

MARÉ

TESTIMONIES



ELIANA SOUSA SILVA

Reading through these *Maré Testimonies* means entering the universe of power relations in unknown Rio de Janeiro territories. Coming from an organic and anti-hegemonic intellectual perception and with her eyes set on local public security, Eliana Sousa e Silva reveals previously unaccessible aspects of the local ethos, allowing us to understand other nuances of the complex conflict management in urban territories dominated by armed violence.

I was proud to work as an advisor to this doctorate research at PUC-Rio, due to its accuracy and tenderness that make this a revolutionary text.

DENISE PINI ROSALEM DA FONSECA

MARÉ

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ELIANA SOUSA SILVA

TRANSLATION: SOFIA SOTER

MARÉ
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1ST EDITION



mórula
EDITORIAL

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Citizens riot because of the death of a child, Renan da Costa Ribeiro, in front of the 22nd Military Police Precinct on October 1st 2006 in the Nova Holanda favela, in Maré.

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*To Renan da Costa Ribeiro, a child who,
like so many other children in hundreds of
Rio de Janeiro's favelas, had his childhood
cut short by violence we cannot accept.*

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To Jailson, for our unlimited love.

To João Aleixo Silva, Rodrigo Luiz and Paula Pimenta, expressions of unconditional love.

To my parents, João and Maria Aleixo, my four sisters and my brother, for lighting up my life.

To my nieces and nephews, for the love and energy we share.

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To André Urani, *in memoriam*, for the privilege of sharing his dreams and projects.

To the public security officials I met in this attempt to understand the actions of the Military Police in the favelas. It was a happy surprise to see that there are people who, like me, also want to go beyond their comfort zones and find a political and existential meaning in what they chose to do with their lives.

To everyone who shares the dream of creating a better life for those who live in Maré, acting through Redes da Maré. Here's the proof of my gratitude to those who weave together this institution, partners in utopia, here and now.

To those who live in Maré, the reason for this work. Maré: where my life makes itself felt.

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Eliana Sousa Silva's book, *Maré Testimonies*, is important for many reasons. First of all, the most evident: it produces relevant knowledge about the multidimensional complexity of public security and its strategic challenge – the relation between criminal justice institutions, especially law enforcement, and the Brazilian society, especially subaltern classes; a challenge that, in this instance, presents itself in its most delicate and demanding form, since the communities that make up Maré have lived a dramatic experience of geopolitical division, stemming from the bellicose rivalry between three criminal factions involved in the drug and arms trade.

Many poor neighborhoods in Rio face recurrent and institutionalized police brutality, resulting in a real genocide (from 2003 to 2010, 8,708 people were reported dead by police violence in the state of Rio de Janeiro), but Maré has also suffered the effects of the despotic presence and the occasional conflicts between armed groups that have been organized around the drug trade, allied with corrupt police segments, in an environment fostered by a hypocrite and irrational drugs policy.

At this point, I allow myself to interrupt my train of thought to consider that maybe some will find the use of the word “genocide” to describe the (still) ongoing process in Rio a little over the top. In this case, I ask the critical reader to read my emphatic tone against the backdrop offered by the following words, quoted in this book. Turned into song, they were repeated for many years as a sort of mantra in officer training in the Special Operations Police Force (Batalhão de Operações Policiais Especiais) of Rio de Janeiro's Military Police (Polícia Militar), under the blessing of commands and governments and before an either indifferent or exulting public opinion:

“An interrogation’s really easy to start / just beat the favelado until it hurts / an interrogation is really easy to end / just beat the favelado until he dies / you don’t clean up with a broom / you clean up with grenades / with rifles and machine guns.”¹

Am I exaggerating? Or are we really talking about institutionalized barbaric violence supporting a genocide? Allow me, now, to come back to my train of thought.

Without losing from obstacles and risk, and going against violence, community socialization has been practiced with intense vitality, showing once again that the favela isn’t an unilaterally negative space, defined by lack, emptiness, need and incompleteness. It’s also a place for citizen creativity, in every area of human activity. This constructive social energy even manifests itself – as the author shows us – in organizing solutions to widely shared insecurity.

Therefore, the actions of armed factions and the regular police interventions don’t find a void, but the thickness of cultural and symbolic resistance and the density of social networks. The community throws itself at the demanding daily life, at the confrontations, at the unfortunate and terrifying visits of the Skull, at the inconsequential police operations, at the tyrant will of young dealers but also, thankfully, has moments of peace. Those who live in Maré don’t give in to skepticism and stillness. They persist: negotiating, mediating, reacting, anticipating, searching for the support of Rio’s society and of political representatives, beyond the neighborhood, to allow for the collective construction of alternative scenarios. The community acts unarmed, but gifted with the legitimate word, with the power of its multiple voices and with the force of popular organizations.

Still, it’s not idealized by the author as a single cohesive unit, beyond good and evil. Contradictions circle social life as in any territory, in any part of town. They also circle law enforcement and the drugs and arms trade. There are no simple and homogeneous realities in society. Therefore, generalizations won’t stand, neither the ones echoing accusations, nor the ones

¹ “O interrogatório é muito fácil de fazer / pega o favelado e dá porrada até doer / O interrogatório é muito fácil de acabar / pega o favelado e dá porrada até matar. Bandido favelado / não se varre com vassoura / se varre com granada / com fuzil, metralhador.”

stamped on crime statistics. Eliana Sousa Silva teaches us that the stories of social groups are distinctive, the territories keep their secrets, the political and institutional webs carry their own conflicts and should be analyzed in their specificity, without losing sight, however, of the broader contexts and of state and federal (and even transnational) conjunctions, in the heart of which the peculiarity of each path gains full meaning.

How, then, can public security be treated as if it was a object unattached to its time and to the marks of history? How can it be treated as if independent from politics and culture, from economy and social structures, from expectations and dreams, from values and beliefs, from the affection and resentment of the men and women who, everyday, build social relations? It can't, the author tells us. Not without paying a hefty price for being reductionist. A price that leads to a deficit in knowledge and to debt in prejudices.

That's why her study on public security and violence in Maré, or from the point of view Maré, is first and foremost a clear and sensitive investigation on the history of the community, on the expansion of democracy in poor neighborhoods, on popular associations and their pitfalls, on electoral tactics and anti-manipulation strategies, and on the relationship with the State as mediated by the forces of law and order, reframed as instruments of disorder by their practice.

The use of interviews and statements, participant observation and the exchanges with police officers, drug dealers and civilians are so important that it's featured in the title: "testimonies". I'd even dare suggest that this book, originally a PhD thesis, was actually written in the fashion of a long testimony of the author herself. Like literature's *Bildungsromans*, in the social sciences there are genealogical reports (explicitly or tacitly autobiographical) related to the author's coming of age as human subjects, scholars and citizens; yet, such stories can still be relevant portraits of more general aspects of society.

It's in this context that I place the work the reader has in their hands. And this is one more reason for the special importance I attribute to this book. Who else could be able to conduct a research listening to police officers, drug dealers and the people of a community where the two former groups tend to fight? Who could have the human authority and the social legitimacy to walk freely, deserving everyone's respect? Who could obtain

safe-conduct to cross war zones and borders separating enemy powers in the same territory? Who could gain enough trust to get precious testimonies, beyond the layer of (justified) fear? Who could overcome so bravely their own fear to walk among such different characters with poise?

There could only be one answer: someone who, as well as being a competent scholar, had lived all their life with these people, had grown up with their families, shared the pain and the pleasure of being part of the same. Someone who, by their actions through the decades, had shown, beyond all doubt, ethical rigor in the defense of their principles, complete loyalty to the community and unwavering openness to dialogue – balancing leadership and the humbleness of one who's part of a brotherland. Someone whose word was deserving of trust and was worth as much as strong currency, unquestionable to every group, every character and every quadrant. Someone whose personal and political paths had made history and, in telling their life and remembering what happened, would be writing the story of their city and their generation. Someone like Eliana Sousa Silva.

Eliana grew up in Maré. She was the first female president of a neighborhood association. She attended college, studied abroad, got a PhD, without ever leaving Maré behind. She dedicated herself to social, cultural and educational projects. She invested in the creation of free night schools to prepare for college admissions, so that others could also have the chance that destiny hadn't denied her. She led people in the fight for human rights and for change in the decades-old public security model – suspended or temporarily transformed for brief periods of time.

For all that and more, I believe we owe Eliana Sousa Silva much more than what could be said in a foreword. She gave us a beautiful book, valuable beyond the biographical itinerary of its author, and with a quality that shouldn't be attributed only to its origins. But beyond a notable book, valuable in and of itself, Eliana gave us an extraordinary example of transgressing patterns, prejudices and probabilities. An admirable example of citizen self-invention.

LUIZ EDUARDO SOARES
Anthropologist and writer

On elections, absurd deaths and new perspectives on violence in Maré

It was an intensely hot and sunny morning. Children played on the streets, running over political candidate flyers, distributed by canvassers and illegal campaigners. In the overpass above Avenida Brasil, a group of men and women handed people the flyers that were carried by the wind, as if a rain of democracy fell on the favela in this day, October 1st 2006, when another election for governor, senators and state and federal representatives happened around the country. According to the press, the electoral process went as planned by the electoral court, save a few hitches due to the particular realities of each state.

In the case of Rio de Janeiro, occasional incidents were reported in specific areas where the elections were taking place – especially in polling stations in favelas. In these areas, there is stronger law enforcement due to the alleged risk brought on by drug dealers or militias² faced by voters and those responsible for the election.

² At the time, there were four criminal groups ruling the local territories in Maré: three of them were involved in the drug trade – Comando Vermelho (CV), Terceiro Comando and Amigos Dos Amigos (ADA) –, and the fourth was a militia. In 2010, the ADA was thrown out by the Terceiro Comando, so only three groups remained. The militias are criminal groups composed by law enforcement officials, such as police officers, correctional officers and firemen. The criminals involved in the different militias that act on the favelas occupy the communities and control a series of economical activities, usually illegal or irregular, such as alternative transportation, clandestine cable TV, monopoly of specific products (such as natural gas), as well as charging protection rates. Militias allegedly offer security to the population in areas that used to be ruled by the drug trade, throwing out the drug lords and repressing drug use and dealing.

In the Maré favela complex,³ election days are always festive moments, whether because of the sheer amount of people on the streets campaigning, or because of the opportunity to see old friends and family who moved to other neighborhoods but still vote at the same polling station. Without a doubt, the atmosphere on election days in the poorer, more stigmatized, areas of the city is characterized by the happiness of group encounters and by the persistent hint of hope that the political process might bring them a better life.

In practical terms, the election is also seen as a special and positive moment because a lot of people find temporary employment in canvassing, even if they rarely believe in the candidate's proposals. In this specific territory, the electoral process is a very intense and agitated time, and its climax, the moment of ultimate celebration, is the first election, when voters go to the stations to choose their candidates.

For me, as someone who left Maré in 1995, election day is a personal civic ritual: I go back to the same polling station where I cast my first vote. I've never given up on this experience of coming back to my origins, and on the pleasure of feeling once more the intensity of living in this place, to which I'm still tethered by so many different personal bonds.

On October 1st 2006, however, the election meant something different for me. On this day, I watched a scene that moved me deeply and contributed decisively to the choice of theme for my PhD research, on which this book is based. A fact that wasn't deemed worthy of press attention became essential to me, because it triggered a new way of perceiving reality and allowed me to realize how I could contribute to another form of law enforcement in the favelas, as well as making me rethink the effects of the public security intervention that's been happening for a long time in these areas.

Like in every election, I was in front of my parents' old home, in Nova Holanda, the area of Maré where I lived for 28 years. The house is across the street from the public school where I studied as a kid, that serves as an important polling station on election days.

³ The officially denominated Maré neighborhood is in the Leopoldina region of Rio de Janeiro, constituted by 16 favelas formed in different moments and through different processes since the 1950s.

It was half past noon when two police SUVs abruptly showed up on the main street of Nova Holanda. Even though there didn't seem to be any problems around, the cars sped by, aimlessly shooting and burning rubber. People were gathered in the street: some of them talking, like me, some of them playing cards or having barbecues. Everyone got scared and ran for cover in nearby houses and stores.

I found cover in a drugstore and, from there, watched an awful scene: a three-year-old child, holding his grandmother's hand, was hit by a bullet in the stomach as police officers shot without seeing where they were aiming.

The grandmother, who was running for cover when she heard the shots, started screaming when she saw the child fall to the ground. Upon realizing the child had been shot, one of the officers stopped his car, got out, and, with no comment or explanation, picked up the child and ran back to the car to, as I came to know later, take him to a nearby hospital. The grandmother, who had started feeling unwell a little earlier, fainted and was cared for by neighbors who came to her aid.

After the police went away, a significant number of people who watched what had happened went to the streets, yelling about the absurdity of it all and asking for justice. It was an atmosphere of commotion as people faced the weight of that act of violence. A feeling of rebellion rose in the voices of those who were there, and the decision to go to the 22nd Precinct – the only police station inside a favela in Rio, ironically placed 300 meters from where the shooting occurred – to protest against what happened was unanimous.

People were clearly upset, and some were getting violent. Noticing the growing turmoil, I approached them and proposed going to the station, in an orderly fashion, to ask for justice and demand that those responsible were punished. As we discussed what to do, we received the news that the child, whose name was Renan, had died soon after getting to the hospital. Once again, people got angry, and there were screams, accusations and expletives. The tumult was overwhelming and we started crossing the two blocks that separated us from the station.

