predatory militias, discussed below.

<div align="center">

Predatory Militias

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Between 2004 and 2008 *predatory militias* invaded as many as 170 favelas

across Rio de Janeiro's West Zone and parts of the North Zone.[159] Although these groups

consistently used the same legitimizing discourse as their stationary counterparts (and in

some cases were outgrowths of the same), they have faced more difficulty in achieving

functional legitimacy, and therefore have tended to rely more heavily on physical

coercion and the threat of violence to exert control. They are not organic products of

crime-ridden communities seeking someone to create an effective authority apparatus,

but rather groups of outsiders imposing their own system of order for economic gain. As

such, they may appear in communities with low concentrations of resident police, and

lacking an "encompassing interest" in the welfare of their neighbors, are more likely to

extort all residents with less concern for the legitimacy problems this may cause. In

essence, predatory militias are more criminal and more exploitative than their stationary

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[159] Secretary of Public Security of Rio de Janeiro

counterparts, acting more purely as an illicit business enterprise and less as an integrated political authority.

Nevertheless, predatory militias can be highly organized entities that are deeply embedded in (and protected by) state institutions. This is evinced by numerous resident accounts of their direct collusion with entire military police battalions, such as when their insertion into a community immediately follows an official police "mega-operation" (*see* Cano and Looty 2008). Whether a militia "breaks in" to a community with the help of official police operations or on its own, however, its operations after insertion may be multifaceted. Protection racketeering may be only one function of many, and sometimes one of lesser significance. Predatory militias, like their stationary counterparts, will typically seek to control or tax most legal and informal economic activity, including alternative transportation and the distribution of gas tanks (for cooking and heating), potable water, electricity, cable TV, and internet. They may also field political candidates themselves or enter in alliance with existing politicians for patronage, forming "electoral corrals" to manipulate voting patterns.[160]

Historical Background

The predecessors to Brazil's modern state Military Police forces were formed in fits and starts between 1808 and 1831 during the transition from colonial rule to independent governance. Although influenced by the spread of 18th and 19th century liberal ideology and its concern with the rule of law, Brazil's Military Police (established formally in Rio de Janeiro as the *Corpo de Guardas Municipais Permanentes* in 1831 and

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[160] Alessandro Molon. 2009. State Legislator (PT), Rio de Janeiro. Author interview, July 1.

later instituted in all states of the republic) was in reality created to protect the moral codes and the physical properties of elite society from the slave and non-slave underclasses (Holloway 1993). As an institution charged with maintaining the integrity of the most oppressive of traditional hierarchies, the police systematically used corporal punishment, imprisonment, and terror to suppress social behavior that was discordant with elite values.[161]

Under the military dictatorship in the 1960s the military police were "hyper-politicized" and institutionally configured to be a sort of counterinsurgent force (Pinheiro 1991). In 1969, as dictated by the Decree Law 667, the Military Police was subsumed under federal military command, and were oriented specifically towards the repression of political opposition to the authoritarian government. Between 1969 and 1974, the notorious Institutional Act no. 5 (AI-5) effectively suspended the rule of law, and the police were given carte blanche in their pursuit of regime opponents. Under the banner of *Operation Bandeirantes* (OBAN), the military regime created numerous police special units that "refined the traditional death squad practices of kidnapping, torture, and murder." (Pinheiro 1991: 175). It was during this period that the term *esquadrão de morte* (death squad) was first popularized and used to refer to groups of police officers who murdered/disappeared criminals and political opponents (Souza 2001).

Once the urban guerilla threat had ended (circa 1974), police attention shifted to common crime. The specialized units created under OBAN were not disbanded, and they

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[161] For a comprehensive historical analysis of police origins in Brazil, read Thomas H. Holloway's *Policing Rio de Janeiro: Repression and Resistance in a 19th-Century City* (1993).

continued using the same tactics of kidnapping, torture, and execution as before, with the same impunity. A legislative amendment in 1977 known as the "April Packet" institutionalized this impunity by bringing the Military Police under Military Penal Code, thus protecting the institution from civilian oversight (Pinheiro 1991). Consequently, and also in response to a growing public security crisis in the wake of a faltering economy and mass rural-to-urban migration, death squads became increasingly active throughout the 1970s and 1980s all over Brazil. Some became media sensations, such as the "Mão Branca" in Rio de Janeiro, a notorious vigilante who would supposedly leave a white glove on the corpse of his victims to claim authorship.[162] Others may have developed directly from the specialized police intelligence units created under OBAN, such as the ROTA (*Rondas Ostentivas Tobias Aguiar*) in Sao Paulo, or the infamous DOI-CODI (*Destacamento de Operações de Informações-Centro de Operações de Defesa Interna*), which had headquarters in several states. In either case, extra-judicial killings by clandestine police groups became commonplace in many Brazilian cities in the wake of authoritarianism, and little was done to curb their development during democratization (Chevigny 1991).

The same social and political dynamics that led to development of death squads also facilitated the more organic growth of vigilante police groups, particularly in areas where the state was unwilling or unable to guarantee social order. While in some communities, local business owners paid death squads to hunt down suspected criminals in the same way the police had pursued regime opponents under the military dictatorship,

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[162] Mario Nicolli. 12/21/2005. "Mão Branca teria sido obra de ficção da imprensa."
FAPERJ: http://www.faperj.br/boletim_interna.phtml?obj_id=2611

in others mixtures of civilians and resident police officers were sought out by residents to resolve disputes and provide general protection, leading to the creation of *Polícia Mineira* (Airam 2009).

The term *Polícia Mineira*, today broadly used in Brazil, reportedly has its origins in the 1960s and 1970s when the Military Police of the state of Minas Gerais (General Mines, so Mineira means either "miner" or from Minas Gerais) illegally invaded parts of the neighboring state of Rio de Janeiro in search of criminal suspects. The term evolved, however, to refer to corrupt police that use their knowledge of law enforcement techniques (such as wiretapping) to practice extortion.[163] As a genre of police-based criminal groups, some *Polícia Mineira* groups also evolved throughout the 1980s and 1990s, professionalizing the sale of private protection and expanding their exploitative activities until they eventually became what I label "stationary militias" (see Zaluar and Conceição 2007).

In Rio de Janeiro, the evolution of a *Polícia Mineira* group into a full-fledged modern militia first occurred during the mid-to-late 1990s in the favela of Rio das Pedras (discussed in detail in the case study below), after which several others followed suit. By the mid-2000s, the highly lucrative criminal model of the militia had encouraged numerous offshoot groups, here labeled "predatory militias," that soon expanded their power over large swaths of Rio de Janeiro, particularly in the West Zone.

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[163] Delegado Pinho. 11/11/2010. "Milícia, grupo paramilitar, grupo parapolicial, ou `polícia mineira.´ *Segurança Pública por Quem Faz:*
http://delegadopinho.blogspot.com/2010/11/milicia-grupo-paramilitar-parapolicial.html

While rooted in the informal protection market like their predecessors, modern militias sought to monopolize territorial authority completely and to expand their operations into all available informal markets, at times forcing even fully legal markets into the informal realm.[164] By many accounts, militias in Rio de Janeiro made the jump from the informal protection markets to the exploitation of all informal markets with the expansion of unregistered public transportation lines during the 1990s.[165] The transportation market was particularly vulnerable because of the lack of legal oversight and high demand for alternative transport, as registered city buses did not provide adequate routes to and from favela communities. Private van services picked up the slack, but had difficulty obtaining licensing, and consequently were left vulnerable to both state repression and street crime.[166] Militias found in informal public transportation, then, an industry they could both protect and profit from.

Once militias began to diversify their economies with public transportation, militia leaders quickly learned to seek other opportunities as well.[167] Prior to the rise of militias in Rio de Janeiro, drug trafficking gangs had already begun to profit from the distribution of household goods and services like gas, electricity, cable TV and internet, which, due to their de facto territorial control, could not effectively be regulated by the

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[165] Corroborated by several police and community leader testimonies, 2011-2012.

[166] Unregistered van driver. 2012. North Zone, Rio de Janeiro. Author interview, November.

[167] Coronel Ibis Silva Pereira. 2011. Military Police, João VI Academy, Rio de Janeiro. Author interview, December 28.

state or private enterprise. This evolution may have been motivated by a steady decline in profits from local drug trafficking in the late 1990s and 2000s,[168] although contrary to militias, drug traffickers generally regulated the prices for these products at below their market value.[169] By some accounts, corrupt military police who were frustrated with the decreasing returns from extorting drug traffickers in economic decline, saw in this informal regulation of household goods and services a greater and more stable income potential, and therefore decided to expel drug traffickers and usurp their territories rather than continue taxing them.[170] In any case, in Rio de Janeiro, militias had dramatically increased their income potential by the mid-2000s by seeking to control the entirety of informal markets wherever they could secure a monopoly of violence.

The expansion and diversification of economic interests by militias in Rio de Janeiro paralleled their politicization. The local social control necessary to ensure survival and enrichment in the informal economy also endowed militias with the financial capability and political capital necessary to invest in electoral projects, which if successful, could serve to further protect them from investigation from within the state itself, and even channel public monies into private enterprise. By 2008, it seemed apparent that the great expansion of militias across Rio's West and North Zones during

[168] See survey, "Rota de Fuga: a caminhada de crianças, adolescentes, e jovens na rede do tráfico de drogas no varejo no Rio de Janeiro, 2004-2006," *Observatório de Favelas,* Rio de Janeiro, January 1, 2006.

[169] Residents. 2012. Santa Marta, Rio de Janeiro. Author interview, January 17.

[170] See *Tropa de Elite II*, a novel by Luiz Eduardo Soares; e Rodrigo Pimentel; e Cláudio Ferraz; e André Batista, Editorda Nova Fonteira, Rio de Janeiro, 2010.

the mid-2000s amounted to a coordinated and pre-meditated political project, as a number of politicians, including several city councilmen and a state legislator, were arrested and imprisoned for direct involvement with militia groups (Cano and Duarte 2012).[171] Once a given territory was controlled, electoral victory became a matter of securing no-campaign zones ("electoral corrals") where a chosen candidate could have exclusive access to the public. In some cases, residents in militia-dominated communities have been bullied into voting one way or another, or have even been bussed to the polls by militia groups themselves, but in most cases campaign control was sufficient to keep political competitors and their supporters at bay.[172]

Prior to 2007, the state's response to the spread of militias in Rio de Janeiro was at best apologetic for a criminal trend deemed a "lesser evil" than the plague of drug gangs that dominated most of the city's favelas. Mayor Cesar Maia publicly compared the militias to the self-denominated "Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia" (AUC), implying they resembled a resistance movement against a greater evil (Cano and Looty 2008).   A number of other politicians and public figures at least tacitly defended the growth of militias for a time.[173]

Between 2007 and 2008, however, several scandals exploded in the media and swayed public opinion over the matter, abruptly transforming the political dynamics

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[172] Interviews with city council members, Andreia Gouveia and Carlo Caiado, November 2011, and former state deputy, Alessandro Molon (PT), July 2009.

[173] Andreia Gouveia. 2012. City Councilwoman, Rio de Janeiro, Author interview, November 22.

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around the issue of militias (Cano and Duarte 2012). In May 2008, undercover

journalists from the newspaper *O Dia* were kidnapped and tortured by militiamen from

the Batam favela in Rio's West Side, after which all major media outlets began

condemning militias as a serious problem (Cano and Looty 2008). Newly elected

Governor Sergio Cabral Filho (2007- present) then ordered vigorous investigations of

militia activity, and moved to recognize militia activity as a specific type of organized

crime.[174] After a 2008 state congressional committee report (the *CPI das Milícias*)[175]

indicted hundreds of individuals including a number of elected officials, two special units,

DRACO and GAECO[176], were formed to investigate and prosecute militia activity. More

than 500 arrests were made in just two years of investigation, representing a severe blow

to the criminal organizations, and forcing them to adopt new strategies and behavior. The

direct fielding of political candidates by militia groups, in particular, was abandoned for

lesser or more discrete forms of electoral manipulation (Cano and Duarte 2012).

Militias as a system of economically motivated organized crime, however, have

proved to be highly resilient, and according to many state investigators are still expanding

despite the crack-downs. The difference is in their visibility. Militias today tend to

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[174] Rio's Legislative Assembly codified militia as a specific crime in 2012.

[175] Headed by state deputy Marcelo Freixo.

[176] DRACO (Delegacia de Repressão ao Crime Organizado) is an office of the Civil

Police now dedicated solely to the investigations. GAECO (Grupo de Atuação Especial

de Combate ao Crime Organizado) was created by the Public Ministry (i.e. Attorney

General) of Rio de Janeiro to both investigate and prosecute anyone involved in crimes

associated with militias.

operate *no sapatinho* ("under the radar"), and rely more heavily on networks of often-clandestine coercion, in contrast to the more transparent hierarchies of just a few years ago (Cano and Duarte 2012). In fact, militia leadership today is often unknown even to the residents of the communities they control.[177] Whereas previously militia members openly committed acts of illegal coercion—often in police uniform or other identifying clothing—today much of their street-level coercive activities are out-sourced to civilians who are seldom armed nor trained.[178] Their much-reduced visibility has reportedly affected their ability to maintain order (i.e. prevent small crimes), and therefore might slowly erode their legitimacy/credibility as protector agencies. According to police involved in investigating them, however, it has not reduced their ability to continue exploiting illicit sources of income.[179]

Although it has received scant attention in the shadows of Rio de Janeiro and Sao Paulo, Recife was also heavily targeted by the repressive apparatus of Brazil's military regime, and police death squads were active there since the late 1960s.[180] And similar to other Brazilian metropolises, Recife also experienced a sharp rise in violent crime during the following decades, with dramatic increases in the 1980s and 1990s. In response,

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[177] Residents. 2012. Rio das Pedras and Batam favelas, Rio de Janeiro. Author interviews, January-March. Also supported by Cano and Duarte (2012).

[178] Community leader. 2012. Rio das Pedras favela, West Zone, Rio de Janeiro. Author interview February 10.

[179] DRACO police, interviews reported in Cano and Duarte (2012).

