

KEEPING THE PEACE?  
AN ANALYSIS OF RIO DE JANEIRO'S  
POLICE PACIFICATION UNITS

A Capstone project presented by

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*Eu só quero é ser feliz,  
Andar tranquilamente  
na favela onde eu nasci,  
E poder me orgulhar,  
E ter a consciência  
que o pobre tem o seu lugar.*

—Cidinho e Doca, “Rap de Felicidade”

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**Abstract**

Approximately one out of every five *cariocas*, or residents of Rio de Janeiro, lives in a favela. Roughly translated as “slums” or “shantytowns”, favelas in Rio are characterized by a historic lack of state presence and government services, as well as poverty, violence, and criminal gang control. The question of how to address citizen security in the favelas has been hotly debated and addressed through a variety of strategies implemented at both the federal and state levels. One of the most recent state approaches combines aggressive territorial takeovers with long-term proximity policing in the form of Police Pacification Units (UPPs). This Capstone addresses the UPP program’s long-term sustainability and potential for success by analyzing UPP strategy and tactics, past security policies, and the historic government-favela relationship. This analysis concludes that the UPP program confronts several serious challenges that threaten its long-term viability. Finally, the Capstone identifies major challenges and presents recommendations for managing them at the state government level.

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## CRIME AND VIOLENCE IN RIO DE JANEIRO'S FAVELAS

### What is a favela?

To many, Rio de Janeiro is synonymous with images of endless beaches, breathtaking views from Pão de Açúcar, and the rich color and exuberance of Carnaval. Hundreds of thousands of visitors flock each year to the mountaintop where Christ the Redeemer gazes over the city. But beyond the famous tourist destinations are the people of the city themselves—the *cariocas*—and their communities, homes, and families. In this city, there is a striking gap between rich and poor, and there are sharp lines drawn between social classes. These lines go beyond daily interactions and social life; they are geographic and stark. One of the most famous and misunderstood urban phenomena that results from these social and geographic divides is the favela.

Simply defining favelas is difficult. In English language texts, the word is often translated as “slum” or “shantytown”, with little explanation as to what that actually means in the Brazilian context. The Pereira Passos Institute (IPP), the municipal agency in charge of Rio’s urban planning, defines a favela as follows:

A favela is an area predominantly used for housing, characterized by the occupation of land by the low income population, scarceness of urban infrastructure and public services, pathways that are narrow and with irregular alignment, lots of irregular shape and size, and unlicensed constructions, that do not conform with the legal patterns.<sup>1</sup>

It is important to note that although Rio has the largest favela population of any Brazilian city, favelas do exist in many other parts of Brazil. In fact, three-quarters of the total Brazilian favela population live in favelas in cities other than Rio. In descending order of total favela population, these cities include São Paulo, Belo Horizonte, Salvador, Curitiba, Porto Alegre, Recife, Fortaleza, and Belém.<sup>2</sup> However, this analysis is concerned solely with Rio’s favelas, and all further discussion of favelas, their history, and their residents should be considered exclusive to the situation in Rio de Janeiro.

Observatório de Favelas, a non-governmental organization that promotes better understanding of favelas and the public policies that affect them, considers socio-political, -economic, and -cultural aspects of Rio’s favelas in order to best describe their

shared characteristics.<sup>3</sup> From a socio-political perspective, favelas are territories historically ignored by the Brazilian state or unaffected by its policies.<sup>4</sup> The first favelas in Rio sprung up in the late 1800s when unpaid veterans and other poor migrants made do in the city by building their own houses without land titles. As urbanization increased throughout Brazil, and more Brazilians migrated to Rio from rural areas, the favelas grew and multiplied.<sup>5</sup> In fact, the growth rate of Rio's favela population has been higher than that of the city's total population in every decade with the exception of the 1970s.<sup>6</sup> Between 1990 and 2000, Rio's total population grew by 6.9%, while its favela population rose by 23.9%.<sup>7</sup> Today, approximately one out of every five *cariocas* lives in a favela.<sup>8</sup>

Rio's favelas continue to lack public goods and services like infrastructure and access to health care and education that are present in the formal city. There is little investment from the formal business sector in favelas, particularly when it comes to housing, construction, and services. Buildings in favelas are often constructed illegally by inhabitants, and most continue to lack land titles. The concentration of buildings within favelas is high and urban planning essentially does not exist, typically resulting in an uneven, ramshackle look.<sup>9</sup> Unemployment rates in favelas are typically higher than those in the *asfalto*, or formal city. Cultural and racial diversity are also high.<sup>10</sup>

It is important to bear in mind that there are hundreds of favelas in Rio (the exact number is highly disputed and difficult to determine due to "complexes" consisting of multiple favelas) and each has a unique situation, history, and population. Some are located in the heart of Zona Sul, Rio's affluent south zone, smack in the middle of posh neighborhoods like Copacabana and Ipanema. Others are on the city's periphery, in areas that take hours to get to by bus from Zona Sul. Some favelas are tiny in size and contain only hundreds of residents, while others are sprawling complexes with tens of thousands of people living within them.<sup>11</sup>

### **Violence in Rio de Janeiro**

Movies like the immensely popular 2007 film *Tropa de Elite* have put Rio's favelas in the international limelight. While *Tropa de Elite* takes place in many different locations throughout Rio, the film's most violent scenes occur in the favelas: drug traffickers shoot a college student execution-style, have multiple shootouts with police,

kill one of their very young lookouts who gave information to police after being tortured, and ring car tires around a man before pouring gasoline over him and lighting him on fire (a technique known as the *microondas*, or microwave). Rio's special forces (the *Batalhão de Operações Policiais Especiais*, otherwise known as BOPE) torture favela residents (including children) to get information by suffocating them with plastic bags, and have numerous shootouts with gangs in various favelas. The military police dump dead bodies in other districts to artificially alter their crime statistics and accept bribes from traffickers.<sup>12</sup> Certainly, these are scenes from a movie, but they are only semi-fictional and based on real events.<sup>13</sup> Plot details may have been altered to make an exciting narrative, but the violence shown is violence that many *cariocas* have experienced.