Our arrival was disastrously received, a clear example of how law enforcement, despite being the State's responsibility, is far from being a republican organization: a big gate at the back of the building was shut in our face.

The group's first intent was to speak to the chief to explain, clearly and objectively, what had happened, as an attempt to contribute to the verification of facts.

However, the chief took a long time to come to the gate, and more people kept arriving to protest. There were lots of insults all around: the people called the officers guarding the gate murderers; the officers looked at us with disgust and responded in kind, yelling, cursing and making rude remarks, especially directed to women. It was painful to wait for four hours in front of a police station and to feel so clearly the distance between the people of that community and the law enforcement officers.

As we waited to speak to the chief, we called professionals who worked in human rights organizations, such as Global Justice. After two of these experts arrived, we decided to form a commission and force our way into the station, since we hadn't received an answer regarding that possibility yet. Faced with the new scenario, the chief finally decided to come to the gate and welcome a group of people in his office.

The group was composed of me, chosen by the people because of my long history of activism, the human rights institution representatives we had called, and one of Renan's aunts. It was a very hard conversation due to the extremely defensive and guarded stance of the chief, who didn't hide his discomfort in talking to us.

Right off the bat, when we tried to explain what we watched as the police arrived in Nova Holanda, we were met with a rude and aggressive response. The chief defended the officers without considering what we had to say, claiming they were there because they had seen two gun-carrying drug dealers on a motorcycle at the place of the shooting.

Hearing this argument, the boy's aunt grew angry, emphatically declaring that that wasn't what had transpired. In the opinion of some of the people there, the officers attacked in retaliation for local dealers' refusal to comply with extortion, claiming they had already payed off another group of police officers not to be bothered that day.

What was most impressive to me was the chief's insistence in ignoring any version of the facts other than the one told by his officers. He had no interest in listening to the people in the area, to the people he allegedly ought to protect. It was evident he wasn't going to make any efforts to investigate the murder of a child, and that he saw the whole community as a threat.

Faced with these facts, we went back to the gate. The protesters got even angrier, and the cursing grew louder. After a few hours, the press arrived, deeply annoying the police officers. They tried to close the gate once more, but the protesters

wouldn't let them until they had gotten a clear position from the police. In that moment, there was some shoving. The officers threw tear gas bombs and shot into the air to disperse the crowd.

However, they didn't accomplish their goal, and were met with more violence: some people started throwing rocks and pieces of wood at the station. As it turned into a riot, we ran for cover behind parked cars. I couldn't help crying as I saw, disappointed, how such an expressive show of citizenship had been met with authoritarianism, violence and complete disregard for human beings. I was taken, then, by a sudden feeling of helplessness and disbelief, knowing that those actions weren't an isolated incident, but a typical expression of how law enforcement acts in the poorer parts of town.

The next day, every newspaper in town talked about the disturbance during election day in Maré. The versions of the story presented by the press were many, all of them trying to justify the absurd and unnecessary death of Renan. The news mostly repeated the official version of the police: an alleged confrontation between police and drug dealers. As we had suspected, the case was closed and nothing happened to the officers involved.

This situation impacted my mind, my eyes and my soul – and to this day it follows me and feeds me. Trying not to succumb to the brutality, my initial feelings of disappointment, pain and helplessness were replaced by the drive to understand the reasoning behind the violence in the favelas and to look for alternatives.

Through permanent dialogue between different subjects, from different places and walks of life, I believe we can construct in the present what the people of Nova Holanda asked for in the commotion following Renan's death: the end of police violence and a new public security policy based on the respect for the life of those who live in Rio's favelas. That's why, instead of demonizing the actions of law enforcement in the outskirts of town and in areas of affordable housing, I tried to get a better understanding of police intervention in Maré; in order to do that, I tried to create channels that would allow me to listen to the stories of law enforcement agents, as well as

of the people of Maré – among them drug dealers and militiamen, important agents in the representations that, in the war logic that intends to defeat an enemy, justify lethal incursions into these spaces.

Considering the broadness of points of view and interpretations, I believe it can be possible to create a space for dialogue with an array of authors who propose different theoretical and practical concepts, all of them regarding the realization of a new policy of citizen safety. I believe this is not only possible but necessary to a significant improvement in quality of life in the favelas and throughout the city.

The direction of my journey

At seven years old, I moved to Nova Holanda, one of the favelas in the Maré *neighborhood*.⁴ At the time, my life was restricted to going to school, to the Sagrada Família parish – the Catholic Church, into which I was raised, and a religion with which my parents are still greatly involved –, and to playing inside with my four sisters and my brother. My parents wouldn't let us play on the street: “where you only learn the things you shouldn't”, they said with the strictness of northeasterners who were raised according to very different rules than those seen in the favela. With the streets a forbidden space, my parents took us to the movies and to amusement parks when they could.

As a teenager, I started helping my parents in their store, a bodega at the corner of the main street and Sargento Silva Nunes. The store was the family's main source of income. At that point, my knowledge about the area where we lived was still very limited, and all my friends were from school or from church. In my life, there was no time to frequent neighbor's houses or other places in the community (nor would my parents allow it). Therefore, up until that moment, my experience in the favela was marked by clear limits around home, school and church, restricting my range of experiences and relationships to my family and to institutions. My reality as someone

⁴ The word *neighborhood*, when used to refer to Maré, will always show up in italics, due to the contradiction between the official use of the term and the social reading of this territory as a favela.

who lived in the favela was, in many ways, very different from that of most people, in particular teenagers, who experienced the rich possibilities of public space and popular culture in the favela.

I was aware of this difference, and it made me extremely curious about the experiences of my neighbors and school friends. I was especially moved by the question of violence, that was already very present in the daily life of the people of the favela, both in reality and in the collective imagination that was being created at the time. We lived across the street from a DPO (Destacamento de Policiamento Ostensivo), a Military Police detachment installed in a small building on main street to act on the favela. At the time, I saw many boys – and some girls – arrested and sometimes beaten up by the police. There was so much screaming and name-calling that sometimes we couldn't even sleep. However, back then, I didn't understand why people were being arrested, why they were assaulted, or why there was so much tension and disrespect between the people and the police.

Furthermore, I found it weird and somewhat appalling that many basic services weren't being provided in Nova Holanda, such as drinking water or waste disposal, as well as electricity, schools, preschools and entertainment areas. One of the only ways the State made itself known in the region was through police violence. However, in the instance of public security, the service that was provided to us was characterized by abuse of power, corruption and the violation of people's rights coming from part of those who represented the State.

I started getting involved in community projects from a young age. At first through the Catholic Church, then through other community organizations, such as the neighborhood associations and the Favela Federation (Federação de Favelas do Rio de Janeiro), or through extension projects linked to the health institution Fiocruz (Fundação Oswaldo Cruz). These practices allowed me to make direct contact with situations of extreme poverty and with the social problems inherent to life in Nova Holanda and other similar areas.

In 1984, right after turning 22, I ran for president of Nova Holanda's neighborhood association as part of the Pink Slate, a color that represented women's roles in the community and as a spearheading figure in local claims. It was an unforgettable electoral process: the first direct election in

the community, allowing people to fulfill their role as subjects of their own stories. Until then, the Lion XIII Foundation (Fundação Leão XIII), a branch of the state's Social Action Office (Secretaria da Ação Social), had been responsible for choosing the institution's directors.

The election was marked by massive participation of the people of the favela, and by the hope that many changes would follow, because people were trying to guarantee their rights through collective action. In this environment of hope, faith and joy, we won the election by a large margin of votes.

For the next eight years I was part of the neighborhood association, with a participation marked by strong popular mobilization. The process, inserted in the context of the country's democratization and of more openness to popular demands from state and municipal governments, accounted for the achievement of most of the basic services that are currently provided to Nova Holanda.

Even back then, violence and the social order of the favela were excluded from the public debate in local organizations. At most, there were occasional movements against extreme police brutality.

This experience with community activism was intense and determinant to my life. It was through it that I understood the complexity of my place, of the favelas and of the city as a whole. In this process, I saw myself, in the mid-90s, devoted to a new way of acting in Maré, considering not only the reality and the problems of Nova Holanda, but the whole group of 16 favelas, and working with what I define as second and third generation demands.⁵

⁵ First generation demands would have at its center the need for basic material needs such as water, electricity, paving, phone service, health and education. At the time, those demands still guided, in great measure, the actions and demands of the neighborhood association of Nova Holanda and of the rest of Maré. Second generation demands, on the other hand, can be defined as the access to broader, more sophisticated, better services in fields such as education, culture and well-being. In this case, it's all about expanding the options and improving the quality of public services and apparatus; increasing education levels until higher education; guaranteeing the access to foreign languages, computer sciences, and the knowledge needed to land more technically demanding jobs. Ultimately, third generation demands regard subjects' identities and subjectivities, such as the right to difference, in all its dimensions, and the fight for the right to dignity. This new agenda is defined by questions regarding gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, security, environment, and human rights in general.

In 1997, alongside a group of locals and ex-locals, I participated in the creation of a social organization called, at the time, CEASM (Maré Center of Studies and Solidarity Actions – Centro de Estudos e Ações Solidárias da Maré). As the president of the organization for ten years, I could develop a series of projects aiming to broaden existential possibilities, especially those of teenagers and young adults of Maré. Afterwards, I was part of the creation of another social organization, with the objective to act in the city, the Rio Favela Observatory (Observatório de Favelas do Rio de Janeiro). But the desire to act in a way that would create institutional structural changes in Maré was still strong in me. That's why, in 2007, we created the Maré Development Network (Redes de Desenvolvimento da Maré), Redes for short, the successor to the late CEASM.

In the process of intervening in local reality, we started to run into the question of violence more frequently. The confrontations between young drug dealers and police officers were common, so there was the permanent need to negotiate with both groups, as to avoid conflicts that would expose students and to restrain arbitrary actions, especially from the police force.

Because of that, it became clear to me that it wouldn't be possible to consider better life quality in the favela without trying to create new positions and propositions regarding violence, which became the main problem of Brazilian urban centers in the late 20th century, especially to the people who lived in favelas. To attain this goal, I needed to broaden my understanding of urban social reality and intervention to beyond the borders of Maré. With this desire and this objective, I built the study that took shape as this book.

A preliminary question in the proposed investigation was to understand how the knowledge and the experience I'd gained from my studies and social trajectory could contribute to the production of new perceptions and approaches to the social space of the favela and its population. This was necessary because I'd long been aware of the lack of academic investigations into the subject at hand written by people with similar trajectories to mine.

With this affirmation, I don't want to endorse purist and sectarian judgments, based on the assumption that only subjects of poor origins, as well as from other subaltern groups in the present social order, can speak or write about their practices. On the contrary, I understand the need for a plurality of points of view regarding the lives and practices in the social world, in all

its levels. This includes, necessarily, scholars from the favelas and from the outskirts of town. However, a subject's perspective on their world and social reality in these social spaces is still lacking in Rio's academia (the same could be said for Brazilian academia as a whole).

In this study, the attempt to intertwine my political and academic interests makes itself clear. In this tension, I develop a study marked by the choice – if I can, with such a rational word, name something so visceral – to act as an insider scholar in the social space of the favela. In other words, this is the work of someone who lives, analyzes, influences and is influenced by the territory and the theme of the study. I'm also legitimized as an author because of my path, my historical insertion in Maré and my objective and direct experience with violent practices and their solid effects in the locale, in the city, in my personal existence. This composite of experiences, reflections and analysis is what the reader will find in the book that's now in your hands.

Through the lens of personal experience, I attempted to develop reflections brought by the analysis of the context of law enforcement practices in Maré. In this work, I point out many questions that seem to be relevant to give proper dimension to the phenomenon of violence and public security. In the first place, a very important aspect of this study was the contact with police officers from the Maré precinct and with other subjects of armed violence in regions ruled by criminal organizations, such as drug dealers and militias.

Therefore, I could deal with the three central actors involved in the issue of violence in a new way, and better understand their actions – which doesn't mean, of course, that I justify them. In the interview process, I could also better understand the perceptions of my interviewees, whether they were civilians, armed criminals or police officers, which allowed me to humanize these characters and to deconstruct the demonized figures that were cemented in our brains after being circulated and reproduced by corporate media. In this way, it was possible to understand the structural aspect of the issue of violence, the suffering of all those involved and the limits of current public security strategies.

Meeting the drug powers in Maré

I can't remember the exact date, but the year I know for sure: 2001. I'll certainly always take with me the memories of what I experienced that day, memories that come back as if it had been yesterday. It was remarkable regarding my understanding of my limits and of factors such as fear and bravery in my day to day life. It was another one of those days when I worked in the social project I directed in Maré. Around 4 PM I was on the third floor of the office building, among papers and documents, catching my breath between meetings, with others who worked there.

The secretary called me on the intercom, her voice tinged by tension, asking me to come down, because a boy wanted to talk to me, and it had to be right then. Quite annoyed, because I had a lot of work to do, I went downstairs and found myself facing a young man carrying a rifle in one hand and a cellphone in the other. When I saw the boy standing by the door, I asked him to come inside to talk, because the kids who were taking classes we provided would find it weird to see an armed man standing in the lobby. When we got to a more private room, I asked him what he wanted.

He was agitated when he said:

"Listen, my friend wants to talk with you, ma'am. He asks you to close down the building, tell everyone there won't be more classes for the day, and around 8 we'll pick you up here. You can't leave until we get here, do you understand, ma'am?"