[180] Luciano Oliveira. 2012. Faculty, Political Science, UFPE, Recife. Author interview, June 28.

police death squads that were unofficially sanctioned to hunt down political opponents during the height of dictatorship began to pursue common criminals, often contracted by business owners who felt threatened by the rise in crime.[181]

The introduction of crack in Recife in the mid-1990s led to an escalation of death squad activity that paralleled (and, of course, was partly responsible for) the sudden spike in homicides between 1996 and 1997 (see Nobrega 2008; 2012). Crack, and the significant increase in illicit cash exchange associated with it, also led to a change in the logic of death squad behavior. First, it offered a highly exploitable new market for corrupt police willing to use violent means to extort drug traffickers. It was particularly common for civil police investigators (plain clothes detectives) and for the so-called *P-2* units (intelligence specialists) of the Military Police to exploit this opportunity, as they could easily acquire detailed information about drug traffickers.[182] In this sense, death squads were oriented to killing for ransom rather than as a matter of social cleansing. Secondly, the logic of violence itself changed with the inception of the crack economy, increasing the demand for murderers who could be hired by drug traffickers themselves.[183]

As the demand for assassins increased in the 2000s, death squads in and around Recife grew larger and more sophisticated, steadily becoming autonomous organizations with a trend towards hierarchical organization and economic diversification.[184] Similar to

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[181] Paulo. 2012. Journalist, Jornal de Comercio, Recife. Author interview, April 26.

[182] Paulo. 2012. Journalist, Jornal de Comercio, Recife. Author interview, April 26.

[183] Fabinet and Bruno. 2012. DeNarc-PE detectives, Recife. Author interview, May 7.

[184] Homicide detectives. 2012. DHPP-PE, Recife. Author interviews, June-July.

militias in Rio de Janeiro, they may also have been developing political ambitions in the mid-2000s, although they never developed the same degree of territorial control, extractive capacity, or operative autonomy. This difference may in part be due to the relatively low concentrations of resident police in Recife and the consequent lack of highly developed *Polícia Mineira* groups early on. Note that as resident police were never exiled from communities dominated by drug gangs as they were in Rio de Janeiro, their pattern of residence has remained roughly even across the lower income districts of Recife, and rarely concentrated in specific areas. Although resident police often still have some authoritative influence in their communities, their presence is generally too small to impose social order.[185]

The further development of death squads into full-blown militias may also have been truncated by a series of focused investigative operations carried out by the Civil and Military Police between 2007 and 2009, which were initiated under Pernambuco's *Pacto pela Vida* public security plan.[186]   These operations, referred to as "qualified repression," shed light on a number of death squad groups operating in the metropolitan area of Recife. Importantly, the investigations revealed that they were almost invariably composed at least partially by civil and military police officers, as well as firemen and military personnel (Nobrega 2012). Furthermore, contract killing was only one among many of their activities for financial gain, and in some cases not their primary function. Extortion, drug trafficking (or extortion of the drug trade), and vehicle theft were systematized activities of several groups. Unlike the stationary militias in Rio de Janeiro, they

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[185] Kcal Gomez. 2012. Community leader, Bode favela, Recife. Author interview, June 6.

[186] Dr. João Brito. 2012. DHPP (homicide division) subchief. Author interview, June 11.

generally did not attempt to impose a conservative and all-encompassing social agenda in their communities, although some had imposed curfews.[187] Some groups were found to have in their ranks city councilmen and political candidates, suggesting a movement towards politicization (Nobrega 2012).

Today there is little doubt that death squads continue to operate in and around Recife, and that they likely enjoy the protection of some public officials. But to the extent they do, it is on a much smaller scale, and with limited economic and political ambitions by comparison with the professionalized militias of Rio de Janeiro. This empirical divergence and its theoretical implications, however, can be more clearly seen by exploring the historical trajectories of specific favela communities. I therefore elaborate two case studies below that demonstrate the most extreme cases of militia-type development in both Rio de Janeiro and Recife. The Rio das Pedras favela in Rio de Janeiro best approximates an advanced stationary militia with predatory offshoots.   The Brasilia Teimosa favela in Recife resembles an advanced death squad with some characteristics of a *Polícia Mineira* group.

The Case of Rio das Pedras (Rio de Janeiro)

Migrants from the arid and poor Brazilian northeast had begun squatting on a private tract of land in Rio de Janeiro's west zone in the 1960s. A dispute with the area's landowner led to an agreement brokered by governor Francisco Negrão de Lima in 1969 to legalize the settlement, thus giving birth to the Rio das Pedras favela (Baumann Burgos 2003).   Migrants continued flooding into the area throughout the 1970s and

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[187] Paulo. 2012. Journalist, Jornal de Comercio, Recife. Author interview, April 26.

1980s, shaking up the delicate social balance established by the founding families.
Meanwhile, the state provided virtually no infrastructure to absorb the impoverished new
settlers, and crime and violence grew rampant. Bandits armed with knives, .38 revolvers,
and the occasional shotgun did as they pleased, smoking and selling marijuana in the
open, bullying neighbors, and assaulting any targetable commercial activity in or around
the community. Delivery companies refused to bring water, gas, and other goods into the
area because their drivers were robbed too often. Residents feared arbitrary violence at
the hands of gangsters, bandits, and rapists, and tried to keep their children in at night.[188]

A dispute over a goal in a children's soccer game in 1978 may have been the
catalyst for the birth of what is today one of Rio de Janeiro's most powerful militias. The
child of a local drug dealer ran for his father, *Carlinho "Dentinho."* The opposing child,
meanwhile, ran for his own father, who was a waiter at a restaurant in the nearby Barra
district. A trading of insults between the parents escalated quickly. Carlinho pulled out a
revolver and shot the waiter in the chest, killing him instantly. That same evening, the
waiter's friends, led by a man named *Otalício*, descended on Carlinho's house with guns
and knives, killing everyone inside, according to resident reports, except for the drug
dealer's mother. They dragged the bodies through the streets for all to see, and then
receiving applause, they kept up the momentum and turned on another house known for
its delinquency and drug dealing. Its inhabitants were locked inside while the vigilantes
torched the structure, killing them all.[189]

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[188] Residents. 2012. Rio das Pedras favela, Rio de Janeiro. Author interviews, February-
March.

[189] Compiled from interviews with several residents of Rio das Pedras, 2009-2012.

Perceived as a sort of local hero in the wake of violence, Otalício became president of the Resident's Association in 1978, which was inaugurated formally that same year, and which he used as a source of political patronage and general authority during his ten years in office.[190] Local business owners voluntarily paid him out their own pockets, requesting in return that he and his aides keep a tab on crime in the area. Otalício and his friends, all of whom now were affiliated with the Residents Association, accepted their new role and expanded it. As Rio das Pedras grew in size and population, they took on new recruits, drawing on the growing number of policemen who lived in the area, and the so-called *Polícia Mineira* was born. Fleeing the drug wars of the mid-1980s in the favelas of Rio de Janeiro's South, Center, and North, quadrants, more and more police officers sought refuge in Rio das Pedras, which by the end of the decade had already become known as the only area favela to have effectively eliminated drugs and drug-related violence.[191] Soon buses and delivery trucks returned, and commercial activity began slowly to flourish. Rio das Pedras was becoming a model favela during times of increasing violence and state inefficacy.[192]

But Otalício's reign was marked by arbitrary and sometimes indiscriminate violence, and he made many enemies. He was murdered in 1989, and rumors spread that

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[190] Residents Associations were promoted by the Arch Dioceses of Rio de Janeiro to create political linkages between public officials and the poor (McCann 2006).

[191] "Beto Bomba" (Alberto Moreth). 2009. Alleged militia leader, Rio das Pedras favela, Rio de Janeiro. Author interview, July 10.

[192] Alessandro Molon. 2009. State Legislator (PT), Rio de Janeiro. Author interview, July 1.

it was his own wife, *Dinda*, who ordered him shot. She then replaced Otalício as the Residents Association president and leader of the *Polícia Mineira,* but she also was murdered just a few years later, gunned down in front of the Residents Association.[193]

The murder of Dinda ushered in a period of violent conflict between several small groups, composed of both police officers and civilians. Older residents described seeing "a lot of bodies in those days,"[194] speaking roughly of the period between 1993 and 1998. By the end of the decade, however, a civil police investigator known as Inspector Felix Tostes had consolidated control over the entirety of Rio das Pedras. It was Tostes who turned the *polícia mineira* into what is today understood as a militia, and according to this theoretical model, a *stationary* militia with predatory offshoots.

Respected and feared, Tostes set out to impose a clearly defined conservative social order in which not only drugs and drug trafficking would be strictly prohibited, but also everything associated with it, including such things as the civilian use of walkie-talkies or blonde hair dye on men.[195] Traditional norms of gender activity and expression were also enforced, with a focused repression of homosexuality (see Cano and Duarte 2012).   To achieve this, he built up the Resident's Association, the Associação de Moradores e Amigos de Rio das Pedras (AMARP), expanding its social and political

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[193] Community organizer. 2012. Rio das Pedras favela,Rio de Janeiro. Author interview, February 10.

[194] Green party candidate for city council. 2012. Rio das Pedras favela,Rio de Janeiro. Author interview, February 10.

[195] Residents. 2012. Rio das Pedras favela, Rio de Janeiro. Author interviews, February-March.

functions extensively while using coercive force or the threat thereof to prevent virtually

any other institution from developing roots in the community, effectively monopolizing

power.[196] AMARP developed myriad proto-state functions, including the provision of

emergency services, dispute resolution, judicial regulation, legal assistance and advocacy,

social activities, state-resident linkage mechanisms, public security, social control and

moral structure, and commercial regulation and stimulus (Baumann Burgos 2003). By

the early 2000s, the AMARP was, in essence, the *state* in Rio das Pedras, and it was fully

controlled by Inspector Felix Tostes and his militia.

AMARP's first president under Tostes' tutelage was Josinaldo Francisco da Cruz,

popularly known as "Nadinho." Impressed by the number of votes the duo were able to

garner in the localized election, Tostes encouraged Nadinho to run for city council of Rio

de Janeiro in 2004. With the help of an electoral corral in various favelas of Rio's West

Zone, and allegedly the support of the city's then mayor, Cesar Maia, he won a seat with

some 25,000 votes.[197]

According to resident reports, the relationship between Tostes and Nadinho began

to sour following the election due to the new councilman's alleged lack of commitment to

Rio das Pedras once in office.[198] Tostes threatened to run in the 2008 elections to unseat

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[196] Community organizer. 2012. Rio das Pedras favela,Rio de Janeiro. Author interview,
February 10.

[197] Andrea Gouvea. 2011. City Councilwoman, Rio de Janeiro. Author interviews,
November 22.

[198] Residents. 2012. Rio das Pedras favela, Rio de Janeiro. Author interviews, February-
March.

his partner, and the riff ended in his own murder in January 2007. Councilman Nadinho was indicted for the murder, and later for involvement in militia activity, but was released after a few months in custody. Then, in 2009, he also was killed by assailants suspected to be affiliated with the Rio das Pedras militia.[199]

Nadinho was among the several public officials originally indicted for militia activity on State Legislator Marcelo Freixo's parliamentary investigation committee (CPI das Milicias). Prior to his death in 2009 he had testified against several members of AMARP, including Jorge Alberto Moreth, or "Beto Bomba," the association's acting president since 2008. The death of Nadinho (along with twenty others indicted by the parliamentary investigation) complicated the prosecution of the remaining members of the Rio das Pedras militia, but brought intense pressure on authorities to do something about it.[200] In early 2010, Beto Bomba and his AMARP affiliates were then also arrested on charges of conspiracy and illegal gun possession, but released three months later for lack of evidence.

Since Beto Bomba's arrest, he officially resigned as the AMARP president, but continues to hold an informal advisory role. AMARP itself continues to provide most of its services to local residents, but no longer has a clear function for dispute resolution.

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[199] "Ex-vereador Nadinho de Rio das Pedras é assessinado em atentado na Barra." 6/11/2009. *Extra:* http://extra.globo.com/casos-de-policia/ex-vereador-nadinho-de-rio-das-pedras-assassinado-em-atentado-na-barra-298609.html

[200] "Ex-vereador Nadinho de Rio das Pedras é assessinado em atentado na Barra." 6/11/2009. *Extra:* http://extra.globo.com/casos-de-policia/ex-vereador-nadinho-de-rio-das-pedras-assassinado-em-atentado-na-barra-298609.html.

Further, while area residents understand that the militia is still active, its leadership has gone underground such that the public no longer knows who is in charge. Local businesses are still required to pay a monthly protection tax, but the protection itself has become fallible, as several area businesses have reported robberies. Others have been vandalized or destroyed for failure to pay. Residents themselves complain of the increase in petty crime, specifically theft and vandalism.[201] While it is assumed that the militia still at least taxes the provision of basic products and services such as water, gas, internet, and Cable TV, there appear to be at least two (nominally distinct) companies for the provision of each, implying some competition.[202] Independent non-governmental organizations (common in most of Rio de Janeiro's favelas), however, have yet to be established in Rio das Pedras.[203]

The Case of Brasilia Teimosa (Recife)

A small community of fishermen and their families had long occupied the coastal marshlands south of downtown Recife that is today called Brasilia Teimosa. The slum is

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[201] Residents. 2012. Rio das Pedras favela, Rio de Janeiro. Author interviews, February-March.

[202] "Beto Bomba" (Alberto Moreth). 2009. Alleged militia leader, Rio das Pedras favela, Rio de Janeiro. Author interview, July 10. During the interview, he displayed tax documents indicating that more than one company actively sold products and services in Rio das Pedras.

[203] Green party candidate for city council. 2012. Rio das Pedras favela, Rio de Janeiro. Author interview, February 10.

named facetiously after Brazil's newly constructed capital city, Brasilia (1964), with the added label "Teimosa" meaning "stubborn," for the notoriety of the area's residents for resisting attempts by the state to relocate them.   With the assistance of progressive factions of the Catholic Church, the first residents association was established around the same time, and quickly became the organizational base around which the community resisted favela removal plans and lobbied state leaders for resources and recognition.[204] By the 1980s, Brasilia Teimosa had grown substantially, to some 50,000 inhabitants, most of whom now lived in permanent housing (i.e. houses of brick and mortar, built on solid land). Government removal efforts then focused on the more precarious "palafita" homes (stilted shacks) that extended from the marshy coastline out into the tidal flats of the Atlantic Ocean. The last of these homes were torn down by the state in the early 2000s after negotiations between the residents association, private businesses, and state officials. To compensate, the state built a permanent embankment to prevent flooding in Brasilia Teimosa, and promoted the newly opened beaches for tourism.   Today the community is home to approximately 70,000 people and numerous small business enterprises.[205] Most of its streets are at least partially paved or laid with cobblestone and are accessible by motor vehicle. Situated between downtown and Recife's wealthy Southside districts of Boa Viagem and Pina, it has become a prime location for low-income laborers as well as low-level drug traffickers.