Rio has one of the highest homicide rates in Brazil, and most violent crimes occur in the favelas. While government data shows that the total homicide rate in Rio has dropped slightly, it is still relatively high. In the first three months of 2011 alone, there were 1,168 murders in Rio state.<sup>14</sup> The youth homicide rate is particularly worrisome. Sociologist Julio Jacobo Weiselfisz, who prepared a recent report on homicides for the Brazilian Ministry of Justice, commented, "If the overall rate is very high, the murder rate among youths has reached epidemic proportions."<sup>15</sup> According to Weiselfisz's report, the homicide rate for Brazilians aged 15 to 24 climbed from 30 per 100,000 citizens in 1998 to 52.9 in 2008.<sup>16</sup> In several years since 1990, homicide rates for young men between ages 15 and 30 in Rio reached over 200 per 100,000. This is a homicide rate typical of war zones; it is comparable to that of Iraq after the 2003 U.S. invasion and Yugoslavia during the 1990s.<sup>17</sup>

Violence within Rio's favelas is a severe problem with deep historical roots. Today, the state is struggling to claim a monopoly on violence in most favelas and is unable to guarantee favela residents' security. Organized gangs that participate in criminal activities, particularly drugs and arms trafficking, have historically controlled many favelas.<sup>18</sup> Since their beginnings about 40 years ago, gangs have become so tied into community structure that dismantling them while preserving favela communities has proved to be the most formidable public security issue in Rio. In an attempt to reassert state authority in favelas, the state government has implemented a range of policies and

programs over the years that address issues such as policing, infrastructure, formalization, economic opportunity, and social and cultural integration. While it is undeniable that progress has been made, it is also without question that favelas continue to pose a huge challenge to the state today, particularly in terms of security and social inclusion.

### **Gangs, Trafficking, and Favelas**

The origins of Rio's gang factions lie in the prison system. In the 1970s, common criminals and political activists were often housed together in maximum security prisons. Prisoners who had previously had little concept of group coordination began to copy the political prisoners' methods of organization. In this manner, one of Rio's biggest gangs, the *Comando Vermelho* (the Red Command, or CV) was formed in the 1980s. As CV members began to be released, the group began to use its new organizational methods for criminal purposes outside the confines of prison. CV factions began to establish themselves in favelas, where Brazilian state presence was the weakest.<sup>19</sup>

Gangs got a major boost in power as their profits from drug trafficking soared. Brazil became a drug transit country of increasing regional strategic importance in the late 1970s and early 1980s. In addition to the growing international market, the domestic market for cocaine in Rio grew and demand skyrocketed. The CV, already established in the drug trade, seized the opportunity to expand their operations and increase profits dramatically. To finance this expansion, CV members participated in an increasing number of robberies, kidnappings, and other criminal activities.<sup>20</sup> Small-scale street dealing of the past gave way to highly organized control of larger drug markets. To protect their local *bocas de fumo*, or street selling points, gangs invested in arms. Gang activities continued to be based out of favelas, where it was easiest to take over territory and avoid the law.<sup>21</sup>

As the opportunities afforded by the drug trade grew, the CV experienced internal rivalries that led to several splits in the organization. Three new factions eventually resulted, the *Comando Vermelho Jovem* (the Young Red Command, or CVJ), *Amigos dos Amigos* (Friends of Friends, or ADA) and the *Terceiro Comando* (the Third Command, or TC). Competition among these new groups and the CV led to increased violence, as each tried to defend its territory from the rival factions, as well as the police. As these



new factions were forming, drug profits were still climbing at an amazing rate, providing a financial incentive for gangs to conquer other gangs' territories regardless of the risks involved in doing so. With this introduction of intense and violent competition, the gangs found themselves with both the practical reasons and financial resources to purchase heavier weapons in greater quantities.<sup>22</sup>

As conflict intensified, gangs protected the territories they controlled by holding a monopoly on violence and enforcing their own brand of behavioral code to keep order. Communities received goods and services from the gangs that operated out of their area, most often economic stimulation and opportunities within the gang, but also food, medicine, and leisure activities. Gangs also helped provide (and tax) services like gas and electricity. Bonds with favela communities were strong; most traffickers lived in the favelas where they operated, and many community members joined the gangs. Gangs made a particular effort to form ties with young people, often asking them to run minor errands in return for money, and slowly building a relationship that led to recruitment. Gangs had access to power, drugs, and women—all very appealing to many youngsters. The police, on the other hand, were often only seen coming into favelas to collect money from gangs in exchange for not interfering with their activities.<sup>23</sup> Seeking bribes is a typical way for officers to both earn more money and cut down on their actual work burden.<sup>24</sup> Indeed, military police salaries in Rio are among the lowest of all the country's military police.<sup>25</sup> According to a report from Human Rights Watch, a new military police officer earns less than a low-ranking scout (typically a child or teenager) for a gang.<sup>26</sup> As shown in *Tropa de Elite*, arrangements between police and gang members are not uncommon.<sup>27</sup>

By the late 1990s, the gang situation had changed. Major gangs split, new rivalries developed, and territorial competition became more intense and also violent as arms steadily flowed into the city, financed by growing drug profits. Police interventions increased, and as many gang members were killed, arrested, or driven out of their territory, new groups and factions began to take over. Many of these, in turn, suffered the same consequences and were replaced by others. Those controlling the drug trade became younger and younger, the arms they controlled multiplied, and the fast turnover

rate meant that many of those using these arms were extremely young and inexperienced. The crack boom of the 2000s intensified both gang power and competition.<sup>28</sup>

## **PUBLIC SECURITY POLICY & FAVELAS**

### **Introduction**

Lack of state presence may have been a large part of the reason why gangs were able to operate virtually unchecked in favelas for years, but Brazilian authorities have recognized the need to establish state control over these areas. From the 1980s onwards, favelas have been given more attention as violence, trafficking, and gang power have not only increased but also become more visible to *cariocas* as a whole. A slew of public policies aimed at decreasing violence, cutting down on drugs and arms trafficking, dismantling gangs, providing services and security to favela dwellers, and/or socially and economically integrating the favelas into the rest of the city have been proposed and often implemented.