"But what's going on? What could I have done to close down the building? How do you think the students will take it? Who is this friend of yours? How can I speak to him to understand what's happening?", I asked.

At that point he called someone and an angry man picked up, yelling, cursing, and barely allowing me to speak. I asked what was going on and, rudely, he replied that I would find out in our meeting later. He mentioned another of the institute's directors, asking where he was. I said he was in Maré at the moment. He insisted that I couldn't leave the building, and that I should wait for someone to pick me up. I replied that I understood and would stay there until I was picked up. Leaving the building, the messenger looked at me and said:

“Stay calm, everything will be cleared up.”

Actually, he saw how nervous I was, not understanding what was happening. When he left, many people who were inside the building came to ask me what had happened. There was some confusion when I had to explain I didn't know what could have prompted that attitude coming from those involved in the drug trade.

Anyway, I asked the secretary to put up a sign on the door, explaining we would hold no classes in the evening due to electricity problems. I called the other directors, explained what had happened and asked if they could guess the reasons for it, but no one could tell: they were as shocked as I was with the situation. I asked the director mentioned by name in the exchange not to come to the office, as it could make everything more dangerous, considering we had no information whatsoever about the risks. I argued that his presence could aggravate the dealers and that the situation would be easier to handle with less people involved.

*We were all very nervous, because we knew what the so-called *desenrolo*, the “untangling”, meant – a situation when a conflict needs to be resolved or someone needs to explain something to the drug lords. Often, those encounters ended in death. In our case, beyond these risks, we were also afraid measures would be taken against the institution, based in Maré. Although I'd talked to people involved in the drug trade many times, due to my work in Maré, that situation was completely different: it seemed a lot more threatening. I was overcome by tension, waiting for what felt like days.*

At the prearranged time, a boy arrived, telling me we would meet his friend between the favelas of Nova Maré and Baixa do Sapateiro. When he told me I would have to walk there with him, the students, teachers and directors who had remained in the building questioned the order, claiming they wouldn't let me go alone. They came closer and we all started to walk, calling attention to ourselves, because we were a group of at least 15 people.

*Arriving at the square *Praça do Dezoito*, a woman who was waiting for us let her superiors know we had arrived at the meeting place. Ten minutes later, a car arrived. A boy called my name from inside the car, telling me to come in, but the people who were with me held my arms, saying “No, she's not leaving here alone. What's going on? Who wants to speak to her? Who is this friend you're talking about?”. That's when the boy who had come to call on me earlier in the afternoon replied: “Don't worry, my friend just wants to talk to her and ask a few questions.”*

The people who were there with me once again said I wouldn't leave alone. I suggested they called their friend and asked if another director could come with me. The request was accepted, and I was joined by another director in the car, on our way to the meeting.

We drove around the Nova Maré favela for a while, probably so we wouldn't know the way to the meeting. If you asked me to retrace our way there, I wouldn't be able to. The car stopped in front of a house I also can't remember clearly and probably wouldn't be able to recognize. Nova Maré is a housing complex built by the government, so all the houses look the same, and the addresses are very confusing; the streets are contiguous and the houses are lined up wall to wall.

Many young men with guns stood in front of the house. We got off the car and, going in, I was shocked to realize that the person who wanted to talk to me had broken in that house so we could meet. When I crossed the living room, I was embarrassed to see a woman breastfeeding a baby, three small kids around her, and her husband watching television. We went upstairs, to the bedrooms. In one of them, the drug lord of one of Maré's favelas asked the other director to leave.

"My deal's with her, please go outside and wait for us to finish talking."

The director got very nervous and tried to argue, asking what I had done that wouldn't allow him to be there. The dealer insisted. At that point, I looked at the director and said:

"It's ok, you can go. Right now we just need to know what's going on."

When the director left, the dealer asked me to sit on one of the beds, and he sat on the other, across from me. He then got a file full of newspaper clippings and government spreadsheets with budgets of some of the projects the institution had been developing with neighborhood associations. I was surprised to see them in his possession.

He started interrogating me:

"How much do you get from the government for these projects? Why aren't the neighborhood associations getting a share that should be theirs? Why are you working on this project? Where exactly are you from, here in Maré? Why are you working around here? Who is the director who said this in the newspaper?" He asked me more than five questions at once.

I began, then, by saying where I was from. I explained that it didn't matter, that all the favelas in Maré went through the same problems and that the institution was to help everyone who lived in Maré, not any specific region. I told him who was the other director, and what he did. I talked about the statement in the newspaper, explaining

that it was misinterpreted, because there was no problem with what he said. At that point, he got angry and cursed the director.

Regarding the budgets, I told him that, had I known he wanted to see what we'd been doing with the money, I would have brought him a file with the documents proving we hadn't been misusing our resources. I also said I was impressed that he'd had access to documents regarding the partnership between an institution and the government.

I talked nonstop, him asking questions and me answering immediately. He asked me what was our budget for some upcoming projects. I gave him exact values. I also explained the reasoning behind the projects, and talked about the educational projects we were developing in Maré.

At one point, as we talked about education, he interrupted me to say:

"Ma'am, you think I'm in this life because I want to. No, I do it because I didn't have the opportunity to study." I replied: "We work so that the children of Maré don't have to go into this just because they didn't have better opportunities". Once again, he was incisive: "Did you see the family downstairs?", he said, referring to the family that lived there, "That's the reality of people around here". Once more I insisted that the work we did in Maré was exactly to fight the inequality he was pointing out.

At that point, our meeting had already gone on for more than two and a half hours, and we kept circling back to the same subjects. I realized that his tone, originally arrogant and aggressive, had been replaced by a more respectful conversation, with more understanding between us regarding what was being discussed.

I looked at him, saying:

"Listen, you called me here, asked me a lot of questions, questioned my work at the institution, where I come from and what I do. So I'd like you to tell me exactly what you want and why you asked me to come here, to close down the institution and shut down operations for the day. You know this is all very serious and that people out there are worried about what could happen to me, locked in here with you for this long. Please, tell me what you want. I need you to tell me, because I need to understand it to make a decision."

He turned to me. "You are very brave to talk to me like that." Immediately, I replied: "I mean no disrespect, but I have my principles, my ways, and the only thing I don't want right now is to mislead you about my intentions and my thoughts." And then him: "What I want to ask you is that you be more understanding with local

organizations. I was told you'd agreed to pay 300 bucks a month to use the space you're using for your educational projects, and it's been ten months since they last received this payment. But you keep using the space for your projects."

Only then did I understand what was going on and how he'd gotten his hands on those documents. In 2001, César Maia had started his second term as Rio de Janeiro's mayor and, in January, had suspended all contracts signed by his predecessor, Luiz Paulo Conde. His argument, at the time, was that he'd revise all partnerships to choose which programs would continue. But it had been ten months since, and the projects involving my institution hadn't received any money from the mayor's office. That's why we couldn't pay the local institutions until the mayor decided what to do, and that only ended up happening a month after that meeting.

I explained all of this to him and also said that the people from those organizations that came to him should have talked to me directly to understand why we'd kept on doing the projects. What happened was that we talked to the people who taught the classes and asked them to wait for the money from the mayor's office, to be paid when the project got its financing, because it would be awful for the students to go so long without classes. All the teachers agreed, because that wasn't their main source of income. That way, we were able to honor our commitment to our students in spite of the problems in the power succession in city government.

At the end of what I said, he remained emphatic:

"You have to understand, ma'am, that you need to help your friends. So-and-so is in jail and we need to help him from the outside. We need everyone to help us." I got nervous and changed my tone, telling him: "Listen, I'm being very honest with you. I want to know if you are really asking me to use the project's funds for something other than what they were intended. Is that what you're asking?" He said: "No, ma'am, that's just your interpretation."

I said I could never do that, because I was very critical of those who misused social project resources. If that was what he asked, I would resign from my station at the organization and he didn't need to worry, because I wouldn't tell anyone what he asked me to do."

"I'm not asking you to do anything, ma'am. I mean, how many people do you help through your institution?", he replied. "Around three thousand children and teens", I answered.

Then he said: "Yeah, so, consider that each of them has a family of around five

people; you already have fifteen thousand people. Just think of how many people will be upset if they knew you were closing down the project. I don't want to harm the community. I just want to ask you to be more attentive to my friends who run local organizations, and to allow us to keep track of what goes on."

As it was past 11 PM, I told him: "It's already quite late, I have to go. We've been talking for over three hours. The people who came here with me must be worried, and my family must think the worst has happened. Can I go?" He said: "Ok, but don't forget to be nice to the people I mentioned."

I left in shock. I didn't want to talk to anyone. I couldn't repeat what I'd heard or felt. It seemed I was waking up from a nightmare. When I met the other director, who waited for me outside the house, I couldn't say a word. We went back to Praça do Dezoito, where those who had walked with us there were waiting, and they said they didn't know what else to do or how to look for us. Some of us went to a diner nearby, and there I made an effort to tell everyone what had happened. I admit it was hard to repeat the conversation. I only spoke superficially about some precautions we should take from then on.

When I got home, I had to tell my family what had happened and everyone's worry only grew stronger with everything I said. I couldn't sleep, thinking about the danger I'd been put through. Only hours after the meeting was I taken over by fear. I was paralyzed, confused, perplexed and hypersensitive. I started fearing walking through my usual routes in Maré. I can definitely state that I've been a different person since that day.

This whole thing had messed pretty deeply with my feelings. I decided to start going to therapy, because I wasn't comfortable talking about it with my peers. I understood I needed professional help. That's what helped me to deal with the situation, to continue working in this area and to defend what I believe.

Regarding the interference of those who were involved in the drug trade in the area I worked at – today, there are entirely different people in the trade –, there was, initially, an attempt to impose new rules on the institution, with the participation of outsiders. We discussed it, listened and, with time – exactly due to the frequent changes in power in the drug trade –, we convinced them that this whole story was nothing but a misunderstanding, and that we had always worked ethically, fulfilling our commitments and only committing to things that agreed with our values.

In a personal level, my way of facing the ghosts of that traumatic experience was to affirm the need to talk about violence in the favelas and to try my best to fight against it. In that sense, this book is also, in some measure, a result of that pain.



COMMUNITIES IN THE MARÉ NEIGHBORHOOD

- 01_CONJUNTO ESPERANÇA
- 02_VILA DO JOÃO
- 03_CONJUNTO PINHEIROS
- 04_VILA DOS PINHEIROS
E PARQUE ECOLÓGICO
- 05_SALSA E MERENGUE
- 06_BENTO RIBEIRO DANTAS
- 07_MORRO DO TIMBAU
- 08_BAIXA DO SAPATEIRO
- 09_NOVA MARÉ
- 10_PARQUE MARÉ
- 11_NOVA HOLANDA
- 12_PARQUE RUBENS VAZ
- 13_PARQUE UNIÃO
- 14_ROQUETE PINTO
- 15_PRAIA DE RAMOS

The starting points for my thoughts on life in Maré were my life and my choices. I learned theory, politics and ethics through critical references to the established social order: its economical and social hierarchies; the weight of social, economical and cultural goods as a measure of people's values; the violence suffered by the vulnerable population.

Thinking about it made me consider numerous binaries: local and global; particular and generic; immediate and mediate; conscience and alienation; philosophical and non-philosophical; consumerism and production, etc.

It all led me to the need to better understand the meaning of actions, practices and (re)production and ordering of the social world, especially those that happened in my history. After all, the goal of this book is to interfere, in some measure, on the practices acted upon in popular spaces, whether they are developed by the State – such as law enforcement – or lived by the people – especially those that can expand the possibilities of citizenship. In order to achieve that, the real challenge is to value the dimension of routine actions in the construction of structural historical processes, understanding its links.

Daily life as a field of study gained traction in philosophical, historical and anthropological thought in the second half of the 20th century, even though Henri Lefèbvre had shown interest in the subject as early as 1946.⁶ It becomes especially significant, initially, to marxists who critiqued stalinism.⁷ Their aim was to value individual human action in daily practice and its impact in global history, as well as to understand the links between routine actions and utopia. For the french philosopher, daily life is humble and solid, works by itself, and is formed by parts and fragments linked in time employment. It is, therefore, that which has no date. It's (apparently) insignificant; it occupies and preoccupies, yet can be left unsaid. Daily life is both

⁶ Henri Lefèbvre published the first volume of *Critique de la vie cotidienne* in 1946. Cf. Lefèbvre, 1991.

⁷ Although Lefèbvre is part of this school of thought, its most important author in terms of writing about daily life was Agnes Heller. She was one of the main names of the Budapest School – a Georg Lukács initiative consisting of a group of hungarian marxists dedicated to the defense of the emancipatory, active and historical aspects of marxism, especially focused on the works of young Marx. In her more mature writing, she rejects her previous school of thought and some of her own early works.

the residue and the product of social assembly. It's a space for balance, but also the space where threatening unbalance is manifested. It's when people in such a society can no longer live their everyday lives, and only then, that a revolution starts. While the everyday life is guaranteed, old patterns can be reconstituted.

In his analysis of modern daily life, Lefèbvre considers the start of the everyday life as the moment when work, in a capitalist logic of production, degraded style and party – leisure. The materialization of an individual's originality and productive potential is replaced by a reproductive alienated act of consumerism. Therefore,

“Until the 19th century, until competitive capitalism, until this “merchandise world”, there was no everyday. There was style in the heart of misery and (direct) oppression. In the past, there were more oeuvres than products. The oeuvre is almost gone, replaced by the (commercial) product, while exploration replaced violent oppression. Style gave sense to even the slightest objects, acts and activities, to gesture, a non-abstract (cultural) sense, taken straight from symbolism.”⁸ (Lefèbvre, 1991, p. 45)

In this case, he concludes, we could only think about revolution as the rupture of the everyday and the restitution of fun, the establishment of a relationship between subject and reality, where its condition as an original producer, not just a reproducer of the consumerism spectacle, can be affirmed.