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[204] Wilson Lapa. 2012. Resident Association president, Brasilia Teimosa, Recife. Author interview, July 9.

[205] Historical documents provided by Resident Association, Brasilia Teimosa, Recife.

As in most large cities across the Americas, crime and homicidal violence in Recife increased significantly during the 1980s. The murder rate alone in Recife increased 390 per cent between the beginning and end of the decade, paralleled by a similar trend in thefts and other types of violent crime (Lima et al. 2002). The police and justice system were wholly unprepared to deal with the rising tide of violence or the moral panic that followed (Freitas 2003). Police officers frustrated with the failings of the criminal justice system to prosecute and sentence criminals formed alliances with local business owners who felt the state was unable or unwilling to protect them.[206] It was in this context in the mid-to-late 1980s that the first organized death squads began to systematically kill suspected criminals and marginalized youth on the streets of Recife.[207] Official estimates by the police themselves of the total percentage of homicides attributable to death squads has since varied widely between seven and thirty percent (Nobrega 2008).[208]

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[206] William, Evans. "Death to Undesirables: Brazil's Murder Capital," in *The Independent*, May 15, 2009.

[207] Orisvaldo 2012. Director, Grupo Comunidade Assumindo as Crianças, Peixinhos, Recife. Author interview, May 28.

[208] Current estimates of the DHPP-PE calculate that 7 percent of all homicides in Recife are attributable to death squads. At the height of violence in the late 2000s, some detectives estimated that death squads were responsible for an entire third of all murders (see: William, Evans. "Death to Undesirables: Brazil's Murder Capital," in *The Independent*, May 15, 2009).

In Brasilia Teimosa, a young and charismatic military police officer that I will call Vladimir[209] began making a name for himself in the early 1990s as a go-to man for arbitration in local disputes. Having grown up in the same community, he knew the residents well, and many people entrusted with him the extralegal provision of public order. He was frequently approached by area residents to resolve conflicts of any kind, and he used various methods on a continuum from persuasion to murder to do so, often while not on duty.   Typically, the public's response to his actions was positive, and therefore created a feedback loop by which Vladimir became, over time, the de facto primary (if still informal) authoritative entity in Brasilia Teimosa. The neighborhood associations continued to exist, but their functions were limited to realms of lobbying and the provision of social programs. Matters of public security fell to Vladimir and his confidants.[210]

When crack was introduced onto the streets of Recife in the mid-1990s, it provoked a tremendous wave of violence throughout the city's slums. The barriers to entry for selling crack were much lower than powdered cocaine, and its profit potential was much greater than with marijuana, which consequently invited a plethora of younger and less organized youths to become drug dealers.[211] A black market small arms trade soon followed, and homicidal violence skyrocketed. In 1997, the number of murders in Recife jumped from a previous average of three hundred per year to more than a thousand (Nobrega 2008).   The old guard drug dealers and their families, who had run

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[209] His name is changed to protect his identity.

[210] Residents. 2012. Brazilia Teimosa, Recife. Author interviews, May-July 2012.

[211] Fabinet and Bruno. 2012. DeNarc-PE detectives, Recife. Author interview, May 7.

relatively stable operations for decades, were systemically killed by younger rivals or jailed. The high rate of homicide, and the consequent fragmented and instable nature of drug trafficking, continued on for well over a decade, earning Recife notoriety as Brazil's most violent city.

Brasilia Teimosa suffered the same initial turmoil brought on by the introduction of crack, and like many other area favelas became known for its violence.[212] But by the early 2000s, drug-related homicides, violent crime, and theft had dropped dramatically. Small businesses boomed, social events and renovated beaches brought outsiders in, and residents again felt safe in the streets by day and night.[213] No special public security programs had specifically targeted Brasilia Teimosa. On the contrary, several residents interviewed in this study attributed the change for the better in their community to the reining in of drug traffickers and other criminals by Vladimir and his men.[214]

As a police sergeant, Vladimir had extensive influence over other police officers, who on or off duty could assist him in resolving problems in his home district of Brasilia Teimosa, where many of them were also residents.[215] By his own account, his influence in local social matters, reinforced by on or off-duty police (many of whom were residents themselves), helped account for the vast weakening of criminal structures and the

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[212] Prof. Jose Afonso. 2012. Professor of photojournalism, UFPE, Recife. Author interviews, May-June.

[213] Wilson Lapa. 2012. Resident Association president, Brasilia Teimosa, Recife. Author interview, July 9.

[214] Residents. 2012. Brasilia Teimosa, Recife. Author interviews, May-July 2012.

[215] "Sergeant Vladimir." 2012. Brasilia Teimosa, Recife. Author interviews, June-July.

reduction of violence in his community in comparison with other low-income

neighborhoods and slums in Recife.   By the accounts of his close associates and others in

the community, Vladimir brought peace to Brasilia Teimosa by taming criminals with

physical violence, expulsion, and murder. "He personally has about fifty or sixty kills,"

according to one confidant.[216] Vladimir was even investigated by the Public Ministry for

a similar number of homicides, although the case was later dropped.[217]

An example of the kind of issues addressed by Vladimir in 2012 was a complaint

from the local Residents Association president, whose teenage son had been robbed at

gunpoint while strolling on the beachfront at the east end of Brasilia Teimosa, losing his

cellular phone. Upon hearing of this complaint, Sergeant Vladimir then "sent word" out

in the community for the thieves to come speak with him, a sort of informal summons.

The next morning the cellular phone was found left on the doorstep of its rightful

owner.[218]

Although the effectiveness of Sergeant Vladimir's authoritative influence is

apparent, there does not appear to be any structural sophistication to his authority

comparable to that of Rio de Janeiro's larger militias groups, such as the Rio de Pedras

militia or the League of Justice. His authority is far from hegemonic, and unlike his

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[216] Close associate of Sergeant Vladimir. 2012. Brasilia Teimosa, Recife. Author
interview, July 12.

[217] Wilson Lapa. 2012. Resident Association president, Brasilia Teimosa, Recife. Author
interview, July 9.

[218] Wilson Lapa. 2012. Resident Association president, Brasilia Teimosa, Recife. Author
interview, July 9.

militia counterparts in Rio de Janeiro, is completely informal. That is, he does not control or closely monitor the local residents associations, and he himself has never been a candidate for public office or held an official position in government, despite calls for him to do so. Likewise, there are no reported attempts or complaints of systematic electoral fraud or repression.[219] Meanwhile, numerous other organizations, including both the resident associations and other non-governmental groups with some independent social mandate are active in Brasilia Teimosa and claim to have little or no relationship at all with Vladimir or any other authority figures, oppressive or supportive.[220]

There is, however, indication of systematic extortion of local businesses and even resident families, which may or may not involve Vladimir and other rogue police officers. Residents have complained that a city councilman has unofficially mandated businesses to hire security guards from his own agency, which charges a monthly fee to anyone making financial transactions in the district.[221]

But unlike the advanced militias of Rio de Janeiro, Sergeant Vladimir's has not attempted to monopolize the informal marketplace beyond the sale of private protection. Most notably, city buses, rather than private vans, constitute the primary vehicle of resident transit in and out of the community, thereby excluding the economic mainstay by which militias in Rio de Janeiro grew most rapidly. There are also no reported attempts

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[219] Wilson Lapa. 2012. Resident Association president, Brasilia Teimosa, Recife. Author interview, July 9.

[220] NGO director. 2012. Brasilia Teimosa, Recife. Author interview, July.

[221] Residents. 2012. Brasilia Teimosa, Recife. Author interviews, May-July 2012.

to control the sale and distribution of cable TV, internet, butane gas, or electricity, although much of that continues to be pirated.[222]

This all suggests that the "militia" in Brasilia Teimosa is far less sophisticated or autonomous than the stationary militias of Rio de Janeiro. Not only does its illicit income base appear to be limited to localized extortion and contract killings around the metropolitan area of Recife, but it is also largely dependent on elite contractors. In other words, the militia is not an autonomous power broker with its own expansionist ambitions and political orientation, but rather a mix of organic local authority based on charisma and coercion, and a singular criminal enterprise selling a limited set of services.

Conclusion

Police-based criminal groups have long existed in Brazil, and have been known by various names. In their simplest form, they are groups of police officers who occasionally take extralegal measures in their home communities to control crime, and over time become figures of authority and influence. These entities have commonly been called *Polícia Mineira*. Death squads, by contrast, are typically groups of police officers contracted by others to kill in any neighborhood and for whatever reason, and whose origins may be rooted in the military dictatorship. More advanced forms of both types of groups have evolved substantially in the last two decades to form what are now referred to as militias. Militias seek territorial control over residential populations and attempt not only to force the sale of private protection (extortion), but also to exploit all economic and political opportunities outside the constraints of the law.

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[222] Residents. 2012. Brasilia Teimosa, Recife. Author interviews, May-July 2012.

All cases of police-based criminal groups represent a threat both to the integrity of the state and the health of democracy. The authority of the state is compromised in any case in which a non-state entity supersedes it, especially if that entity is criminal or insurgent. Anyone living under that alternative authority (in this case, of criminal groups) cannot be protected by the rights supposedly guaranteed him by law. Democracy itself is threatened by systematic fraud as such groups take extralegal measures to manipulate electoral outcomes, whether by intimidation, murder of rivals, or the maintenance of electoral corrals, the long-term effect of which is to criminalize democratic politics from below.

Since 2007, governments in Rio de Janeiro and Recife have begun to take the problem of militias seriously, creating specialized agencies to investigate and prosecute this specific form of organized crime. But combating militias has thus far been only partially successful. In Rio de Janeiro, in particular, militias seem to have survived crack-downs by opting for a more clandestine model of crime. In order for the state to respond more effectively, it must first better understand militias' origins, development, and behavioral logic. By creating a typology of police-based criminal groups active in Brazil today, supported by empirical data from the cities Rio de Janeiro and Recife, this study moves us further in this direction.

Chapter 4

Two Models for Public Security

By the turn of the century it had become more than evident in both Rio de Janeiro and Recife that the state's strategies to control violent crime were at best ineffective, and in by some measures markedly counterproductive. In Rio de Janeiro, violent deaths had continued to increase steadily across the millennial divide, and as much as a fifth of the city's population lived under the de facto governance of drug gangs or militias. Dramatic firefights had become commonplace all over the city, and drug gangs became more audacious in their confrontations with the police as militarism on both sides escalated. In Recife, a moderate homicide rate in the mid-1990s quadruped by the end of decade, earning it notoriety as Brazil's most violent city. Although criminal gangs there rarely established the depth of territorial control seen in Rio de Janeiro, violent crime deeply affected the lives of virtually everyone living there.

The 2006 gubernatorial elections in the corresponding states of Rio de Janeiro and Pernambuco marked a significant change in the political climate in relation to public security. The previous decades in Rio de Janeiro had been characterized by a swinging pendulum of conservative and liberal governors who sought variously to use the police as a blunt military weapon against the growing power of drug gangs, or rein them in order to avoid confrontation altogether (Ahnen 2007). Neither tendency was able to institutionalize anything tantamount to a pragmatic public security system, and violent crime became an increasingly salient issue in the 1970s. This began to change with the election of Governor Sergio Cabral in Rio, who spearheaded the development of the now

well-known Pacification Police Units (UPPs). Since then, while much has remained the same among the core elements of Rio's police force, the establishment of "permanent" police units ostensibly trained in community or "proximity" policing in areas formerly controlled by drug traffickers represents a significant policy shift, and has led to important social and political changes in the city (Cano 2012).

The election of Governor Eduardo Campos in Pernambuco state in the same year was also followed by major policy change. The new governor, who had run his election campaign largely on a promise to reduce homicides and improve public security in the wake of the disastrous policies of his predecessors, moved to implement a multi-institutional public security reform embodied in what became known as the *Pacto pela Vida* (Pact for Life, or PPV). Modeled in part on New York City's Compstat program, which advanced spatial monitoring technology and a specific management schematic to diagnose and address violent crime (see Walsh 2001), the *Pacto pela Vida* is explicitly a plan to reduce homicides. It is substantially more audacious, however, as it also attempts to reform and manage interactions between all of the major state agencies associated with the justice system, as well as institutionalize the participation of civil society representatives (Macedo 2012).

Although dramatically different in design and appearance, both the Pacifying Police Units and the *Pacto pela Vida* are similarly remarkable in that they represent a break from the traditional public security focus on illegal drug repression (Cano 2012).[223] In this respect, state governors Sergio Cabral and Eduardo Campos seem to be delicately

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[223] Jose Luiz Ratton. 2012. Public Security Advisor to Gov. Eduardo Campos. Author interview, Recife. June 8.

spearheading a much broader (albeit slow) movement towards a reconsideration of the War on Drugs, originally driven on a national level by ex-president Fernando Henrique Cardoso. Rio de Janeiro's Secretary of Public Security, Jose Mariano Beltrame, has repeatedly insisted that the illegal drug trade and the violence associated with are separable, and the state should prioritize the control of violence over anything else.[224] UPP commanders are also well versed in this rhetoric, and have publicly defended the shift in police focus away from the War on Drugs.[225] Although political figures in Pernambuco have been less outspoken in terms of refocusing state attention away from drugs, the *Pacto pela Vida* represents a conscious and significant reprioritization of state policy towards the issue of violence.[226]

A cursory review of the outcomes of the Pacifying Police Units and *Pacto pela Vida* indicates that both initiatives have also been remarkably successful, at least with respect to their stated goals. The primary objectives of the UPPs are to a) end the territorial domination of criminal organizations in favelas, and; b) reduce the incidence of

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[224] Leslie Leilão. 3/16/2013. "A sociedade não gosta da polícia." *Veja:* http://veja.abril.com.br/noticia/brasil/entrevista-jose-mariano-beltrame-a-sociedade-nao-gosta-da-policia

[225] UPP commanders' speeches recorded at the *Encontro Estratégico de Segurança Pública e Política das Drogas*, Rio de Janeiro, Sept. 19-21, 2011.