It is impossible to understand the failures, successes, and challenges of public security approaches to Rio's favelas without understanding the historical side of favela-state interactions. Today's policies are not formatted in a vacuum; they are informed by past approaches and experiences, as well as public opinion, federal policies, and other factors. Rio's state policies during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century started out as highly anti-favela, but have more recently fluctuated between two general categories—traditional hard-line security approaches that focus heavily on the role of the police and BOPE, and more progressive policies that attempt to address not just symptoms but also perceived causes of violence and insecurity. These fluctuations are heavily linked to gubernatorial administrations.

As a great deal of valuable literature already exists on specific government policies over the years<sup>29</sup> the bulk of this analysis will be confined to public security approaches from 1982 (the beginning of Leonel Brizola's term as governor of Rio) to the present. I will, however, begin with a brief overview of state approaches to favelas pre-1982. This is not an analysis of these approaches, but rather a map to guide readers through the main events and policies related to public security in Rio that have led up to

the UPP program. It is also worth noting that while much of the literature on Rio's favelas looks at a mix of social programs and security policies, this analysis is primarily concerned with the public security side of the puzzle. Nevertheless, the UPP program does have a definitive social side to it. Bearing this in mind, the following synthesis of favela-state interactions includes social and political elements that fall outside a strict definition of public security.

### **Favelas and the State: 1889-1982**

Scholars generally agree that the first favelas sprang up in Rio after the end of the Canudos War. Post-war, soldiers returned to the city to find the federal government refusing to provide the housing and pay it had promised them.<sup>30</sup> Both as a form of protest and out of necessity, some of these veterans set up a squatter camp on the Morro da Providência, and thus, Rio's first favela was born. This favela and others grew at a steady pace, but state action to remove them began almost immediately. Less than three years after the squatters set up camp on the Morro da Providência, police encircled the favela and made several unsuccessful efforts to remove the community.<sup>31</sup> Often citing concerns about public hygiene, city leaders continued to support favela removal and succeeded in completely razing the nearby Morro do Castelo in the early 1920s.<sup>32</sup>

During the Estado Novo (1930-45), city recognition of favelas increased slightly, but they continued to be self-contained communities with few urban services, and little was done to incorporate them into the formal city. Government officials rejected the idea of including favelas on maps, regarding them as blights marring the city. Most were designated for removal. The government also began heavily regulating expansion of existing favelas in an attempt to stop their spread. Nevertheless, favelas grew and multiplied during this period as industrialization drove many Brazilians to migrate to Rio and other urban zones. The government tried to counter this expansion by moving favela residents into state-administered housing areas known as *parques proletários*. During the Vargas administration, land values of some of the *parques* rose and residents were ejected so that higher-income housing could be built.<sup>33</sup>

After Vargas was deposed in 1945 and a short democratic era began, favelas began to have a small degree of political power as clientelistic politicians looked to gain

votes in return for favors, often visiting favelas during elections and offering token gifts to residents. This period saw local politicians alternate between offers to bring services to the favelas and threats of taking them away, depending on the political motives of the moment. Community organization within the favelas developed. In 1945, the first resident associations (*Associações de Moradores*, or AMs) were created, and by the early 1960s, over 75 AMs had been formed. AMs continue to play a large role in resident organization today.<sup>34</sup>

Carlos Lacerda was elected governor of Guanabara State (the city of Rio de Janeiro) in 1960.<sup>35</sup> Years earlier, during his career as a journalist, Lacerda had declared a “war on favelas”, and as governor, he advocated for favela removal policies. The AMs put up resistance and attempted to negotiate with the government, but soon after the military took power in 1964, the Lacerda administration began removal. The following year, Francisco Negrão de Lima defeated Lacerda’s chosen successor in the gubernatorial race. Though Negrão de Lima opposed favela removal, he was unable to advance policies that the federal military government opposed, and the dictatorship strongly supported the razing of favelas.<sup>36</sup> To this end, the federal government founded the Coordination Agency for Habitation in the Social Interest of the Greater Rio Metropolitan Area (CHISAM) in 1968. CHISAM defined favelas as “abnormal within the urban environment” and saw favela removal as an essential step toward integrating favela residents into society.<sup>37</sup> In the first seven years of CHISAM’s existence, about 70 favelas were removed and 100,000 people were forcibly relocated to other parts of Rio.<sup>38</sup>

As a result of this stance and the government decision not to recognize favela residents’ rights, these residents received few services from the state. Several informal systems developed within favelas to keep order in the state’s absence. For example, AMs often resolved property disputes since residents did not have access to the formal court system. AM leaders negotiated agreements when disputes broke out, basing decisions on their interpretations of the law mixed with community norms. Violence and crime certainly existed in favelas, but on an extremely small scale compared to recent years. Some degree of this violence came from police action; unreasonable searches and police harassment were common during the military dictatorship.<sup>39</sup>

## **Leonel Brizola**

As the military regime began to allow limited political competition in the late 1970s, politicians again sought votes through clientelistic practices, not only in the formal city but also in the favelas. In 1982, Leonel Brizola was elected as governor of Rio after running on a platform that supported building relationships with favelas, AMs, and the AM umbrella association known as the FAFERJ (Federation of Associations of Favelas of the State of Rio de Janeiro).<sup>40</sup> As governor, Brizola made substantial changes to the established criminal justice system. He got rid of the position of Secretary of Public Security and created instead the Council of Justice, Public Security, and Human Rights (Brizola himself sat on this council). Brizola promoted the positions of military police commander and civil police chief to the equivalents of state secretary posts. He made sure that the military police was led by political allies. Brizola supported reforms in military police training and pushed for a community-policing model. He also used his clout with the military police to get officers to cut down on police raids in the favelas.<sup>41</sup>

This last change, in particular, won Brizola support from the poorer segments of the population. While Brizola was concerned with transforming the police into a force that protected rather than repressed the population, he also understood that the favelas were home to a large potential voting base.<sup>42</sup> State agencies delivered new and improved services to residents without a local politician playing the role of middleman, as had previously often been the case.<sup>43</sup> In the Cantagalo-Pavão-Pavãozinho (PPG) favela complex, several pilot projects focusing on infrastructure and service improvements were established that would be used as the basis for future endeavors in other communities. Notably, the state relied heavily on favela residents for input on what improvements were needed most in the community.<sup>44</sup>