⁸ Translated from the Brazilian edition. “Até o século XIX, até o capitalismo de concorrência, até o desdobramento desse ‘mundo de mercadoria’, não tinha chegado o reino da cotidianidade. Houve estilo no seio da miséria e da opressão (direta). Durante os períodos passados, houve obras mais que produtos. A obra quase desapareceu, substituída pelo produto (comercializado), enquanto a exploração substituiu a opressão violenta. O estilo conferia um sentido aos mínimos objetos, aos atos e atividades, aos gestos, um sentido sensível e não abstrato (cultural) tirado diretamente de um simbolismo.”

*“Who am I to sing you, favela, / that sings in me and to no one
all of Friday night / and all of Saturday night / that doesn’t
know us, as we don’t know you? I only know your smell: it
came to me, vibrating, / straight, fast, nasal telegram / fore-
telling death... better, your life. I memorize your names. They
/ gush from the flood among debris / from the great January
1966 rain / in consecutive nights and days and nightmares.
[...] I feel, when I remember, these peeled sores on the left leg
/ Portão Vermelho, Tucano, Morro do Nheco, / Sacopão, Cabritos,
Guararapes, Barreira do Vasco, / Catacumba catacomb
stentorian in the past, / and Urubus come and Esqueleto too,
/ Tabajaras bangs war drums, / Cantagalo and Pavão lofty in
their misery, / juicy Mangueira dripping with samba stock, /
Sacramento... Wake up, Caracol. / Beware, Pretos Forros! [...]”*

[CARLOS DRUMMOND DE ANDRADE, “FAVELÁRIO NACIONAL”]⁹

⁹ Translated from the Portuguese. “[...] Quem sou eu para te cantar, favela, / que cantas em mim e para ninguém a noite inteira de sexta / e a noite inteira de sábado / e nos desconhecemos, como igualmente não te conhecemos? Sei apenas do teu mau cheiro: baixou a mim, na vibração, / direto, rápido, telegrama nasal / anunciando morte... melhor, tua vida. Decoro teus nomes. Eles / jorram na enxurrada entre detritos / da grande chuva de janeiro de 1966 / em noites e dias e pesadelos consecutivos. [...] Sinto, de lembrar, essas feridas descascadas na perna esquerda / chamadas Portão Vermelho, Tucano, Morro do Nheco, / Sacopã, Cabritos, Guararapes, Barreira do Vasco, / Catacumba catacumbal tonitruante no passado, / e vem logo Urubus e vem logo Esqueleto, / Tabajaras estronda tambores de guerra, / Cantagalo e Pavão soberbos na miséria, / a succulenta Mangueira escorrendo caldo de samba, / Sacramento... Acorda, Caracol. / Atenção, Pretos Forros! [...]”

Maré: everyday in construction

The Maré *neighborhood* is a concrete expression of the limits of traditional representation of favelas and the need to create new interpretations on these complex territories, taking into account their plurality as well as their everyday life and material structure.

Solidarity, happiness, fun, violence, disorder, lack and crime are frequently used terms when describing favela life, depending on the social group, ideological perspective and/or living space where the representation discourse is created. All these elements are different throughout favelas in town, including Maré.

Maré is composed by 16 favelas with a population of about 140 thousand people, spread out from Caju to Ramos through Avenida Brasil, the street that connects Downtown and the outskirts of the West Zone of Rio de Janeiro. Its origin dates back to a long process of urban changes, especially in the second half of the 20th century. These transformations happened mainly due to more industrial activity in town and to big infrastructure constructions, which led to the arrival of many people from the northeast of the country searching for a better life. The construction of Avenida Brasil, the longest street in the whole city, started in 1939 and was one of the main factors contributing to the creation of Maré. When the avenue was opened to all in 1946, many of the construction workers who had been working there ended up settling nearby.

Until the early 80s, Maré was composed of only six favelas: Parque Maré, Baixa do Sapateiro and Morro do Timbau (from the 40s), Parque Rubens Vaz and Parque União (from the 50s) and Nova Holanda (created by the government in the early 60s). After the implementation of Projeto Rio, in 1979, the region underwent a deep transformation.

Developed in the late stages of the military dictatorship, the urban intervention initiative predicted the removal of some favelas, transferring the people to government-built housing complexes, and the urbanization of remaining communities, as well as sanitizing the region around the Guanabara Bay. The high degree of authoritarianism in the definition and implementation of the actions was heavily criticized and met with resistance from local community groups, which led to the idea of removal being dropped

and replaced with the main proposition of popular representations: the eradication of the stilt houses (wood sheds suspended over water) that surrounded the favelas, and the relocation of its inhabitants to other nearby communities.

The stilt houses were, during a characteristic period of the history of the favelas, an emblem of the poverty and awful conditions of a significant portion of the people of Maré.

The song “Alagados”, by Brazilian ska group Paralamas do Sucesso, represented that time, giving some idea of the drama lived by the people who, here or elsewhere in Brazil or in the “favela planet”,¹⁰ as defined by Mike Davis, had to live with the absence of state and with all their basic rights, such as drinkable water, sewage systems or safe housing, being denied.

*“Everyday the morning Sun / comes and dares them / brings
down from dreams / those who didn’t want to / stilts, wares and
rags / sons of the same agony / and the city, with open arms /
in a postcard / with closed fists in real life / denies opportuni-
ties / shows the hard face of evil.*

*Alagados, Trenchtown, Maré / hope doesn’t come from the sea
/ but from TV / the art of living of faith / we just don’t know what
the faith is in / the art of living of faith / we just don’t know what
the faith is in.”¹¹*

¹⁰ Cf. DAVIS, M. (2006).

¹¹ “Alagados” is a song written by Bi Ribeiro, João Barone and Herbert Vianna, the three members of the band Paralamas do Sucesso, for *Selvagem?*, the group’s third álbum, originally released in 1986 by EMI Records. Translated from the Portuguese: “Todo dia o sol da manhã / Vem e lhes desafia / Traz do sonho pro mundo / Quem já não o queria / Palafitas, trapiches, farrapos / Filhos da mesma agonia / E a cidade que tem braços abertos / Num cartão postal / Com os punhos fechados na vida real / Lhe nega oportunidades / Mostra a face dura do mal. Alagados, Trenchtown, Favela da Maré / A esperança não vem do mar / Vem das antenas de TV / A arte de viver da fé / Só não se sabe fé em quê / A arte de viver da fé / Só não se sabe fé em quê.”

When the stilt houses were removed, in the early 80s, the people who lived there were transferred to new housing, creating Vila do João, Vila dos Pinheiros, Conjunto Esperança and Conjunto Pinheiros, rounding up the number of favelas in Maré to ten.

When Projeto Rio was being implemented, there was in Maré some resistance from independent groups from the six favelas, who were critical of the traditional local neighborhood associations, seen as complying to government demands, getting specific advantages in order to support official initiatives. Those initiatives were generally centered in the perception of favelas as a problem to be eliminated, understanding their people as unprepared to exercise citizenship. Thus, the proposed actions usually disregarded the people's real interest or participation.

In 1988, the 30th Administrative Region was created, covering the right side of Avenida Brasil. Maré then became a space constituted by areas previously belonging to Manguinhos, Bonsucesso, Ramos and Penha. In addition to the previously mentioned ten favelas, Marcílio Dias, originally belonging to Penha, and Praia de Ramos and Roquete Pinto, originally belonging to Ramos, also officially became part of Maré.

In the early 90s, two other locations were erected by the Municipal Housing Office, through the project Morar sem Risco: Nova Maré and Conjunto Bento Ribeiro Dantas – called Casinhas by those who live there. People removed from risk areas (such as slopes), homeless people and people who still lived in stilt houses in Roquete Pinto were all transferred to the new housing complexes.

In 1994, then-mayor César Maia formally created the Maré *neighborhood*. The idea was to politically recognize that Maré was urbanized and properly equipped with public services, as any other neighborhood in the city. This formalization, made from the top down – as protested by a woman who lived in Marcílio Dias –, generated a feeling of estrangement in a significant part of the people of Maré: they didn't realize, in their daily lives, any changes regarding their territory now being identified as a neighborhood:

"I don't consider myself a person who lives in Maré. My community is Marcílio Dias. I run all my errands in Penha, across from Avenida Brasil. Why do I have to go to Maré now, if it's so far from us?" [ANTONIA, 2009]

In 2000, one last housing complex was built in Maré, Salsa e Merengue. As usual, people who didn't live nearby were transferred there. Since then, Maré has reunited the 16 favelas that, until now, constitute the *neighborhood*. However, it still grows: clusters such as Nova Esperança, Kinder Ovo, Sem Terra and Mandacaru grew recently around other favelas, and are still expanding.

The constitution process of the Maré favelas reveals impressive data: out of 16 communities, nine were built by the state – Ramos and Nova Holanda and housing complexes Vila do João, Pinheiros, Esperança, Vila Pinheiros, Bento Ribeiro Dantas, Nova Maré and Salsa e Merengue. Another organized community, Parque União, was created by an initiative of Communist Party activists in the early 50s. They organized the area and sold plots of land for cheap. The other communities grew more spontaneously.

All of this reveals the failure of housing policies of successive Rio governments, that had as their central goal the "eradication" of favelas. What happened instead was the transformation of so-called "housing complexes" in favelas, at least in terms of social representation and understanding. However, this isn't exclusive to Maré – Cidade de Deus, Vila Kennedy, Vila Aliança, Quitungo and Guaporé, the first housing complexes, built during the 60s and early 70s, are all considered favelas.

With demographics that would qualify it as a mid-sized city in Brasil, Maré received, throughout the years, various public services and equipments: good electricity and water supply, clean streets, waste management, paved streets, universal phone service (including broadband internet¹²), 16 elementary schools and two high schools, numerous pre-schools, seven healthcare centers, one Urban Cleaning Company (Companhia de Lipeza Urbana, also known as Comlurb) center, one Water and Sewer Company

¹² Provided by Velox, the broadband branch of phone company Oi, the biggest in Rio de Janeiro.

(Companhia de Águas e Esgoto, also known as Cedae) center, the 30th Administrative Region, one Community Citizen Center (CCDC, short for Centro Comunitário de Defesa da Cidadania), one Cultural Tent (Lona Cultural), one First Aid Station (UPA, short for Unidade de Pronto Atendimento), two simplified Lion XIII Foundation centers and the Maré Olympic Village (Vila Olímpica da Maré).

Even though it has diverse urban services, Maré is still lacking in high schools – the two that already exist aren't enough – and in public cultural equipment. The existence of public services in Maré is historically explained by the investments made by Projeto Rio, in the late 70s, and by the extensive efforts of local community organizations since the 80s.

Whether they match the needs of the local population or not, the existence of these public services shows there was considerable state investments in the well-being of the people. It contributed to break the general stereotype of total state absence in favelas, as well as the representation of the favela as a “place of lack” (Silva & Barbosa, 2005). Ever since the country's democratization, the differences between favelas and formal neighborhoods are seen in other aspects, not necessarily the offer of specific public social services.

However, the existence of public services by itself can't guarantee that the population will be cared for: in Maré, in general, waste management services are precarious in both maintenance and quality. When it comes to public squares, schools, the Olympic Village and the Cultural Tent, maintenance and upgrades are frequently interrupted – which led to the closing down of some of those spaces in 2009, for example. Institutional spaces such as the Administrative Region and the Community Citizen Center fall short in their institutional purposes – especially because its directors aren't technically trained, and only appointed due to their political affiliations.

There is, however, a curious fact to be observed in these communities: the people's awareness that, even though there are public services at work in the region, the life quality in Maré hasn't shown significant improvement, and the negative stereotypical representations of those who live there are still very much alive. Certainly, this is one of the reasons why the people of Maré haven't accepted the idea and the status of neighborhood, as said by a man from Baixa do Sapateiro:

"I've lived in Baixa do Sapateiro for 30 years. Here, I raised my three kids. I saw a lot of things change and we fought a lot to have all we have over here. I don't say I live in Maré, but in Baixa do Sapateiro, in Bonsucesso. This is still a favela, even though it's been improved. But I think living here was better before a lot of what we have now, because there wasn't all that violence and the people could feel free on the streets."

[MR. MANOEL, 2008]

The daily rhythm

In Maré's daily life, strong elements are felt immediately: the strong smell coming from side streets due to precarious waste management; the constant noise, especially funk or forró music; main streets occupied by tents, selling a wide range of products; many shops, especially small ones, including many liquor stores; motorcycles, bikes and vans fighting for space in the streets among people of all ages, especially children, teens and women – permanent presences in the streets, all day, every day, especially at night and on weekends.

The strong presence of people in the streets is the most impressive element for those who first step foot in a favela like Maré; at night, while middle class neighborhoods' streets are empty, everyone locked inside their houses and apartments surrounded by fences, the favela is lively, stores open, bars full.

The movement in the streets isn't explained by what's expected at first sight: houses would be inhabitable because too many people would live in them. Actually, the average of people in each house in Maré (3,45) is similar to the city average. Factors such as poor housing quality and the small size of rooms contribute a little more to people being outside. Other social factors also contribute: high unemployment rates, especially among teens – many of them don't study either; high concentration of entertainment and shopping activities inside the favela; little circulation in other areas of town, among others.