[226] Jose Luiz Ratton. 2012. Public Security Advisor to Gov. Eduardo Campos. Author interview, Recife. June 8.

armed conflict in the city.[227] To this end, as a whole, they have exceeded even the most

conservative of expectations, at least in and around the communities in which they have

been established. First and foremost, the openly armed and authoritative presence of

drug traffickers, and the corresponding violence of frequent and severe armed

confrontation that had characterized crime in the city for decades, have all but

disappeared in most of these communities, and homicides in UPP-controlled areas have

decreased by as much as 75 percent (Cano 2012). There are also clear indications that

residents have, notwithstanding some notable exceptions, embraced the new authority

structure embodied in UPP initiative (IBSP 2010).

Similarly, the *Pacto pela Vida* in Pernambuco, the elemental objective of which

was to reduce the total number of homicides both in the capital and across the state, has

been associated with a sharp decline in violent deaths. Since its inception in 2007, the

government claims that homicides have decreased by 37 percent statewide, and by nearly

58 percent in the capital city of Recife.[228] This improvement has not only been a boon

for the Governor, who has since entertained the possibility of campaigning in future

presidential elections, but has also led to a notable revitalization of social and economic

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[227] In January 2011, two years after the implantation of the first UPPs, Gov. Cabral issued

a decree which officially established a set of specific goals for Pacification (Cano 2012).

[228] Pacto pela Vida. 9/3/2013. "Agosto registra o menor índice de homicídios dos últimos

anos" *Gov. Pernambuco:* http://www.pactopelavida.pe.gov.br/agosto-registra-o-menor-

indice-de-homicidios-dos-ultimos-anos/

life in Recife.   The image and professionalism of the police and justice system have improved, and importantly, the city *feels* safer.[229]

A deeper analysis of both public security initiatives, of course, reveals numerous complexities and potential problems, as well as uncertainties as to the long-term viability of maintaining such policies. A very basic example of this is that the Pacification project in Rio de Janeiro is very closely associated with the administration of Governor Cabral, and there is a reasonable concern that the political capital necessary to fund the extremely costly UPPs might expire with the end of his term and the 2016 Olympics. There is certainly concern among residents of UPP controlled communities that this might happen.[230] Likewise, the *Pacto pela Vida* in Pernambuco, which has tripled public security spending, is very much a part of Governor Eduardo Campos' political administration. If it is not sufficiently institutionalized (or de-politicized), it also could fall victim to political changes, as have numerous policies tied to specific governors in the past.[231]

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[229] Although there are no broad surveys yet available to speak to this point, numerous interview subjects in 2012 commented that they felt much safer than just a few years earlier. This attitude was most pronounced among the middle classes and well-to-do, however. Favela (slum) residents, by contrast, tended to be much more skeptical.

[230] According to a 2010 survey of more than 4,000 UPP residents, 54% of respondents believed that the UPPs would leave and that drug traffickers would return after the Olympics ended (Instituto Mapear 2010).

[231] Eduardo Machado. 2012. Chief reporter, *Jornal do Comercio,* Recife. Author interview, May 5.

This study, however, is primarily concerned with understanding the mechanisms by which the state can effectively address public security crises and govern effectively amid high levels of criminal violence. In this respect, the Pacifying Police Units in Rio de Janeiro and the *Pacto pela Vida* in Recife represent very different approaches to dealing with violent crime. These distinct approaches, for their part, reflect very different contextual situations on the ground, and their achievements and shortcomings are specific to each socio-political context. This means, of course, that neither model should be seen as a panacea to be copied elsewhere without due consideration of the unique context of politics, crime, and violence in each city. On the other hand, there are clearly identifiable "systems" of criminal violence specific to each context that, if understood, should help determine the type of approach most appropriate.

Criminal Systems and Appropriate Policy Response

I argue in this chapter that there are at least two identifiably distinct criminal systems in Brazil for which different logics of violence apply, and for which different police strategies are appropriate. The distinguishing feature of each system concerns the relationship between crime and physical space or territory. The first system is characterized by a criminal-political monopoly that is dependent on autonomous territorial control. The second system, which is far more common, is characterized by highly diffused and overlapping criminal and political influences that are territorially fluid. These systems should be understood as ideal types that in reality vary a great deal on a continuum of relative authoritative monopoly, but nonetheless can be clearly distinguished in the cases of Rio de Janeiro and Recife.

In Rio de Janeiro, unlike most perhaps cities in Brazil or elsewhere in Latin America, organized crime and political influence have long been wedded to monopolistic territorial control (Misse 2011). Historically, favela communities there have been informally governed by local strongmen who also act as a political linkage between residents and public officials, resembling an almost feudal system of power distribution perhaps best described as "privatized sovereignty" (Silva 2010). Since the 1960s, Residents Associations have acted as the legitimate representative institutions linking favela communities with the state, but over time many of these were co-opted by criminal power brokers (Diniz 1982). When drug traffickers supplanted *Jogo de Bicho*[232] bosses and Resident Associations as local power brokers in the 1980s, they simply added an extra tier to the patronage structures that had long existed prior (Arias 2007).

This patronage system, in which political survival (especially since democratization) became dependent on the formation of alliances with informal power brokers to whom de facto local governance was delegated, helped to reinforce the territorial embeddedness of criminal and political structures in the long run. The need for criminal groups to consolidate territorial control therefore increased over time, and as a consequence, the use of violence in this context began to respond a specific logic that was shaped the imperatives of territorial control.

This particular logic of violence, I argue, is very similar to that of civil war. It is a logic that incentivizes intense social control in order to reduce the risk of defection. What is understood as "random" violence is internally controlled and therefore probably

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[232] *Jogo de Bicho* is a popular illegal gambling game that has served as the financial base of local strong men throughout much of the twentieth century.

minimal. More importantly, it is a logic in which the political allegiances of local

populations are endogenous to the *fact* of territorial control, no matter the perceived

legitimacy of a given authority (See Kalyvas 2006). This is significant because, as long

as criminal and political power remains firmly embedded in territorial control, no state

policy can reasonably expect the cooperation of the corresponding local populations, who

out of fear or loyalty—or both—are unlikely to risk the consequences of defection.

Public security without the cooperation of local populations is untenable (Wilson and

Petersilia 1995).

The Pacifying Police Units in Rio de Janeiro represent the first large-scale attempt

by the state to respond directly to this logic. Repression of crime in favelas had until then

been characterized by sporadic incursions of heavily armed police targeting the drug

trade without concern for other aspects of public security, and leaving the structures of

criminal governance intact each time they left.[233] By contrast, the UPPs have sought to

permanently take control of territory, and in this way (re)establish the state's own

monopoly of the use of force, thereby directly substituting for the authority of the drug

gangs (Misse 2011). Following the consolidation of this new monopoly of force, the

allegiances of the population should be drawn away from the drug gangs and towards the

police, independently of the relative cordiality of police-resident relations. The

community policing ethos in which the UPPs are rhetorically grounded is, from this

perspective, an attempt to promote legitimacy as a tool to solidify the population's

allegiance to the state.

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[233] Itamar Silva 2009. Community leader, Santa Marta, Rio de Janeiro. Author interview,

June 23.

Crime and political influence in Recife, by contrast, are much less territorially embedded, largely because informal authority structures were never able to monopolize territorial control. Unlike Rio's favelas, which have always been governed by local strong men tied to larger political structures, local authority structures in the favelas of Recife have traditionally been decentralized and diffuse.[234] Even when drug trafficking boomed in the mid-1990s following the introduction of crack cocaine, the nature of criminal authority in favelas changed little (Freitas 2003). That is, territorial control and centralized informal governance rarely developed. And importantly, the lack of a territorial imperative in the control of criminal markets in Recife has compelled a very different logic of violence than that seen in Rio de Janeiro, one which I argue here can more appropriately be understood from an epidemiological perspective. In essence, violence is "contagious," and it is follows an infective pattern similar to that of viral or bacterial outbreaks with little or no concern for the organization of political authority and its boundaries (see Haddon 1968).

Criminal violence in most of the developed world tends to resemble the epidemiological model more closely, for typically state authority is more pervasive at all levels of social organization, thus disallowing the development of other armed authorities. Violence in much of the developed world also follows such a logic, however, because even where the state does not exercise a pervasive authority, local authority structures tend to be decentralized, diffuse, and territorially innocuous. Pernambuco's *Pacto pela Vida* initiative, for its part, responds to this logic of violence by focusing its public

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[234] Luis Andrey. 2012. Division Chief, DeNarc-PE (*Delegacia de repressao ao narcotrafico of Pernambuco*), Recife. Author interview, May 3.

security efforts on violence prevention and rapid response in identified "hot spots" rather than securing territorial control.

As ground conditions stand presently, I argue that both the Pacification Police Units and the *Pacto pela Vida* have been appropriate models of public security for Rio de Janeiro and Recife, respectively. The long-term viability of either program is dubious, however, without substantial modifications. This is of particular importance in the case of Rio de Janeiro's UPPs. First, if the logic of violence in Rio de Janeiro has been similar to that of civil war, its economic logic is also akin to counterinsurgency. In other words, the UPPs are too expensive to maintain and expand indefinitely, and therefore are an unviable alternative to traditional policing strategies in the long run. Secondly, there is some concern that the UPPs, which are poorly institutionalized themselves, have simply replaced drug traffickers as the local strong men, thereby failing to break the territorial logic of power that drove criminal violence in the city's slums over the last century (Misse 2010). Whichever the case, long-term success likely depends on deconstructing the territoriality of crime and politics, and truly integrating all neighborhoods socially, economically, and politically.

Keeping with its epidemiological approach, the *Pacto pela Vida* might very well be viable in the long term in its current form. That said, there are both current problems and potential unintended consequences of present successes. First, institutional resistance continues to block progress, as the various agencies of the justice system had never previously been accountable to one another, and enforcing compliance with unified

policy goals has been problematic.[235] Another important concern is the dramatic increase in prison population in the state of Pernambuco as a result of arrests motivated by PPV policy goals.[236] Overpopulated prisons create opportunities for criminal development, much as it did in Rio de Janeiro in the 1970s and 1980s when prison gangs evolved into quasi-political organizations (Penglase 2008). Such developments could subsequently alter the "system" for which the PPV was designed for in the first place.

The UPPs

Precedents and Processes

Although Rio de Janeiro's Pacifying Police Units are by far the most ambitious of public security initiatives in recent history, they are not the state's first attempt to use some form of community policing to address the problem of territorially embedded drug violence. A much more limited initiative, known as GPAE (*Grupo de Policiamento em Areias Especiais*), which was launched under the government of Anthony Garotinho (PDT) in the favela of Pavão-Pavãozinho between 2000 and 2004,[237] deserves brief attention here because both its successes and ultimate failure help to illuminate potential problems and benefits of the initiative.

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[235] Jose Luiz Ratton. 2012. Public Security Advisor to Gov. Eduardo Campos. Author interview, Recife. June 8.

[236] Roberto. 2012. G.I.S.O agent (Grupo de Inteligência da Segurança Orgánica), Secretary of Re-socialization, Recife. Author interview, May 17.

[237] GPAE units were eventually installed in five small favelas in Rio de Janeiro.

The GPAE units were almost identical to the UPPs in both appearance and operational duties. That is, they constituted what was intended to be a permanent community—or "proximity"—police presence in communities dominated by drug traffickers. They differed, however, in two important ways. First, GPAE was a quickly put together project in reaction to a specific political crisis, and never developed any institutional base (Moraes and Cano 2007). Lacking a clear operational mandate, performance monitoring, or mechanisms to secure long-term funding, the project all but dissolved shortly after Governor Garotinho left office. Secondly, GPAE failed to fully replace the authoritative presence of drug traffickers, and instead co-existed with them in a system of shared sovereignty (Misse 2011), the ultimate effect of which was to confirm many residents' suspicions of the connivance of the police and drug traffickers.[238]

Despite its problems, however, GPAE was at least somewhat successful. Not only did relations between police and residents improve where it was implemented, but armed confrontations and related deaths dropped significantly (Moraes and Cano 2007). Although GPAE was often criticized for "protecting the criminals" (i.e. rival drug gangs were less likely to launch attacks while the police were present, and police no longer came in shooting), its successes did establish a precedent. Three years later, when Governor elect Sergio Cabral announced a dramatically expanded initiative of a similar

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[238] Residents. 2011-2012. Pavão-Pavãozinho and Santa Marta, Rio de Janeiro. Author interviews.

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nature, his plans were met with a strong base of support born out of the GPAE experiment.[239]

The first UPP was established in the South Zone favela of Santa Marta in December 2008, two years after Governor Cabral was elected. A few months later, two more UPPs were established in the favelas of Batam, where a local militia group had recently sparked an international outcry by torturing a team of undercover journalists, and in Cidade de Deus, a favela in Rio's West Zone that is home to some 40,000 residents. Within a year, initial reports of success coming from these three communities led to a boost in popular opinion, which helped provide the Cabral administration with the political capital necessary to expand the pacification program further (Rodriguez et al. 2012). During his reelection campaign in 2010, Governor Cabral promised to build some forty UPPs by the end of his second term, as well as to hire and train thousands of new police officers.[240] The Olympic Committee's decision in 2009 to allow Rio de Janeiro to host the 2016 Summer Games proved to be an even greater boost for the project. Following the announcement, city, state, and federal agencies became actively involved in supporting the pacification program, and private investment increased significantly (Suska 2012).

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[239] Coronel Ibis Silva Pereira. 2011. Military Police, João VI Academy, Rio de Janeiro. Author interview, December 28.