Unfortunately, bypassing the middleman and directly involving the state with FAFERJ leadership weakened the FAFERJ as its leaders began competing amongst one another for state attention and resources for their respective communities. The direct state-favela relationship also meant that it was difficult to carry successful programs over as Brizola's first administration finished.<sup>45</sup>

During the same time period, traffickers and criminal groups like the CV were growing and competing for power inside the favelas with the increasingly weakened

AMs. As both international and domestic demand for cocaine grew, criminal groups had the financial resources to provide assistance to favela residents in a variety of ways, reinforcing the notion that gangs could provide for the community as well as, if not better than, the state and AMs.<sup>46</sup> The police became less of a threat to gangs as Brizola's administration made changes within the military police. Without a practical model of community policing or the forces ready to permanently fulfill that role, Brizola essentially saw two options: continued repressive military policing, or a drastic decrease in police operations in favelas. He opted for the latter at a disastrous time; criminal groups were becoming increasingly organized and aggressive, and they were able to consolidate their territorial power with little police interference.<sup>47</sup>

### **Wellington Moreira Franco**

In 1987, Wellington Moreira Franco replaced Brizola as governor. As violence climbed, the public demanded concrete actions to combat what was seen as a situation spiraling out of control. In response, Moreira Franco's administration took a more confrontational approach to crime and trafficking and the military police began raiding favelas more frequently. Many AMs lost favor with residents when they were unable to stop these raids. At the same time, criminal gangs rapidly began to consolidate their influence in favelas by effectively controlling AMs.<sup>48</sup> These gangs did not hesitate to threaten and/or kill AM leaders who tried to resist their influence.<sup>49</sup> The increasing profits from cocaine trafficking gave gangs the resources to buy more weapons, bribe police, and set up some services in favelas that helped get residents on their side.<sup>50</sup> Some politicians recognized the role that traffickers played as leaders in the community and worked with them to obtain votes in exchange for providing support for their community projects. Of course, criminal groups were not just running small social projects; their dominance and consolidation in the late 1980s produced a significant uptick in crime and violence in Rio.<sup>51</sup> By 1990, the last year of Moreira Franco's term, the homicide rate in Rio had reached a record high of approximately 63 per every 100,000 people. Auto theft, kidnapping, and robberies all shot up as well, while seizures of arms and drugs dropped.<sup>52</sup>

### **Marcelo Alencar**

When Brizola came back to power in 1991, the situation on the ground looked dramatically different than it had during his first term, and crime only seemed to be getting worse. AMs were no longer the primary powerbrokers in favelas.<sup>53</sup> When Brizola's second term ended in 1994, Marcelo Alencar was elected as governor. Alencar, who had run against Brizola's chosen successor, embraced hard line policies that bore similarities to those put in place by Moreira Franco.<sup>54</sup> Alencar reinstated the position of Secretary of Public Security, and for the first time since Brazil's transition to democracy, an army general was named to the post.<sup>55</sup> Under the leadership of this general, Nilton Cerqueira, the number of citizens killed during conflicts with the military police jumped from an average of 3.2 to 20.55 per month. Officers who showed bravery in combat situations (often measured by number of opponents killed) were given promotions and other rewards. During this period, the number of arms seized by the military police increased by 20.3% and the amount of drugs confiscated rose by 68.3%. There was also a significant drop in homicides.<sup>56</sup>

The general theory behind Alencar's security policies showed a major break from the past. Instead of trying to reform the police system, the idea developed that the police actually were capable of controlling crime if given a mandate that allowed them to take action effectively; systemic issues like corruption and inefficiency could be dealt with later. Alencar's policies were essentially a test of this theory on the ground.

Unsurprisingly, there are two main interpretations of public security policies under Alencar. The first focuses on police violence and human rights violations, viewing police actions as serious setbacks for the consolidation of democracy in Brazil. The second interpretation sees the drop in homicides and other key indicators as indicative of successful policies that were aggressive but ultimately positive for Rio's citizenry as a whole.<sup>57</sup> This debate has proved to be both a critical and divisive one for decision-makers who often view their options in terms of one camp or the other with little ground in between.

### **Anthony Garotinho**

As the 1998 gubernatorial elections approached, some indicators of criminality were still high despite the Alencar administration's tough stance on crime.<sup>58</sup> While the

homicide rate had dropped, it remained worryingly high at 47 homicides per 100,000 people.<sup>59</sup> Public security was a critical issue for voters. The candidate put forth by the Democratic Labor Party (PTD), Anthony Garotinho, formed a strategic alliance with the Workers' Party (PT) during his campaign. The alliance was based on a progressive public security policy designed in large part by social scientist Luiz Eduardo Soares.<sup>60</sup> This policy centered on "building links among favelas, civil society, and the state to decrease the power of traffickers and control violence".<sup>61</sup> Garotinho, who has been described as impulsive, determined and focused on results, promised to fire police commanders of districts with high crime levels and reward officers if crime in their patrol areas dropped.<sup>62</sup> He went on to win the election. Soares became an influential security advisor in the new governor's administration.<sup>63</sup>

For the first two years of his administration, Garotinho and Soares attempted to implement the security reforms that had been the cornerstone of the governor's platform. Funding to police training, technology, and internal affairs increased. New programs were designed to protect vulnerable demographics of society including women, blacks, street children, and gays. The police forces were also under scrutiny. Civil police stations, where citizens had to go to report crimes, were intimidating places run essentially autonomously by a commander. As reporter Sebastian Rotella puts it, "traditionally, a crime victim venturing into a [civil police] station was likely to encounter a hostile, lethargic, perhaps even shirtless detective working at a typewriter in a sweaty cavern."<sup>64</sup> Garotinho's administration recognized that this type of intimidating environment deterred citizens from visiting and reporting crimes. An initiative called Delegacia Legal was created to work on making civil police stations more professional. Stations were redesigned and often condensed, a new computer system was designed to streamline centralized monitoring of cases, and university students were employed to provide a friendlier face at reception.<sup>65</sup>

The police reform agenda were not small by any means, and police forces were highly resistant to the slew of changes thrown at them. In August 1999, after backing some of Soares' first reforms, Garotinho received a tip that a group of police was planning to carry out high-profile killings, with Soares and Garotinho as primary targets. A few months later, Garotinho angered Soares by appointing a new civil police chief that