Eroticism is very present in that process, especially in Nova Holanda, where black people from Rio and usually biracial descendents from north-east migrants share their sapce. Girls wear very short clothes from a very young age, and usually start their sexual experiences very early, which leads many of them to teenage pregnancy.

The interest in entertainment is high among local population, especially among young people. Therefore, there's an expressive offer of bars, internet cafés, DVD rental stores and street parties.

In the mid-90s, funk parties, the so-called *bailes funk*, were forbidden, generating serious impact in Maré. In the first place, the decision destroyed an economic activity that provided jobs, income and social standing for thousands of young people from the favelas. The criminalization of the music genre also led that criminal organizations, especially those involved in the drug trade, took hold of the parties. This process led strength to the *proibidão* ("forbidden") – a sub-genre of funk, featuring lyrics glamorizing the drug trade –, to the discrimination suffered by teens who followed that style, to violence and confrontation between dealers and the police (that tries to shut down the parties), and made difficult the practice of one of the most important entertainment activities in the favelas.

Social groups in Maré are varied and aren't directly linked. Those who frequent the numerous local churches, both neo-charismatic and catholic, aren't usually involved with samba or funk, even if they have friends or family members who are. Afro-Brazilian religions were practically extinct in Maré, mainly due to growing demographic density, which made it more difficult to keep up ritual practices, because they often took all night; adding to that the pressure of neo-charismatic churches who identified Afro-Brazilian religions as an enemy, most places of worship were transferred to more peripheral areas.

Teens and adults who use drugs are clearly identified as "potheads" and considered to be involved with the drug trade, even if they aren't directly involved in the criminal organizations. The number of people involved in activities promoted by community organizations or NGOs is relatively small, but still expressive in absolute terms.

Most people in the favela use their leisure time to drink beer, play soccer or have barbecues with friends and family. Home improvement used to be

very common, mainly on weekends; the ritual of *bater laje* – get friends and family together to finish off the rooftop, and celebrate with a festive lunch – is a very valued tradition, but has lost its strength recently, because most houses in Maré have reached the safe height limit (four stories) for the terrain.

The legitimacy of social groups and local institutions goes beyond direct links between friends and family. It's present even in real estate regulations. Most of the people in Maré, as in other favelas, own their own property, but don't have a definitive deed. That doesn't stop the existence of a strong real estate market, with property sales and rental, that has been growing in the last few years.

In 1990, I bought a house in Maré: a woman had just died and I bought the house from her son and only heir. We went to the neighborhood association, recorded the transaction and paid a set transactional fee. We also wrote and signed a sales contract, and the sale was completed – less than one month after the death of its original owner. When I sold the house, I did it the same way. It's worth noting that I hadn't previously known the person I was buying the house from, or the one who bought it from me.

The increase in property value in Maré, as well as in Rocinha – traditionally better known in the media –, is a result of diminishing spaces for popular occupation in central areas of Rio. As a consequence, better known favelas undergo an intense verticalization process, building more and more, and face an accelerated economical growth, attracting new entrepreneurs and new people to live there.

Construction work, usually done by the owners, is done against public official regulations. There are almost never licenses for construction or renovation, and there aren't responsible architects or engineers. Still, there are rarely problems, due to the experience of the bricklayers and contractors involved in the construction.

The strong presence of the favelas in the city, the growing intolerance of the upper and middle class regarding the favelas, and municipal governments that, since 1993, take authoritarian stances on the city's public space all bring into focus two controversial issues when it comes to the daily experiences of those who live in favelas: the private occupation of public spaces and the neglect to pay for services such as water, electricity, waste management and housing taxes.

The occupation of public spaces is usually authorized by the drug lords or the chief militiamen, or done by members of the groups themselves. The occupation of sidewalks for commercial activities or by the people who live in the buildings is fundamental to the absence of order in the favela territory. The Administrative Region can't organize, by itself, this growing privatization of space. The regulation of this process is one of the great desires of the population, but they don't have anyone to ask for help. Because the sidewalks are occupied, people usually walk in the streets, fighting for space with cars and motorcycles. It's also common for public squares to be occupied by trailers selling various products. The basic argument of local groups is to guarantee the people's right to work through these initiatives, but it's a huge loss for foot traffic, leisure areas and public spaces.

Improper use of water, sewer and electricity services and evading local taxes are common practices among the people who live there. The problem started due to the decades-old absence of said services and taxes in the favelas. Therefore, the people learned to use other people's services, and not to pay for them. Cedae, the Water and Sewer Company, has adopted, since the Brizola government, an ambiguous policy regarding providing its services: in the last twenty years, it started providing water and some sewer management services to most favelas in Rio, through various programs. However, it didn't establish an invoice system, or even some sort of tax to guarantee maintenance. In the case of Maré, Cedae didn't even have proper records of the houses they served, which changed in 2011, when they started new records and announced they would start collecting payment. The lack of collection generates a growing process of precariousness in service supply, especially when it comes to waste management. The company claims not to be able to invest in the services due to lack of payment, and the situation snowballs.

When it comes to electricity, Light, when it was still a public company in the 80s, instituted a daring policy of installing streetlights and meters in the favelas, maintained to this day. They calculated that, if they didn't provide those services, the people would find a way to get them. Therefore, their losses aren't as big as those of Cedae, even though they're not insignificant, mainly due to electricity stealing, called *gato* (literally meaning cat) in Rio slang.

In the late 90s, Light partnered up with a Maré institution to enforce payment and reduce the amount of irregular usage in the favela. First, the company invested in the improvement of its services, pardoned previous debts and took down *gatos* with no lawsuits or fines. In only a few months, a research conducted by the partnership concluded that almost 90% of those who lived in the favela had a stable relationship with the company and were not in debt. This project was extended to other favelas and towns, through partnerships with different social organizations. When the company's management changed, they abandoned civil society partnerships.

A different situation regards illegal use of cable television – *gatonet*, in local slang. Even though the TV cable provider is under obligation to install the cable network so that the service is accessible throughout the city, that wasn't done in poor neighborhoods or favelas. Faced with such a discriminatory practice, people who can't pay for satellite TV had access to cable through illegal connections.

In the late 90s, I tried, as part of a social organization, to contact a company that monopolizes cable television in Rio de Janeiro to suggest a partnership in order to provide services for cheaper prices in Maré. The company ignored my proposal, stating they had no interest in that public, considered D and E classes. When faced with the argument that people would then try to access the service illegally, the company's representative said the police would stop that. But it was through the militia in Rio das Pedras that illegal connections were spread; a few years later, it spread through most of favelas in Rio de Janeiro, ironically under the control of a criminal group usually commanded by corrupt police officers.

Municipal government started collecting IPTU, the housing tax, in Maré in the early 90s, but most people don't receive their invoices. Many people argue that they don't pay fees and taxes due to the state's failure to attend to their daily needs. Others, although a minority, use an ethically dubious argument: "a favela is a favela, the rest is the rest", indicating that they live by different rules and, therefore, different responsibilities. In general, what justifies such practices is the feeling of impunity.

Many community organizations argue that the people in the favelas can't demand respect as citizens if they don't follow their citizen duties by paying taxes. However, they also recognize how difficult it is to pay the taxes

attributed to citizens in a city like Rio de Janeiro. In normal conditions, mandatory payments could end up in the removal of these people from central spaces in the city. The payment of taxes in favelas is a deeply controversial issue and demands a creative and propositional posture from the State and from service providers, in order to reach a solution that's adequate to all parties involved. Thus, entities defend the need for a service supply strategy that takes into account the economic reality of the people and that guarantees the payment to companies and state organizations – those would be less expensive social fees and taxes. Thereby, people who live in favelas and other poor neighborhoods could have access to better services and be better integrated to the city.

Decrypting violence in popular spaces

In life, some memories are branded in our souls; they allow an intense reflection on values, on the sense of life itself. What I'm about to tell is one of those memories: in favela life, it's not unusual to witness someone being punished for failing to meet an order sent by the criminal group that rules the favela.

What happened looked like a joke, but was a real drama: what was even more shocking was how devoid of dramatics, of catharsis, it was – at least to us, who live in Maré.

It was a Wednesday in June 2003. Me and a friend, who also worked in Maré, were headed to Bar da Galega, a pension that serves meals. As we ate, we noticed a sudden silence, even more impressive due to the usual noise in the favela, caused by loud music coming from bars and homes and by cars with loudspeakers playing ads. Looking outside, we were surprised by a group of young men carrying guns and pushing a wooden cart down the street, another boy tied up inside. The excitement felt by the teens and young men involved in the scene was palpable. The situation drew a lot of attention, and lots of people left their homes to watch, as if it was a parade going down Main Street.

Seeing the commotion of those gathered around the group, trying to figure out who was the tied up boy being carried, my friend asked me, shocked, what was going on. I answered quickly: "The tied up teen is on his way to be murdered. He probably stole something or lied in his accounts to the drug joint."

My friend, very scared at that point, widened her eyes and said: "Eliana, what are you saying? How can you talk about someone being murdered and be so calm? What century are we in?"

Encountering this reaction, I realized she was the only one who didn't know what was going down. She was the Other, the different one. Her indignation made me notice how right she was, how shocking it was that situations like that could be "accepted" as part of a certain reality. I felt, then, a deep sorrow, clearly understanding what she meant. I noticed profoundly the effects of the normalization of violence in me and in those I'd lived with for so long, and how this vision was impregnated in many of the relationships established there.

Violence can be talked about in many ways and in multiple definitions: some authors and organizations value the physical dimension of aggression, while others underline the psychological and/or symbolic aspects. In this book, considering the general theme and the subjects involved, I opted for a more generic and synthetic definition, adapted from Silva and Silva (2005): violence as every act that violates the dignity of a human being, in particular, and of other living beings, in general. I could use the term "right" instead of "dignity", but I find the latter more accurate. It allows us to understand violence in its physical, psychological and symbolic manifestations, and to recognize violence towards the environment and other living beings as violence towards all of humanity.

The phenomenon of violence, in its physical or psychological forms, isn't hard to define or understand. The same can't be said of the symbolic components: stigmas, prejudice, discrimination, stereotypes etc. Effectively, there isn't a consensus on the characterization of violence in its most subtle or "natural" manifestations – such as the existence of poverty and extreme inequality, very low pay for certain workers, the absence of integral rights for domestic workers, industrial progress destroying nature, the way public spaces and the people who live in them are treated...

If there isn't a consensus on what characterizes violence in social relations, the divergence is even greater when it comes to the degree of tolerance regarding its different manifestations. Violence is tolerated to a lesser or a greater degree according to its targets, and not to the violent acts themselves. Thus, considering social hierarchies, the different treatment given by

most of society and media to crimes in rich or poor areas of town is notorious, even in situations of homicide, the most definitive form of violence.

The social impact of a black young man from the favela, who wasn't educated and who enjoyed funk, being murdered is immeasurably lesser than that of the death of a white middle class university student from a rich neighborhood. Social hierarchies, based on means of consuming certain goods, define the value of life and of rights, rather than principles based on the fundamental rights of citizens and human beings.

The value of consumer goods as a reference for human values has contributed to the development of postures defined by Silva and Barbosa (2005) as the *presentification* and *particularization* of existence. In the first instance, individuals live in a permanent quest for what provides immediate returns. They don't aim for future projects, either personal or collective. In the latter situation, social groups and individuals lose the ability to deal with the Other and only recognize the Self. The practice has stimulated a significant growth in intolerance and in the refusal to recognize others through their own values and parameters.

This phenomenon helps us understand the naturalization of the homicide rates in Brazil, especially the murder of young black man from favelas and poorer areas. Although it's a major problem (almost 50 thousand people are killed each year, 40% of them under the age of 24),¹³ there isn't any major social movement against it, nor any attention is paid to the policies and practices that allow for this violence or to those that could reduce this immense social drama. Similarly, a significant portion of the population believes the precarious, frequently inhuman, treatment of prison inmates to be adequate, and argues that the money spent in that instance is a waste of public resources. In this case, we can see how prison is believed to be, above all, a punitive instrument that is supposed to isolate the inmates from the social world and from their rights.¹⁴

¹³ DATASUS, a Health Ministry agency that collects global data on death in Brazil, has regularly updated data regarding this national issue.

¹⁴ A radical example of the absence of investments in the prison system and its consequences is the decision not to imprison those who were arrested for common crimes, only those who committed heinous crimes, in Rio Grande do Sul. The decision was taken in June 2009 because of the overcrowding of state prisons. Cf. *O Globo*, June 9 2009.

In this context, it isn't hard to conclude, whether by reading research studies or stories published in media, that most of the people of Rio de Janeiro consider as natural, or even consent to, the initiatives centered in massive violence by law enforcement.

According to these opinions, they happen and are justified by the need to face criminal groups in the favelas in their own terms. Thereby, it was defined that there aren't any alternatives when it comes to State interference, which leads to hiding the fact that Brazil holds one of the world records regarding lethal violence, especially affecting young black and brown men who live in poor neighborhoods.

My premise is that it won't be possible to create an effective citizen security policy unless the hegemonic representations of law enforcement intervention practices are overcome. We need to understand the reasons that contribute to naturalize war actions, which are proven to be inefficient and to generate numerous perverse effects in poor territories. According to Raymond Boudon (1977), a perverse effect is an action that contributes to worsen a situation that's meant to be overcome.