[240] UOL Rio .3/12/2013. "Rio pode ter mais de 40 UPPs, diz Beltrame: "local será uma surpresa"", http://noticias.uol.com.br/cotidiano/ultimas-noticias/2013/12/03/rio-pode-ter-mais-de-40-upps-diz-beltrame-local-sera-uma-surpresa.htm

Since 2008 thirty-six UPPs have become operational, occupying 252 favelas in Rio de Janeiro, and employing some 9,073 police officers, according the government figures.[241] The vast majority of these UPPs are located above the wealthy South Zone of Rio de Janeiro and parts of the more industrial North and West Zones that, taken together, form a sort of "safety corridor" between Rio de Janeiro's Galeão International Airport and the Olympic City (Misse 2011). Most of the West Zone and large swaths of the North Zone, however, have yet to be targeted by the pacification initiative, and given that the Cabral administration is close to reaching is goal of forty UPPs already, there is doubt whether those areas, which in fact have historically been the most violent, will be targeted at all (Cano 2012). It is important to note, too, that with the exception of the Batam favela in the West Zone, no other militia-controlled favelas have been targeted by UPPs. This might in part be due to the connivance of public officials and militias, but is at least equally due to lower profile style of control that militias exercise, especially now that they are under both press and prosecutorial scrutiny (Cano and Duarte 2012). According to one BOPE commander, militias do not provide a clearly visible armed front that can be militarily targeted as drug trafficker are.[242]

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[241] Secretaria de Estado de Segurança Pública do Rio de Janeiro (SESEG), at http://www.rj.gov.br/web/seseg/exibeconteudo?article-id=1349728 accessed 1/26/2014. Note that according to the military police, there are over 900 favelas total in Rio de Janeiro.

[242] Major Batista. 2011. BOPE (Batalhão de Operações Policiais Especiais), Rio de Janeiro. Author interview, October 17.

Each UPP is mandated to house at least one hundred police officers, and may house as many as six hundred, depending on the community size. Since the communities vary tremendously in population size, however, this numbering scheme creates a dramatically uneven distribution of police per capita from one community to the next. Smaller communities like the Santa Marta Favela may have police/resident ratios of 19 per each 1,000, while larger favelas like Rocinha have as few as 6.5 per 1,000. Still, the average police per capita of all UPPs together (6.5 per 1000) is still three times higher that average for industrialized countries. This is a clear indicator of the exceptionality, in terms of cost and management, of the Pacification program as a whole (Cano 2012).

The installation process of the UPPs is another matter of exceptionality. Because the targeted communities existed under the constant authoritative control of well-armed and well-organized drug gangs that have been in direct conflict with the police and rival gangs for decades, UPP police cannot simply walk into a new community and begin routine patrols. Instead, the installation process is usually initiated by heavily militarized and broadly announced occupations. These occupations consist of a massive show of force that often includes the entirety of BOPE's 450-man special tactics battalion,[243] elements of the Shock Battalion,[244] and hundreds of regular Military and Civil Police, along with the support of helicopters and military assault vehicles. The government's policy has been to announce the exact date and time of incursion several days to a week

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[243] BOPE (Batalhão de Operações Policiais Especiais) was established as a small counter kidnapping and SWAT team in 1978, and has since grown to the size of a large battalion.

[244] The Batalhão de Choque was created in 1977 as a unit of the Military Police specialized in riot control.

prior in hopes that the drug gangs will chose to avoid any confrontation with such a superior force. While this policy has been criticized heavily for allowing gang leaders to escape justice along with their drugs and weapons, it has been largely successful in avoiding armed confrontation and its repercussions. To date, only one occupation has resulted in serious fighting between police and gangs.[245] Almost all others have been carried out without any incidence of lethal violence.

Once the initial occupation of a favela by police and military forces is complete, BOPE and/or Shock police will spend between a few weeks to a few months conducting daily search and seizure operations, looking for known gang leaders as well as weapons and drug caches.[246] When the target community is deemed secure, the actual UPP is formally inaugurated. The UPP police themselves may be housed in permanent structures or in trailers, but in either case assume a routine of daily walking patrols that replaces the more aggressive strategies of BOPE. From that point on, the specific activities of each UPP may vary substantially, however, as each station commander operates with a high level of discretion. Driven by particularly energetic commanders, several communities have seen UPP officers go beyond routine patrols, performing regular community service activities such as teaching karate or Jiu-Jitsu classes for

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[245] The occupation of the Complexo do Alemao favela in November 2010 resulted in limited resistance, following a week of clashes that left at least 37 people dead ("Conquering Complexo do Alemão," *The Economist* Dec. 2, 2010)

[246] Major Batista. 2011. BOPE (Batalhão de Operações Policiais Especiais), Rio de Janeiro. Author interview, October 17.

children (Cano 2012; Godoy Postigo 2013). In other communities commanders restricted officers to their barracks.[247]

Since 2010 Pacification has also been accompanied by a municipal government program called *UPP Social*, which is partially funded by private industries that hope to gain access to markets in favelas or to reap the benefits of the legalization of goods and services such as gas, electricity, internet, cable TV (Suska 2012).   Although the *UPP Social* program is institutionally separate from the UPPs themselves, it claims to work closely with the new police to promote local social and economic development in UPP communities, with the ultimate goal of integrating the historically separate city and slum.[248] To this end, municipal officials hired by the *UPP Social* program have organized "community meetings" that bring together representatives from the UPP police, the Residents Associations, state agencies, NGOs, and various other entities to discuss all matters of security and social development (Rodrigues et al 2012).

<p align="center">*Social and Political Change*</p>

With respect to its stated goals of ending the territorial control of criminal gangs and reducing the incidence of armed confrontations, the UPP program has been, with a few exceptions, dramatically successful, at least in and around the areas units have been

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[247] In the Sao Carlos Favela, officers complained that they were repeatedly ordered not to perform walking patrols or to interact with residents (Interviews January 2012).

[248] See: http://uppsocial.org/programa/

established.[249] First, there are numerous indicators that drug gangs no longer control territory as they did prior to the UPPs, nor do they constitute a social influence comparable to the pre-UPP period.[250] The opening and/or formalizing of new businesses, the expanding of the favela tourism industry, the legalization of a broad range of goods and services, and the elimination of barriers to political campaigning all help to confirm this dramatic change.[251] With respect to lethal violence, homicide numbers in and around UPP communities have dropped as much as 75 percent on average (Cano 2012), and surveys indicate that a majority of residents feel significantly safer under the new regime, owing to an almost total absence of armed confrontations in many areas (IBSP 2010).

Ironically, when *type* of homicide is taken into consideration, killings perpetrated by the police (known as *autos de resistência*) account for the sharpest overall decline in lethal violence (Cano 2012). Since its lethal peak in 2007, Rio's police have decreased the number of civilians they kill by 320 percent (down from 1,330 in 2007 to *just* 415 in 2012!), much of which can be attributed to the shift in confrontation strategies ushered in the UPPs (FBSP 2013). In other words, the UPPs have done more to pacify the police themselves than any other actor in the world of criminal violence in Rio de Janeiro.

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[249] With the exception of the Batam favela in Rio's West Zone, no other militia-controlled territories have been targeted by the UPP program. The majority of West Zone favelas under the control drug gangs, also have not be targeted.

[250] I have frequented several favelas pre- and post-UPP, and have witnessed these changes.

[251] Andrea Gouvea. 2011. City Councilwoman, Rio de Janeiro. Author interview, November 22.

These initial successes, however, should be viewed with a critical lens. To the extent that the initiative represents a truly systemic transformation, there are likely to be unintended consequences as new configurations of power emerge. If change is not systemic, we should expect a return to the traditional, more violent paradigm of confrontational policing in Rio de Janeiro. In either case, the situation warrants a closer look at the actual processes and outcomes of putting boots on the ground.

Prior to the pacification of the Santa Marta favela in December 2008, few favela residents across Rio de Janeiro openly supported the installation of UPPs, although in principle they may have agreed with the imposition of state authority.[252] This was in part due to the fact that the police had long been perceived as abusive and antagonistic to favela populations, as their relationship to residents was characterized by absence at best, and otherwise by indiscriminate violence with no effective goals of actually providing security.[253] Animosity between police and residents had become an increasingly entrenched attitudinal norm since the 1980s when drug gangs first began to monopolize control in Rio's favelas, after which gangs almost uniformly enforced laws prohibiting any residents' association with police officers within or outside favela borders (see Penglase 2008).

Residents' apprehension about the UPPs was also due to fear of immediate reprisals by drug traffickers, as well as related social pressures to remain silent on matters

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[252] Coronel Ibis Silva Pereira. 2011. Military Police, João VI Academy, Rio de Janeiro. Author interview, December 28.

[253] Itamar Silva 2009. Community leader, Santa Marta, Rio de Janeiro. Author interview, June 23.

concerning authority (see *Law of Traffic*, chapter 4).[254] Furthermore, fears that the UPPs

would be a short-lived experiment were justified by previous experiences. If they were to

be discontinued at any point, anyone who had become friendly with the police would be

left at the mercy of vengeful drug traffickers upon their return to power.[255] Finally, there

was, and to some extent continues to be, widespread concern that the authoritarian social

control exercised by drug gangs was the only thing preventing a descent into a criminal

chaos similar to that which older residents often recall from the days before drug gangs

had consolidated control.[256] Local business owners, for example, often feared that their

businesses would be left unprotected from theft and robbery because the police, who

rarely live in the same communities as they work, would inevitably be less invested in or

less capable of preserving community stability than the drug traffickers, many of whom

had been born and raised in the same environs.[257] Political support for Pacification

outside of the favelas was also tenuous, as societal attitudes still strongly supported the

conservative paradigm that sanctioned a militarized and confrontational repression of

criminality (Rodrigues et al. 2012).

Within months of the establishment of the first UPPs, however, attitudes about the

new program both in and outside favelas had begun to improve dramatically, as indicated

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[254] Eliana Souza. 2012. Director, Redes da Maré, Complexo da Maré, Rio de Janeiro.
Author interview, January 25.

[255] Community leader. 2011. Santa Marta favela, Rio de Janeiro. Author interview,
September 20.

[256] Business owners. 2011. Rocinha favela, Rio de Janeiro. Author interview, October 28.

[257] Business owners. 2011. Rocinha favela, Rio de Janeiro. Author interview, October 28.

by numerous surveys published in 2009 and 2010 (Cano 2012). According to one survey, 90 percent of residents hoped the UPP would continue indefinitely in their communities, and 95 percent supported the expansion of UPPs into other favelas (Fundação Getúlio Vargas 2009). Outside of favelas support for the UPPs grew rapidly, particularly in middle class neighborhoods that benefited directly from the marked cessation of armed confrontations between rival gangs or between gangs and police garnered widespread support for the Pacification program.[258]

Now five years in, there continues to be broad popular support for the UPPs. The impact they have had on local economic, social, and political structures, however, have varied substantially from one community to the next, and have in most cases been nuanced. Economically, the process of legalizing goods and services, which had long been governed by informal market structures, has incentivized more outside investment, but has hurt those who benefited from the absence of state regulations and taxation (see Misse 2006).

The gradual legalization of the market that has taken place since Pacification has, in fact, been one of the major points of dispute among favela residents (Rodrigues et al. 2012). Perhaps the most devastating element of this for the social integrity of favelas concerns the imposition of property taxes, viable once property titles are legalized. As a majority of favelas currently under UPP control are located in and around Rio de Janeiro's wealthiest neighborhoods, they are often highly coveted by corporate developers. Consequently, there is a serious risk of mass residential dislocation by

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[258] Hotel owner. 2011. Copacabana, Rio de Janeiro. Author interview, November.

market forces, which so far has been averted only because of lags in the process of legalizing property titles (Silva 2010).[259]

Socially, the effects of pacification have also been nuanced, if for no other reason than the fact that cultural norms between the favela and the formal city have moved in different directions after so many years of de facto separation. New rules of social conduct, created and enforced at the discretion of individual UPP commanders and without uniform policy guidelines, have frequently been met with defiance, especially among favela youth (Cano 2012).   In many communities, parties and social events that used to be unregulated, and that were often promoted and subsidized by drug trafficking authorities, are now being subjected to curfews and other restrictions by the police.[260] The prohibition of the notorious *baile funk* parties, which are emblematic of Rio's favela youth culture, has been a particular point of contention.[261]

The long term political and associative reconfigurations in UPP communities, however, will likely play the strongest role in determining the ultimate success of the Pacification program (Misse 2011; Rodrigues 2012). Political representation in Rio's favelas has been essentially monopolized since the 1960s by the Residents Associations, which have acted as the primary linkage mechanism between the state and favela communities, a relationship that has predominantly clientelist (Diniz 1982; Arias 2007).

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[259] To avoid such dislocation, there has been a push from some sectors to codify favelas as collective entities unto themselves, similar to Quilombos.

[260] Marcelo. 2011. AM president, Coroa, Rio de Janeiro. Author interview, September 15.

[261] Eliana Souza. 2012. Director, Redes da Maré, Complexo da Maré, Rio de Janeiro. Author interview, January 25.

By the late 1980s, most Residents Associations had been co-opted or outright controlled by drug gangs as they began to realize the benefits of securing political power (Zaluar 1998), a situation that reinforced the representative monopoly of the Residents Association, while protecting the day-to-day governing functions of drug gangs.[262] Today, however, the political role the Residents Associations has been partially eclipsed, primarily by the UPPs themselves, and secondarily by the increased presence of other entities permitted entrance in the wake of Pacification, such as NGOs and agencies associated with the *UPP Social* (Rodrigues et al. 2012).

According to Michel Misse (2011), the fundamental challenge facing the UPP program as a whole will be whether or not it can break the "strong man" governing culture that has characterized favela politics since their early development in the late nineteenth century, instead of simply replacing the previous strong man with a new one embodied in the police. Although the Pacification program is still very young to evaluate, it is already evident that the range of authoritative activities performed by the UPPs far exceed those of regular police. On a daily basis, this primarily concerns local dispute resolution, such as arbitration in the case of domestic violence, street fights, or other such disturbances, which is typical of community policing.[263] UPP commanders also frequently act as de facto arbiters of economic and social organization in the favela, however. In Santa Marta favela, for example, a community member wanting to start a

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[262] Eliana Souza. 2012. Director, Redes da Maré, Complexo da Maré, Rio de Janeiro. Author interview, January 25.