Soares claimed was corrupt. Soares nearly resigned, but says that he “thought it would irresponsible to quit...but from that moment on, the trust was gone with the governor.”<sup>66</sup> Soares continued to be the main man behind the push for reform, but Garotinho increasingly tried to placate hard-line police elements.<sup>67</sup>

“At first, Garotinho wanted to support the reforms as a whole. But then he realized the best thing would be to have all the projects in place but not go forward on them to avoid confrontations with the police,” Soares said.<sup>68</sup> While Garotinho denies this, it is undeniable that achieving police reform rather than just discussing it is a formidable obstacle to any Rio authority. Soares, however, kept on pushing for real action and had public disagreements with Garotinho over several issues. Things came to a breaking point in March 2000 when Garotinho unceremoniously fired Soares during a live television interview.<sup>69</sup> Soon after, Soares was forced to flee in exile to the United States amid threats of violence.<sup>70</sup>

After Soares’ departure, security policy was dominated by established conservative military elements in the administration. Reform efforts were largely shelved.<sup>71</sup> In the final years of the Garotinho administration, there was an uptick in crimes perpetrated outside of favelas by criminal gangs. Government buildings, buses, shopping centers, and major highways all suffered attacks.<sup>72</sup>

### **Benedita da Silva**

In the fall of 2002, Garotinho stepped down in a bid for the presidency that would ultimately prove unsuccessful.<sup>73</sup> Benedita da Silva, Garotinho’s vice governor, was left to serve the rest of his term. Da Silva, who was a member of the PT, had been originally chosen as vice governor as part of the PTD-PT alliance that Garotinho had formed during his campaign. Da Silva, a black woman who grew up in a favela and earned her high school degree at age 40, supported laws that addressed social concerns of favela residents such as racial discrimination and domestic violence.<sup>74</sup> During her short stint as governor of Rio, da Silva attempted to implement security reforms similar to those that Soares had advocated. With financial and moral support from President Cardoso and the federal government, her administration sought to root out corruption within the police forces. As Cardoso recalled during an interview with Maria Helena Moreira Alves, da Silva’s legacy

was her attempt at creating change, but she was ultimately unable to achieve much success when it came to eliminating corruption within the system.<sup>75</sup>

### **Rosinha Garotinho**

As the end of da Silva's term approached, it was unsurprising when he chose not to back her in the upcoming election; Garotinho had broken with the PT during his second year in office, and da Silva was the PT's candidate.<sup>76</sup> Instead, he endorsed a former member of his social action and citizenship secretariat—his wife, Rosinha Barros Assed Matheus de Oliveira, more commonly known as Rosinha Garotinho.<sup>77</sup>

Only a few months into her term, Rosinha fired Secretary of Public Security Josias Quintal and replaced him with her husband.<sup>78</sup> Rosinha and Garotinho endorsed President Lula's National Security Policy, which ironically had been drafted by Luiz Eduardo Soares, who was serving as Lula's new federal Secretary of Security. The plan sought to integrate the civil and military police forces as much as possible; attack networks of activities including corruption, money laundering, and arms trafficking; reduce police brutality and lethal violence; focus on prevention instead of punishment; and finally, create links between police forces and NGOs, human rights groups, community organizations, and academics. This policy reflected a federal push for a major shift in security strategy, and with the Garotinhos on board, a change in tone from the state administration was noticeable. Public statements from both Rosinha and Anthony Garotinho repeatedly emphasized the importance of not exaggerating Rio's public security challenges, avoiding a culture of fear, and properly acknowledging security achievements.<sup>79</sup>

Despite endorsements from Rosinha and other state governors, President Lula did not complete the final ratification step of confirming participation by calling all of the governors together to reinforce their commitment to the plan. Soares, who was fired from his new position in October 2003 for reasons related to nepotism,<sup>80</sup> has written extensively on the ideas behind the policy and the reasons why its momentum dwindled away.<sup>81</sup> Despite its eventual deterioration, the National Security Policy did win enough support to establish a new mood, both in the government and the people of Rio.<sup>82</sup> As violence escalated in Rio, however, this mood did not last long.

In April 2004, a conflict in the favelas of Rocinha and Vidigal resulted in the deaths of two policemen and six civilians. In response, the government sent 1,200 police officers into the two favelas. A few days later, Rosinha and deputy governor Luiz Paolo Conde suggested constructing a physical wall around Rocinha and Vidigal. The wall plan was intended to stop traffickers from escaping into nearby forests and also to “mark off territory”, according to the deputy governor.<sup>83</sup> The plan was met with ridicule and general disapproval, with groups like Global Justice saying that such a wall would lead to “social apartheid”. The mayor of Rio, Cesar Maia, spoke out strongly against the wall idea, calling the governor’s proposal “unbelievable.”<sup>84</sup>

Shortly after the violence in Rocinha and Vidigal occurred, Rosinha’s administration called on the federal government to send in 4,000 army troops under Garotinho’s command. Lula and the Justice Ministry publicly opposed the call to send in the army under state command, widening an existing division between Lula and Garotinho, who was planning to run against Lula for a second time in the 2006 presidential elections. During a week of controversy and sharp remarks from both sides, Rosinha and Garotinho accused the federal government of failing to get the drug trade under control in Brazil.<sup>85</sup>

### **Sérgio Cabral Filho**

In the 2006 gubernatorial elections, Maia backed Denise Frossard,<sup>86</sup> but Sérgio Cabral Filho emerged as the winner after receiving 68% of the vote in the second round of elections.<sup>87</sup> Cabral, who endorsed Lula’s re-election campaign during the same year, had previously spent twelve years as member of Rio’s state assembly and four years as a national senator representing Rio state. After winning the 2006 election and serving his first term, Cabral was re-elected in 2010 and is the current governor of Rio state.<sup>88</sup>

In terms of public security policy, the Cabral administration has been defined by its development and use of a new type of police, the *Unidades de Polícia Pacificadora* or Police Pacification Units (UPPs), which to date operate exclusively in favelas.<sup>89</sup> There are currently 17 operational UPP units in Rio, each operating in a different community.<sup>90</sup> There are several other communities that are in the early stages of pacification and will ostensibly receive UPP units in the near future. Designed mainly by Rio Secretary of