In the fight between law enforcement and groups involved in the drug trade in the favelas, the population's basic rights are disregarded. Therefore, around 1.2 million people in Rio de Janeiro are treated as civilians aligned with the enemy army. These citizens are inevitably sentenced to suffer the consequences of an allegedly fair war on drugs that's confirmed in and by itself, not allowing for questioning.

The clearest expression of the warlike aspects of the conflict in the favelas is the fact that law enforcement uses armored fighting vehicles. They are similar to those used by South Africa police against black territories during the Apartheid – however, there these vehicles only exist in the museum, to remember the atrocities of the segregation system. The war strategy that's been shown, for decades, as unbearable in all senses – morally, ethically, economically, socially and, paradoxically, in terms of efficiency – was, and still is, the main reason for the public security crisis in Rio and in other Brazilian cities that follow the same pattern.

The steady growth in sales and consumption of cocaine and its derivatives in Brazil since the 80s shows us that the war on drugs hasn't been able to reduce the product's offer or distribution, even though lethal violence has tripled in that time, with most of the inmate population locked up due to

drug involvement, with rising corruption in law enforcement, with growing resources applied in fighting crime, with the rising numbers of policeman and civilian deaths, with rising violent crimes in urban centers, with heavy artillery being used in crimes, with the widespread feeling of insecurity, with routine violence in the favelas putting its people in constant risk etc.

Even more significant than what happens in the favelas is the term *eradication war*, widely used since 1995 in the conflict between law enforcement and drug trade criminal groups. According to accounts at the time, many police groups avoided arrests, even in the case of surrender, opting to execute the dealers instead. Thus, because surrender wasn't worth it, police officers also became targets, to the point where they were being killed only because of their profession.

Therefore, these territories were increasingly identified and represented as definitely dangerous and unmanageable, affirming the impossibility to establish there the same pattern of social regulation present in the rest of the city.

The examples only show that, as said by Silva & Silva,

“[...] violence is a disturbingly present practice in our daily lives, in all social spaces. It isn't an act of exception that's manifested in rare occasions, nor is it practiced only by individuals who could be classified in the “mentally unstable” stereotype, unaware of their actions or their consequences. Violence, unfortunately, is used by numerous State and society individuals, groups and institutions as a means of social control and of accomplishing singular or particular goals and desires.”¹⁵ (2005, p. 15).¹⁶

¹⁵ Translated from the Brazilian edition. “[...] a violência é uma prática incomodamente presente, em nosso cotidiano, nos mais diversos espaços sociais. Ela não é um ato de exceção que se manifesta em raras ocasiões nem é praticada apenas por sujeitos enquadráveis no estereótipo clássico de ‘desequilibrados mentais’, sem consciência de seus atos e de suas consequências. A violência, infelizmente, é utilizada por diversos indivíduos, grupos e instituições do Estado e da sociedade como forma de controle social e meio de realização de desejos singulares ou particulares.”

¹⁶ H. Arendt, in her book *On violence*, presents an original interpretation on the links between violence and power. Instead of seeing the former as an instrument of the latter, she believes that “power and violence are opposites; where the one rules absolutely, the other is absent”. Her position comes from a conception of power as something that “springs up whenever people get together and act in concert”; a diametrically opposed view to the classic and dominant idea in political theory that considers power as a synonym of domination.

I understand that creating effective security policies demands adopting new strategies, foregoing those I listed above. New representations of favelas and its people, the establishment of a different form of State presence in the favelas and the creation of innovative and democratic social regulation mechanisms, involving most of the people in the decision-making process, are also needed.

What made it evident, for me, that routine violence overcomes even ideology and ethics, was the experience I mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, the reaction I had (as well as the other people of Maré) to seeing a young man being led to his death. There, I understood, radically and ashamed, Hannah Arendt's concept of the banality of evil. According to her, the evil becomes trivial, commonplace, when a certain society or social group becomes compliant in the suffering or the torture of another being, whether they are part of the Self, or – what's more usual – the Other.

The Jewish thinker's theory was created from the experience of Adolf Eichman's trial in the State of Israel – Eichman was the creator and operator of the final solution, the process of radical Jewish genocide. Arendt considers that Eichman actually believed his justification for what he did: he was only following orders, believing it would be dishonest to fail to execute the plan given to him by his superiors – genocide. Arendt then points to the complexity of human nature and to the lack of support for the idea that behavior has an essence (whether good or evil). The only way to avoid situations such as the holocaust, according to her, would be constant vigilance, both social and individual, to guarantee the preservation of freedom and a routine moral conduct.

Most of the people of Germany during the Nazi regime were soon morally and rationally convinced that the persecution of Jewish people was part of a natural and necessary process to defend German society as a whole. What happened in the occasion of the murder of that young man in Maré is a result – considering due proportions – of the same moral and rational references.

Regulating social relations

In the early 90s in Maré, a young boy, about 16 years old, was taken by drug dealers, tied up to a streetlight, beaten in front of his mother and then murdered. In broad daylight. His crime: breaking into a house in the favela, killing an old lady taking care of her grandson, and stealing the house to himself. Most people in Nova Holanda agreed with the reaction, even if they didn't necessarily agree with some of the actions, such as torture, meant to make it an exemplary punishment.

The principle that supported this general agreement is the same that, to a point, legitimizes armed criminal groups: the regulation of social relations in the local space. Everyone knows that crimes in the favela, even murders, aren't investigated by the police. Therefore, compliance with a crime of that nature comes from the fear that otherwise life in that territory would be unmanageable. There's an undeniable rationale in the practice of dealers and civilians, very similar to the one behind the teen's actions: he most likely knew that stealing in the favela would probably sentence him to death; it's likely that what led him to murder was the fear of being killed.

It's also known that most people in Rio defend the current war on drugs in the favela, in spite of the social cost it represents. One of the justifications for that stance is that, if it wasn't done, the drug dealers would take the whole city. There is a complete disregard for the fundamental rights of the people who live in the favelas, and for the fundamental premise that any security policy should make protecting citizens its priority.

All these examples have a common principle with the final solution: an undeniable rationality.¹⁷ That's why the holocaust had a deep impact in

¹⁷ The practices mentioned in the examples can also be understood through an expression used by Luiz Eduardo Soares to describe the defensive practices of most of the Brazilian population regarding public security and republican rights: "[an] aggregated irrationality as a consequence of rational actions" (Soares, 2007, p. 10).

the western thinking of the 20th century.¹⁸ Effectively, the Age of Enlightenment, in the 18th century, was crowned as humanity arriving to an age of light, with the belief that the reign of reason would take humanity to a never before seen level of civilization. Reason, progress, civilization and humanity were naturally interlinked concepts.

Faced with the holocaust and its potential to tear down the enlightenment reason, Frankfurt School thinkers (critical thinkers, usually of marxist tendencies, who were heavily critical of capitalism, analyzing the cultural phenomenon) divided *reason* in two concepts: instrumental reason and critical reason.

Instrumental reason is born when the individual's main interest is to understand the world to establish domination of, not autonomy from, nature or other human beings. In this case, reason works in service of means, not of ethically oriented goals. In the process, science, for instance, becomes an instrument of exploration and dominance; it's crystallized and becomes dogmatic, ideologic and contrary to the process of emancipating humanity. This reason controls the routine relations in contemporary social life in the scope of public policy, company decisions, communication companies, that is, practices in various social fields – including the favelas.

Critical reason is supported by a different paradigm. Through it, the individual tries to build an alternative understanding of the world, of the relation between individuals and between them and nature. It has as its starting and finish lines the emancipating of humanity from power relations and, from then on, the building of a new civilization.¹⁹

It's clear that instrumental reason still rules the different social groups and spaces in the current social reality. Therefore, the people of the favela need to overcome their specific reality in order to overcome the acceptance of violence as a fundamental instrument of social order regulation.

¹⁸ Another example of extreme reason, disregarding humanitarian impact, is the use of the atomic bomb against Japan to hasten the end of the Second World War, an action that resulted in the death of over 100 thousand civilians, especially women, children and elderly people. If they had lost the war, those responsible for the decision would probably have been tried for crimes against the humanity.

¹⁹ Cf. Freitag (1986).

Thus, the difficulty of working with Zuenir Ventura's 90s notion of *broken city*, part of Rio's common sense, becomes evident:²⁰ after all, the rational assumptions that guide social practices of those who live in the favelas aren't different from those that guide the people who live elsewhere. Their experiences share a rationale, a paradigm model. What happens is that the former need to deal with peculiar routine situations, especially regarding the relation to the State, the work force and the social regulation of local spaces. Their practices result from the subjective experience with objective situations that affect the whole city, such as the fear of violence.

The aforementioned process is central to the constitution of practices and representations that make Rio de Janeiro one of the most violent cities in Brazil. On the other hand, it also shows that there wouldn't be a cultural obstacle, for example, for the affirmation of an effective sovereignty of a republican state in the favela territories. The people who live there aren't dominated by a different perspective regarding public affairs, citizenship or State recognition than that of the rest of the city.

Anyway, producing innovative ways to deal with violence, in its different performances, demands a global understanding of the phenomenon and deep knowledge of its different manifestations in different social spaces. In the current context, the special attention given to favelas is due to the fact that the social practices established there, even those of State agents, are still unfeasible; or worse, understood through the lens of stigmas that support the reproduction of hegemonic public policies in Rio de Janeiro, especially in the scope of public security.

²⁰ Cf. Ventura (1994).

Historical references of law enforcement practices

The historical context of conflict over the universalization of fundamental rights in Brazilian society is expressed more acutely in the law enforcement practices in poor territories and, at the same time, in the resistance of the people who live in those spaces. In the case of Rio de Janeiro, the public security strategy adopted by law enforcement has been traditionally based on oppression and intimidation as instruments of routine action, as revealed by the following quote:

An interrogation's really easy to start / just beat the favelado until it hurts / an interrogation is really easy to end / just beat the favelado until he dies. You don't clean up / with a broom / You clean up with grenades / with rifles and machine guns.²¹

The chant yelled by Rio's elite police force cruelly summarizes how law enforcement officials usually perceive a significant portion of the city's population, around 1.2 million people. It's all even more severe when it's known that a huge parcel of police officers – most soldiers, corporals, sergeants and sub-lieutenants – come from those territories, and still live there, or have family there.

The way the police acts in the favelas is clearly different than the way they act in the rich parts of town. In the latter, what guides law enforcement is the belief that the “good”, law-abiding, tax-paying citizens need to be protected. This contradictory action has consequences. Thus, even the parcels of the population seen as more deserving of citizenship than the others

²¹ Chant repeated by Military Police Special Ops, BOPE (Batalhão de Operações Especiais da Polícia Militar do Rio de Janeiro), in their daily exercises in the streets of a rich neighborhood in Rio de Janeiro. Cf. *O Globo*, September 24th 2003, “Gritos de guerra do BOPE assustam Parque Guinle” *apud* International Amnesty, 2005. The fact that “Human Rights for Right Humans” is painted on the walls of a police chief in São Paulo reveals how disseminated this opinion is around the country. Cf. *Caros Amigos*, junho de 2006.

still live in permanent fear.²² Growing violence in urban centers, also rising in smaller towns, provokes panic and insecurity. The most visible criminal actions are a result of armed criminal groups controlling large parts of the urban terrain; but also because, paradoxically, violence and war strategies are used by the state to fight these groups, especially those involved with the drug trade, and, allegedly, to guarantee urban order.

Considering of this context, it's clear that building an effective constitutional state in the country demands that public security in popular spaces be treated and recognized as a fundamental social right. Therefore, it's fundamental to recognize that there's a dissonance between offering a variety of rights to the people of the favelas (water supply, waste management, streetlights, street paving, schools, pre-schools and healthcare, among others) and a public security policy that guarantees the citizen condition of those people.

The constitutional right to public security hasn't always been upheld in the same way in different social groups. The current Brazilian constitution, in the article 144, presents the following norms regarding public security: "(...) the duty of the State and the right and responsibility of all, is exercised to preserve public order and the safety of persons and property."

The Military Police, for example, the main institutional instrument in maintaining public security in the country, was developed, since its beginnings in the time of the Empire, as a force in service of the dominant class – it was even paid for by the rich.²³ The Republic doesn't change the previous reality, and law enforcement continues to be used as an instrument of repression of subaltern social groups or those who question the social order.

The military dictatorship, since the 60s, worsened this reality, using Civil Police to combat revolutionary guerillas and the social organizations

²² Ramos and Musumeci (2006) demonstrate that different law enforcement approaches vary according to the combination of an individual profile and a set territory; therefore, a black young man is considered a suspect when he's in a rich area, as well as someone who's read as being middle class – white, educated, wearing brand-name clothes – in a favela. This also explains why the police acts aggressively towards me in Nova Holanda. The same doesn't happen in other parts of town.

²³ Cf. Holloway (1997); Marino (2004).

fighting for democracy. Military police forces were directed by high ranking army officers,acerbating the institution’s hierarchy, the authoritarianism of higher ranking officers regarding lower ranking ones,²⁴ and the despise for human rights in police action.

The violent tradition of the police was worsened even more when the dominant political groups elected the drug trade as the main crime to be fought in the country. It became acceptable to use any means, including indiscriminate violence, especially lethal, in order to achieve that goal. All of it done because it would allegedly be impossible to go against heavily armed local criminal organizations any other way.