[263] Disturbing the Peace and Domestic Violence complaints are the single most common among those reported to the UPP police (Cano 2012).

paintball business was compelled to negotiate directly with the local UPP commander to obtain permission.[264]

More problematically, there is a strong general tendency of favela communities to treat the UPP command as if it were itself the actual government, or at least the principal channel through which to link local needs to goods and services provided by the state (Rodrigues et al. 2012). In this sense, the UPPs might be understood to simply replace the Residents Associations in a preexisting patronage system, just as they replace the drug gangs as the makers and enforcers of local law. The ultimate danger of such a scenario concerns the perpetuation of the territoriality of political power (Misse 2011). That is, if in the long run the UPPs act as semi-sovereign governments in favelas, they will fail to alter the basic power dynamics that led to the political isolation of favela communities in the first place, and the consequent corruption and violence associated with coercive territorial control. To the extent that his happens, the UPPs could evolve into bases of political power in the same way that criminal militias have in may of Rio's West Zone favelas (see chapter 4).[265]

Overall, however, the short term social, economic, and political impact of the UPP program on target favelas has been overwhelmingly positive. With respect to public security, Pacification has been particularly successful. Although the incidence of non-lethal crime like theft and burglary has increased in and around UPP communities as my residents had feared, survey data suggest this has largely been overshadowed by the

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[264] Residents. 2012. Santa Marta, Rio de Janeiro. Author interview, January 17.

[265] Andrea Gouvea. 2011. City Councilwoman, Rio de Janeiro. Author interview, November 22.

dramatic increase in residents' sense of security and freedom of movement associated with the expulsion of criminal authorities (Cano 2012). Numerous interviews with favela residents conducted between 2011 and 2012 also attest to significantly positive change in one's overall sense of security since the establishment of UPPs in their community.

This is true despite the very common complaints that property crime has increased. Many residents, for example, complain that they now feel a need to lock their doors at home for the first time, as the criminal deterrence capability of the police is nothing close to that of the drug gangs.[266] Where the rule of drug gangs had been particularly stable, such as in the Rocinha favela, Pacification was accompanied by an increase not only in property crime, but also of gang violence, perhaps due to the fact that rival gang members could now freely enter the community.[267] Still, however, the public seems more willing to tolerate the types of crime that have increased than for the criminal situation prior to Pacification, which was characterized by oppressive governance and the periodic outbreak of extreme violence as rival drug gangs or drug gangs and police went to war with each other.

Relations between police and residents in most UPP communities have also improved substantially. In Santa Marta favela, the local UPP commander ordered her officers to eat and drink at locally owned establishments in order to create a stronger connection between police and residents, a strategy that has worked exceptionally well

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[266] Marcelo. 2011. AM president, Coroa, Rio de Janeiro. Author interview, September 15.

[267] Community leaders. 2012. Rocinha and Vidigal favelas, Rio de Janeiro. Author interviews, January-February.

(Suska 2012). The UPP commander in the Prazeres favela, with the help of respected

community leaders, succeeded in organizing a well-attended one-year anniversary party

replete with live music, free food, and an enormous cake built in the image of the UPP

occupied favela.[268] UPP officers in several communities also provide free sports or

music classes for children and youth, which has improved the image of the police.

Adolescents and young adults (ages 15-29), not surprisingly, continue to be the age group

most impassive to rapprochement with the police (Cano 2012). Older age groups have

been much more likely to openly accept the presence of the UPPs, while young children

have shown even admiration, suggesting then that social opposition to the UPP will

decrease substantially through generational succession.

Pacto pela Vida

Unlike the UPPs in Rio de Janeiro, the *Pacto pela Vida* had no policy precedent in

the state of Pernambuco. Prior to its implementation in 2007, public security policy in

the state was at best disorganized and inconsistent, and often led to disastrous

outcomes.[269] Policy initiatives were characterized by reactionary police repression and

simplistic initiatives which consisted of little more than putting more police on the streets,

which is a typical response to political imperatives but one that is generally both

expensive and unsuccessful (see Sherman 1995). In reaction to a dramatic increase in

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[268] Residents Association president. 2012. Prazeres favela, Rio de Janeiro. Author

interview, March 7.

[269] Jose Luiz Ratton. 2012. Public Security Advisor to Gov. Eduardo Campos. Author

interview, Recife. June 8.

violent crimes and homicides in the late 1990s, for example, then governor Jarbas

Vasconcelos ordered the hiring of new police officers and a heavy handed repression of

drug traffickers in the Coque favela near downtown Recife, the ultimate effect of which

was to destabilize local political dynamics and usher in a new and even more violent

generation of drug traffickers (Freitas 2003).

Historically, the onus of public security was also limited to police action only,

excluding virtually all other agencies of the justice system from proposed reforms. This

meant that while arrests increased during repressive operational periods, the number of

convictions usually did not, because the legal process depended heavily on almost non-

existent cooperation between the various police institutions, the Court of Justice, and the

Public Ministry.[270] To make matters worse, few initiatives before 2007 ever focused on

professionalizing the police, which would have included substantial long-term

investments in training and technology that guaranteed no immediate political benefit.

As a result, the bulk of police work continued to favor preventative patrolling and

reactionary repressive sweeps at the expense of effective criminal investigation and

prosecution, completely ignoring systematic problem diagnostics and planning.[271]

As late as 2009, two years into the *Pacto pela Vida* initiative, the DHPP

(Homicide and Protective Services Division) continued to file less than one-third of

Recife's more than one thousand yearly homicide cases to the Public Ministry and Court

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[270] Del. Vamberto. 2012. DHPP Information Specialist, Recife. Author interview, June 11.

[271] Jose Luiz Ratton. 2012. Public Security Advisor to Gov. Eduardo Campos. Author

interview, Recife. June 8.

of Justice for review, leaving the rest completely uninvestigated.[272] Resource and
training deficits plagued other departments as well. Until 2008 the Narcotics Division of
the Civil Police (today called *DeNarc*) had targeted only small-scale drug dealers in
Recife's favelas during a time when criminal organizations were growing rapidly in size
and sophistication, the effect of which was often to increase violence instead of curtail
it.[273]

By 2006, the public security policies of then Governor Jarbas Vasconcelos had
widely been identified as a failure, and Recife earned notoriety as Brazil's most violent
city.[274] The following year, this notoriety was internationalized when an innovative blog
project called *PE Bodycount* began compiling and publishing data on all homicides in the
state of Pernambuco online each day in order to draw attention to the state's dismissive
attitude towards lethal violence (Macedo 2012). The blog published the names and
circumstances of more than 14,000 homicide victims over three years, and was
accompanied by a large electronic counter posted in the wealthy Boa Viagem district of
Recife, which put pressure on new Governor, Eduardo Campos, to fulfill his campaign
promises to reduce violent crime.[275]

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[272] Dr. João Brito. 2012. DHPP subchief, Recife. Author interview, June 11.

[273] Luis Andrey. 2012. Division Chief, DeNarc-PE, Recife. Author interview, May 3.

[274] Jose Luiz Ratton. 2012. Public Security Advisor to Gov. Eduardo Campos. Author
interview, Recife. June 8.

[275] Eduardo Machado. 2012. Chief reporter, *Jornal do Comercio,* and founder of *PE
Bodycount,* Recife. Author interview, May 5.

Governor Campos formally launched the *Pacto pela Vida* in May 2007, just one

week after the inauguration of the *PE Bodycount* blog. The organization and planning of

the new and comprehensive public security plan, however, began several months earlier,

shortly after Governor Campos took office. For the first time in Pernambuco, the state

Governor hired a sociologist, Professor Jose Luiz Ratton from the Federal University of

Pernambuco, to act as his public security advisor, with whom he discussed the possibility

of an ambitious policy reform. Between February and April of that year, representatives

from all institutions pertaining to the justice system and all the major non-governmental

organizations operating in Pernambuco were organized into sixteen "Technical

Committees" (*Câmaras Técnicas*) to discuss proposals for the new initiative (Macedo

2012).

The goal of bringing in the technical committees was to promote both horizontal

and vertical multi-sectoral and inter-institutional cooperation on matters of public

security.[276] This objective alone represented a paradigmatic shift in the state's approach,

although actual implementation of the plan would, in the end, focus far more on

repressive policing than matters of social and economic development, as the plan's

protocol envisioned (Macedo 2012). Still, the launching of the *Pacto pela Vida* on May 8,

2007 inaugurated 138 specific projects subsumed under six "lines of action," which were

oriented to professionalizing the police, improving inter-institutional cooperation and

policy management, and promoting citizen participation in the design and application of

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[276] Jose Luiz Ratton. 2012. Public Security Advisor to Gov. Eduardo Campos. Author
interview, Recife. June 8.

policy, all of which were at least rhetorically oriented towards the preservation of human life.[277]

The policing function embodied in the *Pacto pela Vida*, which is arguably the most substantial component, represents an exceptional advancement in quality and effectiveness of police work in Pernambuco, and has become a model for many any cities throughout Brazil since its inception. Along with substantially increased budgets for equipment and training, the onus and method of police work itself shifted in two important ways. First, the organization and management of policing was given a specific structure and set of performance guidelines.[278] Modeled after New York City's *Compstat* (see Walsh 2001), the *Pacto pela Vida* organized the state of Pernambuco into twenty-six "integrated security areas," the police representatives of each of which would be directly responsible for reporting and explaining homicides and other violent crime trends before police and other institutions representing the other areas during weekly meetings called "management committees." [279] The weekly committees, which are headed by Governor Campos directly once per month (and otherwise by the Secretary of Planning), consist of identifying geographical "hot spots" using GPS mapping technology, diagnosing probable causes of increased violence in specific areas, and developing plans to address violence in those areas.

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[277] http://www.pactopelavida.pe.gov.br/pacto-pela-vida/

[278] Jose Luiz Ratton. 2012. Public Security Advisor to Gov. Eduardo Campos. Author interview, Recife. June 8.

[279] Jose Luiz Ratton. 2012. Public Security Advisor to Gov. Eduardo Campos. Author interview, Recife. June 8.

In addition to the social pressure to reduce homicides and violent crime that is explicit in these meetings,[280] material incentives have also been built into the weekly outcomes assessments, such that police or other agents receive regular bonuses for their success in advancing specific goals. In the case of the DHPP, for example, detectives are rewarded for increasing their rates of completed case submission to the Court of Justice. Individual police also compensated at near-market value for illegal arms apprehensions, thereby deterring their re-circulation in the black market.[281]

The second major change in policing associated with the *Pacto pela Vida* was the implementation of inter-institutional long-term investigation of violent crimes, known as "qualified repression" (Macedo 2012). Prior to 2007, none of the institutions of public security in Pernambuco had any real investigative capacity to speak of.[282] For DeNarc (Narcotics division of the Civil Police), this meant investigating only street level drug dealers, a strategy that at best failed to curb drug sales, and often provoked more violence as younger dealers fought over vacuums of local power and money left after arrests (see Freitas 2003). For the DHPP, this meant that homicide investigation was limited to individual cases in isolation from each other, therefore ignoring the role played by organized death squads and other criminal groups which had been developing rapidly over the previous decade.[283] Since 2007, the implementation of qualified repression, which often consists of large-scale operations between six months and a year in duration,

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[280] I attended two management committee meetings during May-June 2012.

[281] Dr. João Brito. 2012. DHPP subchief, Recife. Author interview, June 11.

[282] Fabinet and Bruno. 2012. DeNarc-PE detectives, Recife. Author interview, May 7.

[283] Dr. João Brito. 2012. DHPP subchief, Recife. Author interview, June 11.

has resulted in the dismantling of numerous death squads and other criminal organizations of substantial size (Nobrega 2012).

Like most recent public security initiatives in Latin America, the *Pacto pela Vida* also includes a community policing objective (see Fruhling 2012). The *Policia Amiga* project, which was inaugurated in September 2008, consists of small units of Military Police officers permanently stationed in violence-prone communities and who are specially trained in community outreach and violence prevention.[284] The impact of the project is still very limited, however, as to date it has been initiated in only twelve communities across the entire state of Pernambuco.

Social and Political Impact

The stated objective of the *Pacto pela Vida* from its inception was to reduce total homicides in the state of Pernambuco by 12 percent each year, an ambitious goal that was initially criticized as being unrealistic (see Zaverrucha 2008). Likewise, homicides during the first two years did not decrease significantly at all, measuring only a two percent and three percent statewide decrease for 2007 and 2008, respectively, which was well within the range of normal yearly variation.[285] By 2009, however, homicides had dropped a full 12 percent from the 2006 tally. They continued to drop each subsequent year since then, falling some 37 percent below pre-initiative levels by August 2013. Success in the state capital of Recife was markedly even more impressive. There, according to government sources, homicides fell as much as 58 percent between 2006

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[284] Found at http://www.portaisgoverno.pe.gov.br/

[285] Jose Luiz Ratton. 2012. Public Security Advisor to Gov. Eduardo Campos. Author interview, Recife. June 8.

and 2013.[286] In terms of specified and measureable outcomes, then, the *Pacto pela Vida* has been astoundingly successful.

The *Pacto pela Vida* has also been highly successful politically. The highly publicized reductions in lethal violence helped Governor Eduardo Campos get reelected for a second term in office in 2010, and even launched him into the sphere of national politics as a possible future presidential candidate.[287] The *Pacto pela Vida* model, too, has been actively promoted by the Brazil's federal Secretary of Public Security, and several other states have since implemented similar initiatives (Macedo 2012).

Despite the dramatic objective success in terms of homicide reductions and political outcomes, however, actual perceptions of the police and the effectiveness of the *Pacto pela Vida* on the ground have been much more mixed. The clearest divide in public opinion seems to fall along socioeconomic lines. For example, increased and professionalized vigilance by both police and private security agencies in many middle class neighborhoods in Recife have led to a noticeable improvement in perceptions of security.[288] The perceptions of favela residents throughout the city, by contrast, have

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[286] "Agosto registra o menor índice de homicídios dos últimos anos," Sept. 3, 2013, at: http://www.pactopelavida.pe.gov.br/agosto-registra-o-menor-indice-de-homicidios-dos-ultimos-anos/

[287] Paulo. 2012. Journalist, Jornal de Comercio, Recife. Author interview, April 26.