Public Security José Mariano Beltrame and new chief of the military police Mario Duarte,<sup>91</sup> the UPP program's aims include: retaking state control of territories strongly influenced and controlled by criminal groups; ensuring peace and public safety for the populations of these territories; and maintaining state and police presence.<sup>92</sup> UPPs police in a way that is deliberately designed to bring the police and the population closer together, and are unique in that they combine traditional territorial takeovers carried out by BOPE with long-term presence of pacification police.<sup>93</sup> It is important to note that the UPP program does not aim to completely end drug trafficking or criminality, or seek to be the sole force directed at addressing all socio-economic problems in the favelas.<sup>94</sup>

While the UPP model is often lauded as a fresh and unique approach to tackling citizen security in favelas, it was preceded by several experiments in police reform. Certainly, Rio's favela policing strategies have historically been dominated by zero tolerance approaches and BOPE invasions, and challenging this approach was not usually politically popular. As we have seen, various reform attempts have been brought up over the years and were usually abandoned quickly. One of the most notable projects was the Special Areas Policing Group (GPAE), developed when Soares was head of SESEG/RJ and initiated a push for reforms. The GPAE program addressed specific locations in Rio chosen by the governor where drug trafficking was a serious problem. Military police forces, in cooperation with NGOs and churches, then attempted to establish a community policing-style program in those locations.<sup>95</sup> The GPAE program failed after two years, due mainly to a lack of police training, equipment, and political backing.<sup>96</sup> A serious state attempt at taking a new approach to policing favelas did not occur again until the UPP program was initiated.

The first UPP was established in December 2008 in the Santa Marta favela<sup>97</sup> as a policy of the Rio de Janeiro State Security Department (SESEG/RJ).<sup>98</sup> The UPP initiative is also part of a federal program within the Ministry of Justice known as PRONASCI (*Programa Nacional de Segurança Pública com Cidadania*, or the National Public Security and Citizenship Program).<sup>99</sup> PRONASCI was established by Law n. 11530 in October 2007, ten months after Cabral was sworn in as governor. The program was created by the National Public Security Department (SENASP), which saw a need for a new body that could respond in a practical and effective manner to the nation's

security crises.<sup>100</sup> With a budget of R\$6.7 billion (approximately USD\$3.9 billion) for the 2007-2012 period,<sup>101</sup> PRONASCI's official documents demonstrate a dedication to combining security policies with social programs, with a focus on prevention and digging at the roots of security problems.<sup>102</sup> PRONASCI consists of 94 programs run by 15 ministries. These programs are designed to target three specific areas—improving education and training for law enforcement personnel, improving the prison system, and targeting socio-cultural factors that contribute to crime. As one of Brazil's most violent cities, Rio de Janeiro is one of PRONASCI's target locations for program implementation.<sup>103</sup> Although it is administrated at the state level, the UPP initiative is one of the programs that receives PRONASCI funding.<sup>104</sup>

## **POLICE PACIFICATION UNITS**

### **UPP Pacification Process**

The pacification process undertaken by UPPs follows several steps. While the amount of time required for each step and the manpower necessary to successfully carry out each phase vary depending on the specific situation, the general four-step process remains the same in each targeted favela. First, territory is retaken during an armed intervention conducted by BOPE, Rio's elite special forces.<sup>105</sup> This is the phase with the greatest potential for violent conflict, as BOPE essentially invades territory controlled by heavily armed gangs. However, the state government makes a public announcement of upcoming BOPE operations of this nature in advance, which decreases the potential for conflict to some degree. Many gang members and criminal elements choose to flee before BOPE sets foot in the favela, as was the case with the most recent BOPE mission in November 2011. An announcement was made a week in advance of BOPE's operation in the communities of Rocinha and Vidigal. Despite anticipation of resistance in these large favelas, no shots were fired during the operation.<sup>106</sup>

The second phase focuses on stabilization. Once the initial territorial takeover has been carried out, BOPE identifies and removes sources of resistance and criminal elements.<sup>107</sup> In Rocinha, BOPE officers found and seized two rocket launchers, two rocket-propelled grenades, a shotgun with 3,000 rounds, 24 kilograms of cocaine, and

one hundred fake Civil Police uniforms in one stash. During the same operation, BOPE drilled through a concrete barrier to discover fourteen grenades, five pistols, 35 rifles, and ammunition. Motorcycles, submachine guns, and nearly half a ton of other drugs were also seized during the operation.<sup>108</sup> BOPE forces are stationed inside the favela around the clock during this phase, which can take days or many weeks to achieve.<sup>109</sup>

After the situation is stable, the third phase of occupation begins. It is at this juncture that the UPP forces enter the favela and begin initial operations to establish law and order through system of community policing. In the final post-occupation stage, the UPPs work toward establishing a positive relationship in the community based on trust.<sup>110</sup> The UPP forces attempt to keep the peace and do preventative work while serving the community by establishing positive social and economic initiatives. Monitoring and evaluation of the community's situation and the UPP's role are carried out during this phase.<sup>111</sup>

### **UPP Recruitment, Training, and Community Relations**

A key part of the UPP strategy is the selection and training of its policemen and women. UPP commander and former United Nations Peacekeeping Commander Jose Carvalho sums it up: "We need fresh, strong minds, not a Rambo. The older generation of cops is more oriented to kicking down doors and shooting people."<sup>112</sup> UPP police training takes a different approach to training than the military police and BOPE. When these forces had to deal with gangs in the favelas, they went through training that taught them to dehumanize favela residents, who were seen as inherently involved in or compliant with gang activities.<sup>113</sup> In order to break free from this type of thinking, only new police academy graduates are selected to participate as members of an UPP.<sup>114</sup> Once accepted to the program, recruits go through training that includes human rights, sociology, and community outreach components, as well as training tailored to the situation of the specific favela where each officer will work. The focus in training is on dialogue capacity with communities rather than use of force.<sup>115</sup> In addition, to make sure that UPPs are not abusing their power, officers are subject to covert internal affairs investigations.<sup>116</sup>