In the war on drugs, military repression and war strategies are used indiscriminately, without considering the fundamental human rights of the people who live where it takes place – almost always the favelas. The war also justifies and trivializes annihilation of the enemy, generally young poor black men who don’t even have the right to be arrested.

In the recent historical context of the country, democratization led to a series of changes in the established relations between State and most of the population. However, law enforcement is still dissociated from those transformations, especially the ones regarding a new understanding of social rights and a significant amount of public policies aimed at the poorer sections of the population. Only now, when faced with how severe the violence has become, is public security being considered an unarguably urgent issue to be put in the center of most state’s political agendas, especially those more affected by organized crime.

²⁴ Called “*parças*”: soldiers, corporals, sergeants, sub-lieutenants.

Maré: rituals of war and peace

In the early 80s, Maré was composed of only six favelas. Drug trade wasn't as expressive, but gangs had already started exerting their power on local land. In Parque Maré, Rubem Vaz and Nova Holanda, two groups fought for control of the trade. The frontier between those groups was a ditch in Nova Holanda, dividing the favela in two, about 50 meters from where I lived for nearly 20 years, and from where I could watch a lot of violence, but also the situation I'm about to tell you.

On one side, the Metralha Brothers, five brothers led by the youngest, a 15-year-old teenager with great leadership. He was nicknamed Lelei. The other gang was led by Jorge Negão, the drug lord who'd stayed in power the longest, for nearly 15 years. Both groups were equally strong; therefore, there was a certain balance in conflict, yet it was very violent, causing the deaths of the young people involved and also of innocent bystanders.

One of these deaths was that of Jorge Luiz, whose name was chosen by the people of Nova Holanda to name the street he lived in. Jorge was a worker who was brutally tortured to death by one of the gangs only because his brother was part of the rival gang. Because of civilian deaths, people were terrified of walking freely between the two turfs. The gangs hadn't issued an open prohibition, but we grew up understanding that free passage wasn't possible.

In 1982 and 1983, there were many clashes between both groups, and also between them and the police. Obviously, the guns used in those conflicts aren't even comparable to those used nowadays by the criminal groups in the favelas. But, even then, what we see now was foreshadowed, because it was when they started using Uzis and .30 caliber submachine guns, instead of .38 caliber revolvers – the AR-15 rifle was rare, but already on the wishlist of more seasoned criminals.

At the same time, Nova Holanda went through many changes when it came to political and community life, with the population getting involved in the issues that made daily life more difficult. It was crucial to get over the impotence narrative, the

belief that “nothing can be done”, that the people in the favelas were hostages to both State and armed criminals. Some social movements grew strong and tried to organize themselves better to improve local quality of life.

One of those movements encouraged the people to think about the importance of trying to find ways to change the precariousness of urban services, such as the lack of electricity, drinkable water, waste management, schools, pre-schools, healthcare etc. Among all those problems, according to the people, one was the most important: violence, whether practiced by criminals or by the police. Thus, a meeting was called, bringing together various community organizations: the Catholic Church, women's groups, community health providers, the carnival band Mataram Meu Gato (Portuguese for “They Killed My Cat”) and members of Maré’s neighborhood association.

The main goal of the meeting was to create strategies to end the divide between both sides of Nova Holanda, because everyone agreed that their lives could only be better if there weren't spacial limitations. Among many inconveniences, the divide had also created a huge difference in the social standing of people on both sides: in one of them, very poor families, with awful living arrangements and no public service whatsoever; in the other, the few public services available – public school, healthcare provider, Lion Foundation XIII, the neighborhood association and the police station.

In a historical moment, in the Catholic Church's building, it was agreed that the groups would organize events in the streets, in order to call attention to the importance of community participation in the resolution of problems, especially violence. It was also defined that some members of those groups would talk to the drug lords in order to ask for a truce in the war, explaining the people's need for peace. At the time nobody knew how they would take this initiative, but even then it was clear that the refusal to be controlled and oppressed by the state – through the Lion XIII Foundation – and by those criminal groups should come from the people.

Another initiative defined in the meeting was to organize campaigns to encourage everyone to believe in the possibility of peace in Nova Holanda. A young talented man made huge banners, that were put up in strategic points. One of them was put across the ditch, saying: “Let's Believe in Peace”.

A situation that I could see and live at the time left a deep mark on me; it was, certainly, one of the experiences that make me believe that a massive population reaction to violence and oppression in Maré is possible, even in current times. Both groups, those led by the Metralha Brothers and by Jorge Negão, started to

take initiative to end the conflict to allow the people to walk freely between turfs. They kept their autonomy, but established the truce demanded by the people. Each group would take one side, one couldn't sell on the other's turf, but everyone could walk freely in the other's turf.

As many people, including members of the gangs, didn't believe this was possible, a public ritualistic display was put on by both sides to officialize the agreement. At a set day and time, both gangs walked out from their turfs, guns in hand. I remember clearly the feeling of terror, tension and expectation.

Always staring at each other, the gangs walked to the community police station – the police officers stayed inside, knowing what was planned. At the same time, all the gang members dropped their guns to the ground. That attitude, watched by many of the people of Maré, including police officers, meant a new moment for Nova Holanda. Since then, the war was over and there was peace between gangs in Maré for many years. The peace was only broken in the mid-90s, due to new arrangements.

The favela's transformation into an arena for warring armed gangs became the main factor of the destabilization of the people's daily lives. It defines parents' routines, many of them permanently terrified to let their children play in the streets, and restricts circulation inside and outside of Maré, because many teens and young adults fear aggressions from people of other favelas. The spacial limits generated by the favela's internal wars expand, subjective and objectively, to other places in town and are part of schools' routines, considering how hard it is for its teachers, who are usually from other parts of town, to feel comfortable to work in the midst of unpredictable and always possible shootings.

The most curious aspect of daily life in the favela is the fact that most perceived violence is linked to the conflict between armed criminal gangs. Although there are various conflicts, there's a very focused perception of those between gangs. Selling and using drugs, actions that can be aggressive depending on how they're done, are very present, to varying degrees depending on the region. There are, obviously, other forms of violence, especially domestic violence, but they don't draw as much attention in the day to day.

The concept of violence chosen by most people interviewed points to a broader understanding than its basic component, physical violence. 41.4% of 514 interviewees said that violence is when a person's (or a group's) rights are violated. 30.2% understand violence as someone suffering from physical and/or psychological pain. Only 27% of interviewees chose the first option, linking violence only to physical pain.

Representations and daily practices of violence

The sight of young adults and teenagers carrying guns, especially early in the night, is very shocking to those who visit Maré. Those young men try to exert their power and garner respect, fear and/or the admiration of girls by showing rifles and pistols, driving motorcycles that come and go, usually very fast, through the crowded streets. To those who live there, the sight of armed young men is treated as natural, just like that of police officers in the rest of the city. Seeing the police in the favela is much weirder and makes people tense: they usually walk suspiciously, with the rifle pointed at people, finger on the trigger, always ready to shoot, which is risky for all the bystanders and explains why the population revolts with every recurrent news of innocent civilians being shot by stray bullets.

The naturalization of young men carrying guns doesn't mean that the population is happy with guns being displayed. The drug lords who control or forbid such practices earn the respect of local population. There's a practical aspect to the display: according to one of the main drug lords in Maré, showing guns, especially rifles, is meant to scare off enemies, because rival gangs sometimes send in X-9s (slang for "spies") to check out the local gang's ability to defend their turf.

A drug dealer from one of Maré's gangs tells how his group feels about carrying guns:

"I'm 31 years old. My family comes from [the state of] Paraíba, they're working people, and my mother's very religious. We're four brothers, but I'm the only one who chose crime. I'm a dealer, but I don't want to kill anyone."

We don't shoot for nothing. Do you see shots during the day, ma'am, are there shots during the day? There are dealers in the community, but during the day we don't resist no police. The Skull comes at night. When we react, we're usually just defending the trade. They know the trade's here, so they come in shooting? It's complicated, isn't it?

I think the Skull is a way for the officers to protect themselves. That's true, it is. At night, the dealers are there. So if it's man on man, no one's gonna run, right? But if they bring in the Skull, it's complicated. You have to run. But this whole van situation made the conflict between dealers and police much worse. They come with their car, and how does that leave us? We have to defend ourselves and all that's left is confronting them. Before, it was a hand to hand war. But now we don't even know who's inside, what they're packing. They come and we don't know who's hiding.

Another bad thing is that they yell at the people, at women and kids, especially those who are outside. The Skull goes by offending everyone. Why do they have to do that, if their issue is with us dealers? The police has to check that out. The police can't do that with the people. They don't have anything to do with this. It's wrong. It makes me angry. I don't think all officers are like that, some of them are christians, they respect people.

Just look at me; my family is exemplary. I joined the trade for silly stuff, not because I needed it. At the time I wanted a motorcycle, I wanted to play cool. I wanted to have things I couldn't have. I started wanting that, really wanting a motorcycle, and I watched some of the guys, started to do favors for some of them and then I started dealing at I haven't got anything yet. What made me join was that whole motorcycle thing.

Another influence is TV. I think TV really glamorizes dealing, but I think the law should be glamorized instead of crime, do you know what I mean? There was a miniseries on channel four that totally glamorized dealing. Children see that and think that dealers are living the good life. Children don't see anything wrong there. It's real propaganda, that's what makes us want to get involved.

Also when I saw shooting movies, you know, I used to watch movies full of shootings, like Rambo, that sort of thing, and I imagined myself doing the same. Nowadays I don't like shooting. But in the beginning I shot because I was excited, drunk, young man stuff. As I grew up and started thinking, I realized it wasn't like that at all. That was all silly, an illusion, child's play. It was the excitement of youth. And when you start thinking and realize there's no logic in it you start to feel stupid, pretty damn stupid."

Maré, except for the Morro do Timbau and part of Baixada do Sapateiro, is in a flat stretch of land, which is easier for people and vehicle circulation. Therefore, people from outside the favela walk quite freely there, specially during commercial hours in weekdays. This ease of passage puts into question one of the greatest fears of the people who don't live in favelas: the right to walk safely in them. It's quite common for people who work with social organizations in favelas to have to deal with prejudice, rudeness and impossible demands, due to city people being very ignorant regarding the situation of the favela. The feeling that one's life is at risk just by being in the favela is quite common. It's an irrational fear, and different forms of symbolic violence are suffered by those who live or work in favelas due to these traditional misrepresentations.

In the case of some people who enter the favela, often for professional needs, there's the *demand* – that's the best word for it – for total safety guarantee. They ignore that locals face the same risks if there's a conflict, that

there's no direct communication with the gangs, that their activities aren't controlled. There is, however, a logic to the young criminals' actions, coming from historical references, from the need to legitimize their presence in the turf and their need to be accepted. All of this means their practices aren't random, but shaped by more or less determined social codes.

Thus, it's wrong to assume that the favela is a space of irrationality, barbarism and chaotic violence. There are, indeed, social rules established and recognized by those who live there.

The establishment of social rules in the favela is a complex process, involving different actors. In theory, the drug lord has autocratic power, doesn't need to consult others to make his decisions, and his authority comes from the degree to which what he decides is accepted by the general population. Therefore, there are mutual demands, not usually explicit, for daily behaviors and agreements. The dealers are entirely intolerant of "telling"; the people, on their hand, just like many of the dealers, get angry when the favela is a mess, when things aren't working according to the necessary order. Robberies or similar actions in the favelas, for example, represent a crisis both for civilians and gang members.

Those who aren't used to the favela see its environment as taken over by hostility and disorder. It's not an accident that most of the people in the city believe a huge chunk of the favela's population to be involved in criminal activities, especially with robberies or with the drug trade.

The distance between reality and representation was made clear in an activity developed by Redes in 2009, called "Favela's representations and stereotypes". Some of the people who lived in rich neighborhoods and were present in the event said that at least 20% of the local population was certainly involved with criminal activities – that would mean around 30 thousand people only in Maré!

I've heard "generous" estimations that said criminals were a minority in favelas: "only" 30% of its people (sic!). Indeed, the general belief among those who don't live in the favela is that those who do are criminals or at least accessories to crime.

Those stereotypes lead the people in the favela to adopt an ambiguous position regarding recognizing their status as a favela-dweller. When it's convenient, as in the case of receiving some sort of social benefit, for

example, they say they live in the favela. However, when looking for jobs, they give a different address, usually from a non-stigmatized neighborhood.

Another traditionally ignored social factor in favelas, especially Maré, is the strength of civil society and of the churches: many civil society organizations are spread out through the communities, developing assistance, education, culture and research projects, as well as actions to generate work and income. That's because favelas attract many social projects, as well as, due to its historic needs, having a broad and well-articulated community experience. Thus, the people who live in Maré, especially young adults and teenagers, have much easier access to free classes that broaden their social horizons than most of those who live in similar neighborhoods. The same can be said in regards to churches, considering the strong investment of some religious denominations, especially neo-charismatic, in the local space.

A central aspect of daily life in Maré, as in most favelas controlled by armed gangs, is the high degree of safety regarding possessions, which is rare in the rest of the city: in Maré, nobody is afraid to be robbed, to have their cars stolen or their houses broken into. Similarly, crimes such as rape are also violently repressed. As mentioned before, the policing role of armed gangs is efficiently executed, mainly due to their proficiency in intimidation. There's also the fact that people involved with criminal activities such as stealing and robbery are afraid of losing their status and their place in the favela, and, to some exchange, have internalized a community code of ethics that strongly disapproves of criminals who dare to steal in their own favela. On the other hand, it's quite usual for young criminals of other favelas to attempt robberies in rival commercial establishments in order to demoralize the local gang.