[288] Residents and business owners. 2012. Aflitos, Torre, Pina, and Boa Viagem neighborhoods, Recife. Author interviews, May-July. Note: Private security guards employed to watch apartment buildings today use a radio network in conjunction with the

been at best highly nuanced with respect to the *Pacto pela Vida*. Even where the *Polícia Amiga* project has been implemented, the increased presence and proximity of the police is often equated with merely an increase in police abuse and corruption.[289] There is also widespread suspicion among favela residents that the supposed decrease in homicides is highly exaggerated, a concern fed by the fact that since the closing of the *PE Bodycount* blog in 2010, there are no independent agencies to confirm the government's statistics. Specifically, there is suspicion that drug gangs and death squads have simply taken to hiding their victims or disposing of them elsewhere in order to avoid media attention.[290]

Although I have found no evidence that the government is misrepresenting the state's homicide statistics, such a perception among residents could be the result of two possible scenarios. First, the dramatic reduction in homicides since 2006 (58 percent in Recife) has not been paralleled by an equal reduction in actual shootings. In fact, specific life-saving strategies employed under the auspices of the *Pacto pela Vida*—such as stationing ambulances in and around "hot spots" during high-violence periods (i.e. weekend nights), has substantially increased the survival rate of gunshot victims without necessarily affecting the overall number of violent incidents.[291] Secondly, lethal violence

police to report on suspicious activity, which has led to a significant decrease in theft and violent crime.

[289] Community leaders. 2012. Favelas of Bode, Santo Amaro, Peixinhos, and Coque, Recife. Author interviews, June-July.

[290] Osana. 2012. Director, "Galpao," Santo Amaro, Recife. Author interview, May 10.

[291] Jose Luiz Ratton. 2012. Public Security Advisor to Gov. Eduardo Campos. Author interview, Recife. June 8.

in specific neighborhoods tends to come and go in waves, or cycles, and even the most violent communities may be accustomed to relatively long periods of time without experiencing any homicides at all.[292] As a result, the responsibility for reductions in homicide is much more difficult to attribute to specific state policy than it is in the case of Rio de Janeiro's UPPs, where saturation by police very clearly has replaced previous criminal authority.

With respect to the long term success of the *Pacto pela Vida*, there is also significant call for concern regarding possible unintended consequences of imprisoning more people. The prison population in Pernambuco has more than doubled since implementation of the *Pacto pela Vida* in 2006, increasing from 11,000 to 26,000 inmates, and yet prison expansion and reform have been delayed.[293] The effect of inmate overpopulation in Pernambuco's largest prison, the Anibal Bruno Complex, for example, has created propitious conditions for the development of increasingly sophisticated criminal organizations, a situation reminiscent of the embryonic stages of organized criminal development in Rio de Janeiro and Sao Paolo.[294] Already there are some

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[292] Patricia. 2012. Coque Vive, Coque Recife. Author interviews, May-June.

[293] Roberto. 2012. G.I.S.O agent, Secretary of Re-socialization, Recife. Author interview, May 17.

[294] Roberto. 2012. G.I.S.O agent, Secretary of Re-socialization, Recife. Author interview, May 17, and former inmates of Anibal Bruno Complex, Recife. June/July.

neighborhoods that are reportedly "controlled" by criminal bosses operating rackets directly from prison.[295]

Conclusion

During the past five years, state governments in charge of public security in two of Brazil's most violent cities have implemented similarly ambitious but very different initiatives to curb the rise of violent crime. In Rio de Janeiro, Governor Sergio Cabral launched an expansive plan to install Pacifying Police Units in areas previously dominated by drug trafficking gangs, the explicit purpose of which was to reassert the state's authority territorially, and thereby reduce a specific type of violence: that which was driven by the territorial imperatives of drug gangs. In Recife (and throughout the state of Pernambuco), by contrast, Governor Eduardo Campos' *Pacto pela Vida* initiative has ignored territorial imperatives altogether, and has instead focused on creating a multi-institutional management scheme that incorporates the spatial mapping of violent crime in order to reduce homicides specifically.

In this chapter I have argued that there are at least two identifiable systems of criminal organization for which two distinct logics of violence apply. The first system relies on territorial control to establish monopolies and shape political influence. In this system we see the development of almost feudal enclaves where political authority is informally delegated to local criminal power brokers who act as a political link to the

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[295] According to a local drug dealer, for example, the drug trade and associated violence in the Santo Amaro favela is controlled by a man called "Junior Box," who has been imprisoned since 2011.

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state. The corresponding logic of violence is similar to that of civil war, such that the preferences and allegiances of local populations are a function of whoever controls them. The second system of criminal organization is much less rooted in territorially control, and therefore ignored by greater political structures. Its corresponding logic of violence is better understood from an epidemiological perspective, which sees parallels between patterns of violence and the spread of disease.

The UPPs in Rio de Janeiro respond to the first system, and justifiably so, because without first addressing the problem of criminal territorial control, no institutional reform or policing strategy could function properly, and particularly where it is most needed. The *Pacto pela Vida* in Recife responds to the second system, as criminal organization there is characterized by a lack organization, as well as the absence of any significant territorial imperative. In this sense, each initiative is appropriately tailored to its specific criminal context, and for this reason they have both been dramatically successful in achieving their most explicit goals.

At least part of the lesson, then, is that when crafting a pubic security program to deal with crises of violent crime, states would do well to first identify the underlying logic of that violence rather than simply copy programs that have appeared to be successful elsewhere. That is only the beginning, however, for there are certain to be unintended consequences of either type of program, to mention nothing of the their long term political or financial viability. In Rio de Janeiro, there is a potential for the UPPs to simply perpetuate the territorially embedded political order that has driven violent conflict for decades. In Recife, the rapid increase in the prison population resulting from

the *Pacto pela Vida*'s successes could potentially compel an evolution of the very system

of criminal organization for which it was so appropriately designed in the first place.

Image Bank
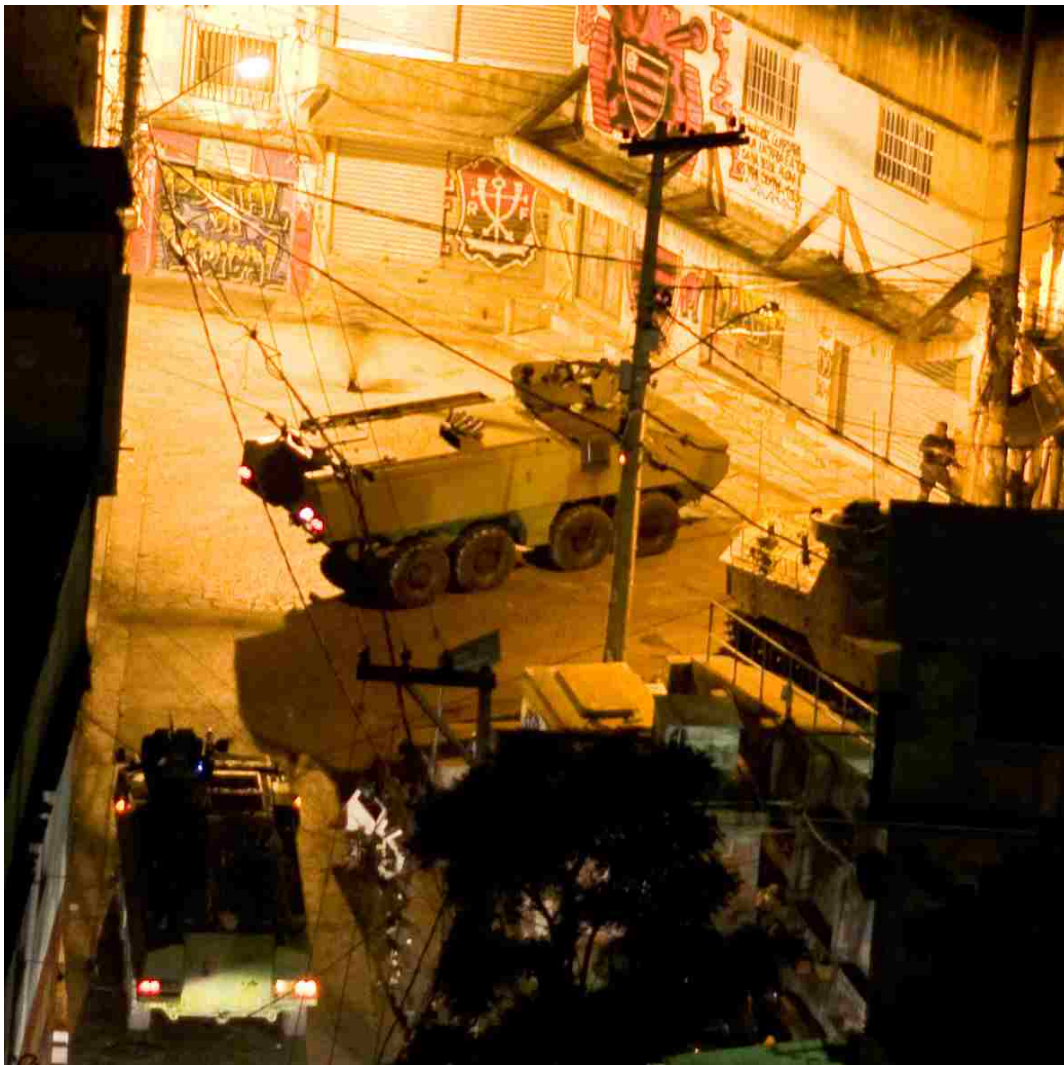
Brazilian military forces participate in the initial occupation of the Vidigal favela in Rio's
South Zone, November 2011. The tanks and armored vehicles seen here were not able to
advance, however, due to oil slicks and narrow streets.

Helicopter gunners keep a close eye out for resistance by drug traffickers (not to mention graduate students with cameras) during the occupation of Vidigal.

Federal Police participate in the initial occupation of Rio's South Zone Rocinha favela, November 2011.

Police from Rio's *Batalhão de Choque* are forced to advance on foot during the occupation of Vidigal after their support vehicles were halted by oil slicks and road blocks, November 2011.

Youth fraternize with UPP officers in São Carlos favela in Rio's Center Zone. The police say they are frequently offered bribes, and there is suspicion that some units accept them.

Responding to domestic disputes is one of the most common activities of UPP officers. Here an officer and a graduate student help a woman move out of her home following a fight with her husband.

Relations between residents and UPP officers are still tense in many communities.
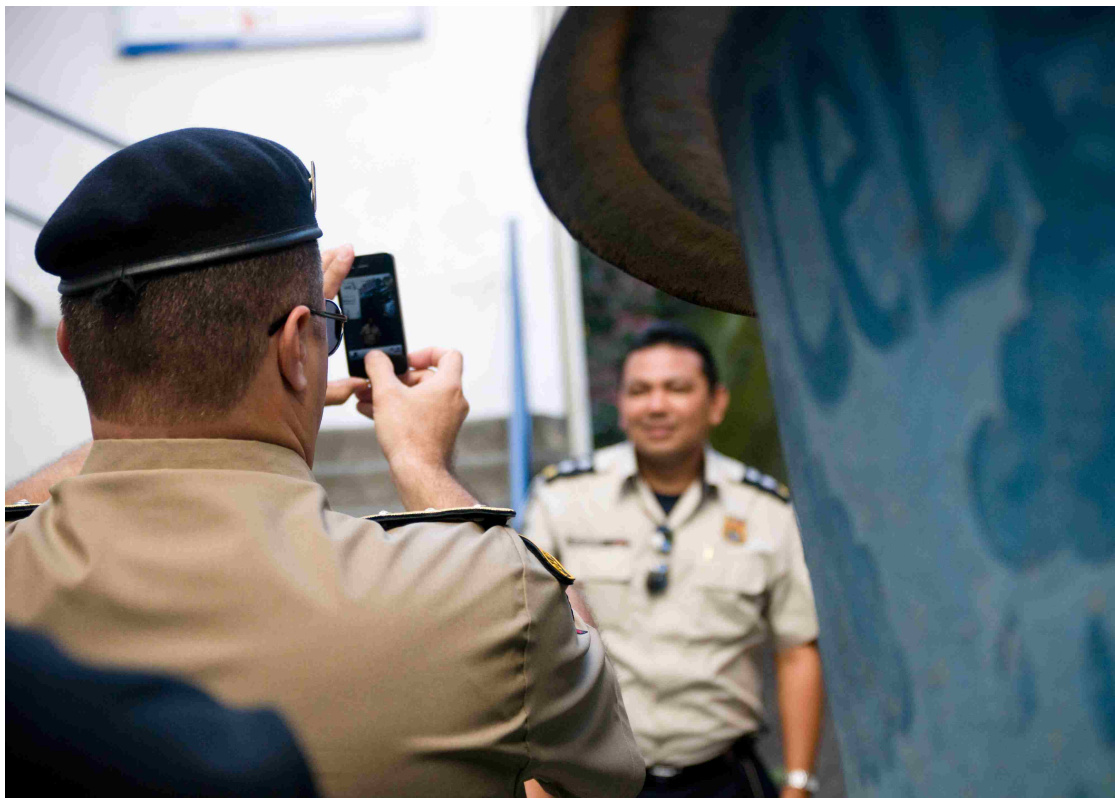
Military Police captains from Salvador de Bahia are sent to visit a UPP in Rio de Janeiro by the state governor there, who has launched a similar program.

The UPP commander in the Prazeres favela in Rio de Janeiro's Center Zone risked throwing a party to commemorate the UPP's first anniversary. To his delight, much of the community participated, with the notable exception of adolescents.

Conclusion

At the outset of this dissertation I asked three central questions: 1) Why do criminal groups consolidate territorial control and develop authority structures in some places and not others?; 2) What conditions or circumstances are most or least favorable to this type of development? and finally; 3) how can the state reassert its own authority where it has been effectively replaced by that of criminal groups, or prevent it from happening where conditions might be propitious for such development? Empirically, I focus on two major Brazilian cities, Rio de Janeiro and Recife, that on the surface look very similar with respect to demographics, economic structures, and social violence, but that differ dramatically when we look more closely at the organization and logic of violent crime. I find that as a whole, drug gangs and mafias in Rio de Janeiro have consolidated territorial control in favelas and have developed elaborate authority functions, while in Recife criminal groups of similar origins have remained small, unorganized, and politically marginalized. Digging deeper still, I compare such differences within each of these cities as well, which allows for a more robust analysis of the factors that drive criminal groups to develop in one way or another.