Cultivating a positive relationship between the UPPs and the communities they serve is a key part of the pacification process, but in practice it is an extremely difficult goal to achieve. For some in the community, gang rule meant economic opportunity, relative stability, and at the very least, a system that favela dwellers understood. While it has enjoyed a high degree of popularity in certain favelas, the UPP program's promise of social programs and employment opportunities is far from being accepted or admired by many favela residents. When asked if he would be more positive about BOPE's takeover in Complexo de Alemão if the state were able to create opportunities for employment or education, one youth said, "Let's be honest here. We liked the *tráfico* and we won't prefer anything but the situation before the occupation."<sup>117</sup>

While many describe the UPPs as a form of community policing, SESEG/RJ prefers the term "proximity policing." As Juliana Barroso, SESEG/RJ's Undersecretary for Training and Prevention Programs, describes it, proximity policing is like flirting, while community policing is more like marriage. Before a truly positive relationship built on trust can be formed, the UPPs need to start small, beginning to interact with favela dwellers and eventually normalizing these interactions.<sup>118</sup> The importance of minor interactions that slowly build and take place over time cannot be overstated. It's slow going; residents who have had overwhelmingly negative experiences with the police in the past view the new forces with suspicion. Two years after the UPP began operations in Cidade de Deus, Officer Luis Pizarro commented, "Nobody likes us here. It can be tough sometimes."<sup>119</sup>

## **CHALLENGES & RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Long-term Sustainability**

No matter how effective the UPPs prove themselves to be in individual communities, they will be unable to endure as a comprehensive, long-term program if there is a lack of political will to support and fund them. Considering the quick turnover rates of past state policies, particularly community policing initiatives, one has good reason to be skeptical of the sustainability of the UPP program. Firstly, there is the issue of funding. As it stands, the program derives a substantial amount of its funding from

PRONASCI. UPP officers receive individual monthly grants of R\$400 from PRONASCI, which makes up nearly a quarter of their total monthly payment and is a major incentive for new recruits who might otherwise think of joining the regular military police.<sup>120</sup> In 2012, PRONASCI's budget was slashed after Dilma Rousseff entered office.<sup>121</sup> This could have huge repercussions for programs all over the country that depend on PRONASCI funding, and the UPP program is most definitely one of them. The UPP initiative was designed to expand to new communities, and so it not only needs funds to sustain its current units but also to create new ones. A lack of federal funding would make it difficult to attract new officers. Existing officers who find that a large amount of their salary has suddenly disappeared are more susceptible to bribery and corruption, an already serious issue amongst Brazilian police that the UPP program is attempting to combat.

It is unlikely that Rio de Janeiro state will be able to fully make up for the lost funding from PRONASCI at this time. With mega events like the Olympics and the World Cup on the horizon, many public funds are being redirected in order to fund these events. Rio's state government contributed more than R\$6 million to fund Brazil's Olympic bid alone.<sup>122</sup> Much more will be needed to actually host this massive international event. Obtaining the funds necessary to compensate for PRONASCI's budget cuts is not impossible given the importance placed on maintaining a secure environment during mega events, but it is extremely unlikely. There are also concerns that once the World Cup and the Olympics are over and Rio is no longer subject to international scrutiny that goes hand in hand with playing host to these events, the UPP program will no longer be a priority for the state government. This is a rather cynical view, but one that points to a very important motive for either pushing or dropping the program—political will. Without sufficient political will to continue with the UPP program, particularly at the state level, it will be incredibly difficult for the program to achieve any real success. If the World Cup and the Olympics are indeed the causes for some of the existing support for the program, there is a danger of losing momentum once these events have finished.

The UPP program also depends on funding from private investors. These investors are composed mainly of companies that see the possibility of opening the favela market,



so to speak, through pacification. These investors have political power and want to see results.<sup>123</sup> This presents several problems for the sustainability of the UPP program. Firstly, it creates an incentive for program administrators to brush problems under the rug and make the program seem successful even if it is encountering serious issues, since funding depends largely in part on seeing positive results. Secondly, it is possible that once investors start to have some degree of access to favela markets, they will have achieved their goals and will pull their funding. If the UPP program is to be successful, it needs to be around for the long term, but this will not be possible without sufficient funding.

While funding concerns are quite serious and endanger the UPP initiative's sustainability, there is some cause for optimism when it comes to the political will behind this funding. The UPP program is widely regarded as the most successful in a long line of security policies aimed at the favelas. While it is certainly closely linked to Cabral and Beltrame, it has a better chance of continuing to receive necessary support and funding from future administrations due to strong public perception of its success. Unlike many past programs, such as the GPAE program, the UPP initiative has grown rapidly since its inception and enjoys a great deal of publicity. It is likely that public pressure to continue pacification will be high, and future successors to Cabral and Beltrame are extremely likely to support the program. The real question is whether or not the UPP program will get the funding, training, and support that it needs to be truly effective under a new administration.

### **UPPs and Favela Residents**

Establishing rapport and trust between UPP officers and members of the communities where they operate is the biggest challenge that the UPPs face on an operational level. UPPs are confronting an extremely negative police legacy in favelas. While they have the potential to overcome this legacy and establish themselves as a legitimate force, doing so will take a great deal of time, patience, and individual efforts and interactions to achieve. It is crucial to ensure that officers are committed to building this relationship and are not overstepping their mandate, engaging in practices of corruption, ignoring police procedure, or behaving in any other way that would sabotage

the fragile trust between community and UPP. Residents have reason to be suspicious of police forces entering their neighborhoods, as many have had overwhelmingly negative past experiences with the military police and particularly with BOPE. In an interview with Maria Helena Moreira Alves and José Valentin Palácios, one teacher recalled the atmosphere that prevailed in her unnamed favela when BOPE's tank, "the Big Skull", entered the community:

When it arrives, everyone is terrified. According to the students, they [the BOPE police inside the Big Skull speaking through loudspeakers] say terrible things regardless of who they're talking to. If it is a *bandido* or a community resident, it doesn't matter. They say, "I'm going to get you. I'm going to kill you. I'm going to take your soul." The children are terrified of the Big Skull...when they say, "Big Skull is here," it's the end of the world; they're panicking.<sup>124</sup>

This is but one recollection of BOPE; there are countless other stories of abuse and fear told by favela residents. Memories and feelings like these are not going to dissipate in a matter of hours. The fact that BOPE forces are a crucial part of the first phase of the pacification process makes it even more difficult to extricate UPP forces from the BOPE's legacy. It will be an arduous process for the UPPs to establish themselves as a legitimate force in the eyes of favela residents, but it is their most crucial task.

In terms of the pacification process itself, the first phases involving BOPE should be highly controlled and take place over as short of a time period as possible. This is absolutely not to suggest that BOPE should do a shoddy job at securing favela territory in order to meet a self-imposed deadline. The bottom line is always a secure and successful operation. However, BOPE operations in some favelas have stretched for months upon months, as tensions rise and the arrival of the UPP seems like a far-off hope. For example, BOPE initiated operations in Rocinha and Vidigal five months ago, and these communities are still currently occupied by BOPE. During this time, several officers were accused of taking bribes, one was killed in a shootout, and three were charged with rape.<sup>125</sup> José Martins de Oliveira, a resident of Rocinha, said:

We were so hopeful. Now it seems we've traded the guns of traffickers for the guns of police. These are official, so we can complain of abuses, and that's better. But in

the end it's not guns that are going to make things better and convince the people who live here: it's services, things like running water, sewage, and shoring up unstable hillsides that can slip when it rains. And those aren't here.<sup>126</sup>

Indeed, this sort of change would only be part of the program once a UPP is established in Rocinha, and it is unclear how much longer the community will have to wait before BOPE exits and an UPP begins operations.

UPPs have already made positive strides towards separating themselves from BOPE not only in form but also in substance. Training in human rights and community relations is an extremely positive step that should be supported by all security elements and continued. However, there are some key elements missing from the current UPP training program. According to research from the Brazilian NGO Centro de Criação de Imagem Popular (CICEP), UPP officers do regularly not receive training on how to deal with children and adolescents.<sup>127</sup> These are exactly the demographics that are most likely to be recruited by gangs in the favelas. CICEP's study does note that a few UPPs have received some training on working with children and teens, but it is essential that this training become formalized and standard for all units.

UPP officers are chosen immediately upon graduating from the police academy. This means that they are new to the police system and have no negative personal history within that system, such as corruption, brutality, personal grudges, or any other factor that could negatively impact their success in a pacification unit. This is an effective way to ensure that old pernicious practices do not carry over into the UPPs. However, it must be remembered that these new UPP officers have little or no on-the-ground experience. Regular evaluations and oversight, both of officers and commanders, are absolutely necessary. UPP commanders should encourage favela residents to share opinions freely, allowing them to anonymously report any incidents where they feel that UPP officers did not act responsibly to community leaders. Reporting through community leaders has several benefits. It establishes ties between existing community leadership and the UPPs, makes residents more comfortable reporting to someone they know and trust rather than directly to an officer, and helps ensure maximum anonymity to avoid any negative reprisals.

There are many other ways that UPPs can work to build trust within communities. Much of the negative legacy surrounding police in the favelas is due to a perceived (and very often quite real) tendency toward indiscriminate violence coupled with police impunity and lack of accountability. Ensuring that UPP officers are held accountable for their actions is crucial to building legitimacy with favela residents. Accountability goes hand-in-hand with transparency of UPP decisions, actions, and projects. Not only allowing but encouraging community input in these decisions will help UPP officers build relationships with residents. It's also important not to forget the importance of local knowledge and solutions. No one understands the way a community functions better than its long-time residents. If UPPs can build trust with these people, particularly with community leaders and existing civil society organizations, they will also be able to harness the power of their ideas and knowledge of the community's needs.

Once UPP officers go on the job, they work in a specific favela. This is positive because it means that they get to know one community very well rather than working amongst many groups without getting too familiar with any of them. However, it runs the risk of UPP isolation, that is, the possibility that individual pacification units will become overly inward-focused. It is important to actively foster communication and information sharing not only between UPP commanders, but also between the officers who do the vast majority of patrolling and have high contact with residents. Regular casual meet-ups between officers from different units should be established in order for officers to have an informal forum where they can share experiences, challenges, and best practices. Commanders should also regularly meet to discuss management issues and report on recent progress and issues within their UPP.

As the administrator of the UPP initiative, SESEG/RJ should look into training partnerships with other national and/or international community policing programs. The military police of São Paulo, for example, participated in an exchange program with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police that to share experiences with community policing methods and the participation of civil society in policy-making to control police violence. As a result of this exchange, São Paulo launched a statewide program to implement community policing strategies.<sup>128</sup> The military police in the state of Minas Gerais have a long-term exchange program with police in the state of Texas in the U.S. This program

has several goals, including increasing citizen participation and cooperation with police and improving police officers' conflict management skills.<sup>129</sup> Clearly, programs with this type of focus are promising possibilities for the UPP initiative.

### **Conclusions: The Big Picture**

The success and sustainability of the UPP program depends on the willingness to address an array of complex challenges that range from funding and police impunity to best practices and civil society involvement. This willingness must come from UPP commanders and officers, the Rio de Janeiro state government (in particular, SESEG/RJ), the federal government, and the private sector. It also heavily depends on the willingness of favela residents to accept the initiative into their communities. The UPPs have huge potential to bring positive change to favelas in the form of law and order, lowered crime and violence, and social and economic integration into the formal city. However, the UPP initiative was not designed to combat all of the deeper issues that caused these problems. It does address social inequality to some degree, but its main goal is establishing and enforcing law and order. Realities that fuel the gangs—domestic drug consumption, arms trafficking, and lack of economic opportunities—must also be addressed with gusto outside of the UPP program. If they are not, the UPPs will essentially be treading water, trying to treat the symptoms while the illness itself continues to fester.

Critics of the UPP program say that drug traffickers and gang members simply leave one community when the UPP comes and establish themselves in a different one. In April 2012, Beltrame admitted for the first time this is essentially true, saying that increased crime in Rio's peripheral zones, including Niterói, São Gonçalo, and Baixada Fluminense, is due largely in part to the effects of the UPP program.<sup>130</sup> While this effect is not a reason to reject the UPP program entirely, it does make a critical point: the UPPs cannot rid the favelas or the city of violence and crime on their own. UPP success does not equate to resolution of Brazil's security challenges or social ills. The UPP initiative is certainly a part of the puzzle, and a crucial one at that, but in the long run there are profound issues that must be dealt with in order to permanently dismantle gangs,

establish state presence and services in favelas, and combat the gaping wealth inequality in Rio de Janeiro.

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