To answer the aforementioned theoretical questions and better orient my analysis of Rio de Janeiro and Recife, I drew from the scholarly literatures on street and prison gangs, organized crime, civil wars, and counter-insurgency. The first two sets of literatures offer invaluable theoretical orientation for understanding how gangs and mafias respond to state absence, economic structures, and illegal markets, but they are inadequate to explain the extent to which drug gangs and mafias have established territorial governance monopolies in cities like Rio de Janeiro. Most of the literature that

has focused specifically on Rio de Janeiro, for its part, has succumbed to exceptionalist arguments that are difficult to generalize. In reframing the issue of violent crime in terms of its relationship to physical territory and authority imposition, however, I was able to draw important insights from the civil wars and counter-insurgency literatures to explain conditions in Rio in non-exceptionalist terms, identify relevant conditions to evaluate other cases of criminal development comparatively.   These literatures are also particularly relevant for the evaluation of public security policies in Rio de Janeiro and Recife, where state governments have launched broad and ambitious initiatives in recent years to reassert their authority and control violent crime.

So why do criminal authority structures appear in some places but not others? The simple answer is that where illegal markets depend on territorial control for protection, criminal groups will attempt consolidate control and enforce their own laws if and to the extent that they can. This is no easy task, however, especially for typical street gangs, which often lack the resources, political savvy, or organizational wherewithal to take and maintain control of territory that is contested by other armed actors, including the state. It is here that the civil wars literature is most useful in understanding variance in criminal outcomes, as it evaluates the conditions under which armed groups will be motivated and/or capable of challenging the authority of the states.

Many of the conditions stipulated by the civil wars literature are equally relevant to armed criminal groups that operate with some degree of territorial imperative. First, resources and capabilities, which can be bi-products of both wealth and poverty (i.e. wealth buys guns, poverty encourages recruits) are as necessary for criminal groups to control territory as they are for rebel groups fighting the state. For gangs, local drug

consumption patterns can determine the concentration of wealth that falls into their hands. For mafia-type groups, wealth is derived from extortion and other rents, and therefore depends on local market structures and inadequate (or conniving) state presence. For both groups, greater wealth means a greater capacity to wage war, and, subsequently, the greater potential they will have to conquer and control large territories.

A second condition of importance concerns geography. Similar geographical barriers to those that reduce a state's ability to repress insurgencies, like mountainous terrain, can also reduce the willingness or ability of the state to deal effectively with criminal groups. Large urban slums with high population densities that stretch up steep mountainsides and are accessible only by foot, for example, can be difficult to police effectively. Without effective police intervention, gangs can carry through on wars of territorial conquest more easily, as well as impose their authority on the community.

Lastly, state weakness and style of state presence can facilitate criminal develop in a similar way that these factors foster insurgency. Where the state does not guarantee the most basic protections, arbitration of disputes, or welfare, informal authority structures tend to develop to respond to those needs, and this responsibility most readily falls on existing armed groups. If those groups consolidate territory control and can credibly guarantee punishment and protection, non-criminal publics will have a rational incentive to ally with them instead of the state. Such alliances may then be deepened if the state's application of violence is perceived to be indiscriminate, which creates both rational and moral incentives to refuse cooperation with state institutions.

In consideration of these conditions, the cases of Rio de Janeiro and Recife begin to look quite different from one another. Rio de Janeiro is typified by an exceptionally

high level of illegal drug consumption built around a multi-class obsession with cocaine, the sale of which is largely rooted in favela based distribution networks. The resulting concentration of wealth in the hands of drug gangs has attracted a vibrant international arms market, which in turn has substantially increased the war making capacity of gangs. Gang wars, now fought with military-grade small arms, were often left to take their course between victors and vanquished, because police have been reluctant to intervene in conflict. This reluctance can be attributed to various factors, but is significantly increased by the difficulty and danger of engagement created by geographical barriers, which are formidable in Rio de Janeiro's many mountainside and hilltop favelas. Finally, while ineffective and irregular state presence has encouraged the development of informal authority structures of some kind in most Brazilian favelas, the exceptionally violent and often indiscriminate repression by police in Rio de Janeiro has created moral and rational incentives for non-criminal publics to ally with drug gangs and resist cooperation with the state, thus nurturing specifically *criminal* authority structures.

Recife stands in stark contrast to Rio de Janeiro with respect to these base conditions. Although drug consumption is high there, too, it is centered around crack cocaine, which is not only less lucrative than its powdered counterpart ounce per ounce, but also carries a strong class stigma. This has meant that favela based drug gangs benefit very little from middle and upper class consumption trends, and drug wealth has therefore not been as concentrated at the street level. The war making capabilities of drug gangs in Recife have consequently remained much less than in Rio de Janeiro. Secondly, Recife is a predominantly flat city, and its favelas are typically much smaller, less dense, and much more accessible by motor vehicle than favelas in much of Rio de

Janeiro. As a result, the police have been less reluctant and more capable to intervene in gang conflict. Finally, the police have also been far less violent, killing on average 10-20 civilians each year compared to Rio de Janeiro's average of 500-1,000. From the perspective of residents, then, the police do not represent a rival warring party to be feared, and there is little incentive to side with any group, much less with socially and politically marginalized drug traffickers.

A closer look at Rio de Janeiro reveals significant variation in both the stated conditions and the criminal outcomes I associated with them, thus providing more robust empirical support for my theoretical argument. For example, there is a clear superiority of strength and stability of drug gangs in the densely populated mountainside favelas of Rio's wealthy South Zone (at least prior to the installment of UPPs) in comparison with their counterparts in the flatter, poorer, and less dense favela expanses of the North and West Zones. Drug gangs in the West Zone have been particularly weak. This is evinced by their systematic expulsion by militia groups in favela after favela during the mid-to-late 2000s. Despite some attempts, militias were unable to do this in the drug gang strongholds in most of the South, Center, and North Zones. Recife, for its part, also varies internally, but does to a much lesser extent, and variance in criminal outcomes is therefore much less visible.

The Dark Side of Police

The recent appearance and continued expansion of so-called militias in Rio de Janeiro has made it clear that the greatest challenges to state authority might very well come from within the state itself. Although there is a long history of criminal police groups and

clandestine police death squads in Brazil, today's militias appear to have evolved into a much more dangerous type of organized crime than their predecessors. They are no longer homegrown self-defense groups or tools of the political elite to contest or maintain power, rather they have become autonomous and expansionist organizations that exercise strict territorial control in order to extract wealth and enhance their political power. According to Ignacio Cano, a sociologist at the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, the expansion of militias since 2004 constitutes an ambitious and premeditated "political project" meant to infiltrate the state via its electoral institutions, and consequently provide returns to organized crime in the form or public monies and virtual impunity from the rule of law. The 2011 assassination of judge Patricia Acioli by militiamen, as well as the dramatic increase of killings of key witnesses in criminal cases in recent years, is indication of how successful militias have been.

There is still very little understood about why militias develop, however, or how they differ from the various other groups of criminal police that have long existed in Brazil. Conditions that are propitious to their development are particularly important to identify before they spread elsewhere, because once they have developed and infiltrated the state political institutions, they will be much more difficult to combat. For this reason, I dedicated Chapter Three specifically to police-based criminal groups, creating a typology to identify them by their organizational characteristics and behavior, and a stipulating a theory of where and how they might development.

As it turns out, the militia phenomenon in Rio de Janeiro is in large part an unintended consequence of the state's thirty-year war on favela based drug gangs. As the state engaged in an increasingly violent conflict with drug gangs, the favelas in which

these wars were waged became hostile to resident police, who for their own safety moved

elsewhere or were otherwise expelled. This, in turn, led to disproportionately high

concentrations of resident police in certain areas, particularly in Rio's West Zone, where

drug gangs have historically been weaker, but violent crime even higher. There,

neighbors often turned to the resident police, who for their possession of weapons and

training in matters of security, were especially apt at dealing with criminals. Vigilante

police groups called *Policia Mineira* were thus formed, and the extralegal violence they

practiced was easily justified as a necessary evil in the absence of an effective state

presence to curb the violence of drug gangs.   Needing resources to keep order, these

groups began to tax local businesses and residents. In time, they developed sophisticated

protection rackets and monopolies on virtually all financial transactions in their host

communities. Finally, realizing they could increase their wealth further and guarantee

their impunity by securing political support, they ran political candidates in local and

state elections, bolstered by votes they could manipulate by virtue of the territorial

control they imposed.

The State

My final question, "how can the state reassert its authority where it has lost it or never

established it in the first place?," certainly has no easy answer. As in many other parts of

Latin America, Brazil has long depended on the allocation of authority to informal power

holders in order to reduce the cost of controlling a large population spread across a

massive country.   These informal authority structures, which are typically semi-private

and sometimes criminal or criminalized, develop entrenched interests that make it

extremely difficult and costly for the state to assert itself effectively when circumstances

compel it to do so. In the case of public security, the state often must run a gauntlet of

obstacles created by pre-existing authority structures that find their interests threatened

by the state's decision to act.

Inordinately high rates of criminal violence in both Rio de Janeiro and Recife

have provoked strong reactions from the state since the 1980s. Very few public security

initiatives during this time seemed to have any positive effect on overall levels of

violence, however. Only recently did this begin to change. Following the gubernatorial

elections of 2006, the newly elected governors of Rio de Janeiro and Recife each

launched novel and ambitious initiatives that, within just a few years, would dramatically

impact violent crime in their respective state capitals. Governor Sergio Cabral's

Pacifying Police Units in Rio de Janeiro were associated with an almost total cessation of

armed confrontations and a nearly 75 percent decrease in homicides in and around UPP-

controlled favelas. Governor Eduardo Campos' *Pacto pela Vida* initiative, for its part,

has claimed responsibility for a 58 percent decrease in homicides in Recife since 2006.

Considering the very different nature of the two initiatives, what explains their similar

degrees of success?

I argued in Chapter Four that the respective designs of the UPPs and the PPV

reflect a successful identification and response to the very different logics of criminal

violence that characterize Rio de Janeiro and Recife.   Because organized crime in Rio de

Janeiro had become deeply dependent on territorial control, virtually no state policy

could count on the cooperation of non-criminal populations until actual physical control

was taken back by state institutions. The police saturation of favelas that constitutes the

base strategy of the UPPs is therefore an appropriate response, because only by destroying the ability of drug gangs to impose their own authority could the state win the loyalties of residents that is so necessary for effective policing. The *Pacto pela Vida* reforms, had they been implemented in Rio de Janeiro prior to 2008, for example, would have had little positive impact, simply because they do not address the issue of criminal territorial control. This is much less important in Recife, however, where criminal violence follows patterns that I argue are better understood in epidemiological terms. In Recife, strategic professionalization of the police coupled with inter-institutional management reform dramatically increased the capacity of the state to investigate and prosecute violent crimes, as well as reduce the lethality of violent crimes that are still committed.

In the long run, there are serious potential problems with both initiatives. The primary drawback of the UPPs is their cost. Much like counter-insurgency, the UPPs require an immense amount of material and personnel to physically control territory, which might very well prove to be too costly for the government of Rio de Janeiro to continue in the long run. Even in the short run, the vast majority of favelas currently controlled by criminal groups will likely never see a UPP installed at all. In this sense, the UPP program has simply created a new kind of social division in the city. Whereas before there existed a stark contrast between *morro* and *asfalto* (favela and formal neighborhood), today there is an almost equal contrast between favelas with UPPs and those without.

The *Pacto pela Vida* also has some drawbacks, although they are probably less serious. The most important issue that the government of Pernambuco will have to deal

with as a consequence of the initiative's success is the very rapid increase in the prison population, which if left unchecked could lead to increased organizational capacity of gangs and other criminal groups, much like in São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro. There is also some potential for the PPV's achievement measures to be systematically manipulated, and thereby create a degree of public security on paper that is not reflected on the ground. New York's Compstat program, after which the PPV was modeled, for example, has been heavily criticized on similar grounds. Whichever the case, however, the PPV seems to be working quite well for now.

Both the UPPs and the PPV have been lauded as exportable models of public security. The dramatic increase in violent crime in the North and Northeastern region of Brazil over the last 5-10 years has brought this question increasingly to the fore, as many local governments are currently considering major reforms. As the two most novel and ambitious public security programs in the history of Brazil, one model or the other is likely to be adopted. Which one is appropriate, I argue, should be determined by the particular logic driving violence in each locality. Where informal and criminal power is deeply rooted in territorial control, the state must deal with that issue first and foremost, and the UPPs have handled that part well. Otherwise, the state should do everything in is power to prevent that from happening, which mostly requires that it should simply do a better and more consistent job. Something like the PPV is a good place to start.

Future Research

One of the most unfortunate upsides for anyone studying matters of criminal violence and public security in Latin America is that these themes are highly unlikely to lose their

political and social relevance anytime soon. According to the UN Regional Human Development Report (2013-2014), Latin America is the only major world region where rates of homicide increased during the first decade of the millennium, which they did by twelve percent. It was also during this decade that street gangs and organized criminal networks began imposing pervasive territorial control to a degree not seen since Pablo Escobar's cocaine empire in Medellin, Colombia, in the early 1990s. And today it is far more widespread. None of this looks particularly promising for the institutional integrity of states or for the health of democracy, but it does provide us with a enormous bank of unanswered questions about the political future of Latin America, which, if we can better understand, we can hopefully help to shape in a positive way.

There are two key lines of research born out of this project that I would like to pursue in the coming years and which are highly relevant to political dynamics across Latin America. The first concerns the development of authoritative capacities of criminal groups and the criminalization of existing informal authority structures. The second concerns the criminalization of police and military forces. As many scholars have done before me, I envision a comparative analysis of Brazil and Mexico, where these issues have become increasingly salient over the last decade and a half. Where and why is the state losing ground to non-state actors who increasingly assume social and political responsibilities that are traditionally associated with the modern state? What are these groups likely to look like? How might they behave? Do they bare dismal tidings for the future of the modern state system, or will opposition to them reinforce the authority and legitimacy of the state? Indeed, many questions need answering.

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