Another meaningful fact is the recent rise in home robberies, associated to the growth in crack sales in the favela. The drug was forbidden in Rio's favelas for a long time, due to how hard it is to control its effects on its users, specially those who are involved in the trade. In the last few years, however, the drug started to be sold in many favelas. Due to crack's devastating effects, historically built social relations have been unstable.

Because of the rise in property damage due to crime in Maré, some areas, especially commercial areas, have created permanent security teams. The team offers its services to local establishments during the day, in return

for monthly or weekly payments. At night, when gang members are out in the streets, there's no professional security.²⁵

However, Maré's most prominent feature, and what allows it to be characterized as a typical Rio favela, is gun violence. Because of their strong rivalry, the control of armed gangs is felt in everyone's daily lives, especially through turf wars. Frequent police interference is yet another element that factors into local instability and into the frequent fear of armed conflict.

The problem's complexity can be shown through a curious example: at some point, college admission prep classes in Redes were interrupted a few times a week by shots being fired by police officers and a criminal gang. Due to the severity of the situation, that kept many students from attending classes, a group of directors tried to understand what was happening, since that caused damages to the educational work. What was understood was that, a few days a week, a group of religious officers, who wouldn't take bribes, fought against the dealers. The situation reflects a paradox: respecting law and ethics, those officers risked the people's lives and contributed to worse conditions for everyone. Shouldn't the police consider other interventions instead of violent conflict? What's really the point of that practice?

²⁵ The amount to be paid depends on the risks and on how many customers the establishment has. Therefore, a lottery retailer pays more than a medical practice, for example. It must also be noted that the fee is much smaller than what official private security companies would charge.

New mentalities, new security policies

The police raid happened in April 14th, 2009, in Baixa do Sapateiro. According to the 22nd Precinct chief, the operation was done by the Civil Police, coming to Maré to follow-up on an arrest warrant. Some of the precinct's officers joined the team, in order to help. The result of the police foray into Maré that day was the death of a 17 year old, shot in the head in front of his house, while talking to his friends. Felipe dos Santos Correia de Lima went to a public school nearby and worked at a diner.

The operation that ended with Felipe's death left yet another negative mark on Maré's relationship to the police, deepening the chasm between law enforcement and local population. Once more, as in many other occasions, different versions of the story were issued. The people said the officers were agitated, pointing their guns and shooting haphazardly. Arriving near the young man's house, they would simply have shot, not checking to see who was actually there. Naturally, the police version is different, claiming they were only reacting to shots fired by drug dealers.

That confrontation threw me back to the death of Renan da Costa Ribeiro, the 3 year old child killed by one of those police raids in 2006. On that occasion, a group of people, including me, protested in front of Maré's precinct. It was another day, and my situation was different: on the day Felipe was killed, I was inside the precinct, getting interviews for my book. I was taken aback by a strange feeling: a combination of sadness, helplessness and rage, but mainly a strong desire to understand how those situations were understood by police officers and how they dealt with them.

At the precinct, things were tumultuous. Officers went in and out of the chief's office, giving information regarding what had happened and noting the people's outrage. At that point, lots of people had already gathered at Linha Vermelha, in a protest against police brutality that closed traffic for a few hours. Both Military and Civil officers tried to contain the protesters, but, more than once, all parties reacted violently. Some TV channels broadcasted live, with some journalists describing the protest while trying to protect themselves from shots being fired.

When asked about the reasons that led to Felipe's death, the chief insisted on saying that he couldn't assert that the shot had been fired from a police officer's gun, but that the young man looked suspect, which led to the officers' aggressive action.

There, immersed in police tension, I realized something had changed in me regarding law enforcement since Renan's death. My resentment towards police violence in the favelas hadn't changed, but it was now clear to me that the problem ran deeper, beyond the officers' personalities or an occasional disdain for poor people's lives. The problems reside in the conception of the officers' actions, in affirming a "warrior" ethos, in the distance between involved parties (officers and civilians), in the resentment accumulated after years of conflict and distance, and in the effort to try to give a purpose to their own lives without paying attention to the other's pains, efforts and lives.

It became clear to me that the way to avoid new deaths, conflicts and pain was to recognize people's humanities, in all their contradictions, and, from then on, to work on permanent communication channels. It was then that I realized how much I needed to expand the connection between law enforcement, as well as members of other State organizations, and the people of Maré. After explicitly noticing how important something so trivial yet unusual in action as propositional dialogue strategies had become to my work in Maré, I went much farther in developing propositions aimed at creating permanent reunion channels. I'm happy to say this became a point of no return, involving more people each day.

I was very surprised by the experience of being in closer contact with law enforcement officers. Initially, I thought it would be difficult to approach them and get them to talk about their experiences. I even thought I'd be received with hostility for wanting to investigate the precinct's work and, maybe, notice or identify examples of pre-existing ideas of how police acts in favelas.

None of that happened. The 22nd Precinct chief at the time greeted me in a meeting mediated by a friend who researches public security. After I was allowed to make contact, I stayed in the precinct for three months, talking to officers in different dates and times, in an office offered by the chief. During shift changes, the officers freed up their time to talk to me. I was also very surprised: even after receiving a nice and helpful response from command, I was still afraid it would be hard to get the officers to talk about Maré and their jobs. However, what happened was just the opposite: they made themselves very available, and I met professionals who were happy to be heard and very interested in talking about public security.

My daily excursions to the precinct became one of the most enriching experiences in the process of writing this book and thinking about public security. In these visits, I could observe how administrative and operational sectors worked, the relationships between the corporation's members, the internal activities, the organization dynamics regarding actions in the areas covered by the precinct and, especially, the way officers reacted to different situations. I also visited other police sites in Maré: community stations (Postos de Policiamento Comunitário) in Vila do João, Baixa do Sapateiro, Parque União and Praia de Ramos, and police cabins, specifically the one in front of Vila dos Pinheiros and Morro do Timbau.

I choked up more than once when trying to ask them about what led them to act so disrespectfully and incoherently, considering that the first goal of the police is to guard and guarantee safety for all citizens. Listening to their arguments and justifications, I realized how hard it was to explain situations that I found indefensible. What was new to me was that many of them reported the conditions and contexts that led them to that point. In conversation, many of them admitted to feeling disrespected and humiliated inside the force, just like the people of Maré, for example. Every authority figure in the 22nd Precinct was very open and critical to current police

actions in the favelas and in the city as a whole. They pointed out how the reasoning behind the State public security apparatus' structures needs to be reviewed.

Direct contact with different segments of law enforcement officers renewed my enthusiasm: I recognized officers in their human condition, as individuals, and not only in their official professional functions. This recognition of the humanity of those who represent a state I've always looked at with mistrust and distance was significant. I could see and feel their pains, very vividly in some cases. I realized that the historical reproduction of police repression is supported by structures that harm the target audience of the violence, poor people, but also deeply oppress the agent conducting routine violent practices in the favela.

Maré's Military Police precinct

"I was president of the association when Maré's regional administrator told me a precinct was going to be built in Maré. I was taken aback. A precinct inside the favela? Why and how did they decide to put it in here? When he said it was meant to be in the borders, near the Administrative Region, I was really impressed. How could they put up a precinct exactly where rival gangs exchange shots? I thought it was all very weird. I thought to myself: this is another political move." [EXCERPT OF AN INTERVIEW WITH THE PRESIDENT OF ONE OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATIONS IN MARÉ, 2008]

The 22nd Military Police Precinct was transferred in 2003 to Maré from Benfica, where it was stationed since 1989, in a controversial decision. The idea of a community precinct had started taking shape in the beginning of Anthony Garotinho's administration (1999/2002), as part of an innovative public security program. The program was organized by the Research

and Citizenship Office (Subsecretaria de Pesquisa e Cidadania) at the time directed by researcher Luiz Eduardo Soares, who became the main public security expert in the country.²⁶

In its origin, the idea of community precincts was based on establishing a new concept of patrol in favelas. The plan was to recruit officers in the favelas where the precinct would be set. Thus, according to those who defended the concept, the State would deal with a serious social problem: the lack of opportunity for 15 to 25 year olds in favelas, many of them recruited by the drug trade.

According to Soares, the idea at the time was that the precincts would be institutions, like many others installed in favelas, aimed at offering services focused on professional training, like an employment agency, with health-care services focused on drug use; as well as being a meeting place for councils aimed at guaranteeing women's, children's and teenager's rights and at fighting against sexual and racial discrimination. These activities would all be done in partnership with other government institutions, and understanding that the issue of violence could only be dealt with if every instance in government was willing to prioritize it was necessary (Soares, 2000, p. 289).

The thing is that, in order to set up a community precinct in the favelas, the government needed to take some preliminary actions:

- a) hiring more officers, around 4,800 at the time, all of them from favelas. The goal was to have one officer for every 250 civilians, according international rules;
- b) place the community precincts in the most risky areas;
- c) new officers wouldn't need to be highly educated.

²⁶ Luiz Eduardo Soares was a part of the Garotinho administration from January 1999 to March 2000, developing a series of innovative measures in the field of public security, such as: Legal Stations (*Delegacias Legais*, a program to modernize police stations); investing in data, intelligence and technology to deal with crime; new thoughts regarding the links between public security and human rights and the fight against armed gangs; and also innovations regarding drug decriminalization. Cf. Soares, 2000.

Training would be offered in the first years on the job as an officer. The priority would be to teach civics through short-term specific classes, aimed at understanding a police officer's social function. The officers, in their first years, would be followed by elderly men and women who live in the same places the officers are from. They would act as mentors, each one of them looking over five recruits. Before setting up the precinct, police would have to occupy the favela, getting rid of the gangs controlling the territory. Outsourced activities for the people of those areas were also proposed. In other words, the idea was to create ways for the people of the favela to be actively involved in the precinct, whether through work in specific actions or as a member of the councils that met there (Soares, 2000, p. 289).

The community precinct proposal described above was discussed in the administration, well received by the governor, but questioned by some members of the public security summit. Maré was the chosen place to set up the new precinct, although it was also proposed in Cidade de Deus. According to Soares, the idea was very well received by the people of the favelas at the time. When the responsible team visited the favelas to discuss the proposal, they were met with encouraging hope. Against all common sense, that would point out the people's lack of interest in getting involved in public security issues, government agents saw a direct interest as well as a strong concern with it being dealt with differently than it had been before.

However, considering that Maré is composed of 16 favelas, what ended up determining where the precinct would be set up? How did this decision reach the people, those involved in criminal activities and those in local institutions? There are many versions of the story of the precinct's arrival in Maré. The first report of a precinct being built in Maré came with many doubts. Information was scattered, coming from the top down, without clear definitions of what was its purpose, who was proposing it and how it would be materialized.

Maré borders: where the precinct was set up

The first idea the government had was to build the community precinct near favelas Nova Maré, Parque Maré and Baixa do Sapateiro. It's the same area where there are the Community Citizen Center (CCDC), the Administrative Region, the Herbert Viana Cultural Tent, two integrated public education centers (CIEP) – Elis Regina and Samora Machel – and part of the Maré Olympic Village sports complex. What's worrying is that the proposed area is precisely the border between rival gangs, where many armed conflicts happen. In function of that, Maré's people are very afraid of walking through that border – which ends up devaluing property nearby. The presented argument was that the chosen area should have yet another institution to go against the conflicts, which hadn't happened lately even though there were already other public institutions there.

Actually, the shots, deaths and hurt people who dared to cross the borders, in different occasions, were meaningful. It was so serious that both schools in the area were, for a time, occupied during the night by criminals who shot fires from inside. It was, it still is, hard to create safe conditions so that those institutions could function.

"I live at the end of main street, near CIEPs and the CCDC. I've lived many hard times there, me and my family. I don't let my kids go out at all. I've watched many attempts at one side taking over the other. I was terrified, threw myself on the ground with my kids. After 8PM no one goes out. The criminals, my goodness, went into the CIEPs! I don't know why they keep the gates open, they still do to this day. I've seen those kids smoking pot in the CIEPs, during school hours." [INTERVIEW WITH A WOMAN FROM PARQUE MARÉ, 2009]

In the woman's story, the severity of the problems of those who live near central conflict areas in favelas is clear. It was in such a place that they first attempted to set up the precinct in Maré. Somehow, it made sense to think

of setting up a security apparatus in an area with a story of violence that needed priority care. But, in the end, worried about the safety of the professionals who would work in the precinct, about the unfavorable logistics and about how small the land was to house a thousand men, they ended up setting up the precinct in an area next to the Olympic Village, looking out at the Linha Vermelha, in Nova Holanda.

The discussion around the precinct frequently brought together neighborhood associations and some government institutions. The security sector clearly intended to involve local institutions, in order to have their support to set up a security apparatus in a region where criminal groups control people's lives.

The problem regarding the place chosen for the precinct was that the new space restricted the possibility to expand the Olympic Village: the institution has some sporting equipment, as well as a pool and playing fields, in the borders of Baixa do Sapateiro, Nova Maré and Morro do Timbau, dominated by a specific gang – Terceiro Comando. This makes it harder for many people, especially Nova Holanda, Rubens Vaz, Parque Maré and Parque União's teens – who live in areas controlled by Comando Vermelho –, to access the benefits of the Vila Olímpica, because they are afraid of walking through different areas of Maré, to exercise their right to come and go. Now, more and more people from those favelas use the Olympic Village, especially adults and elderly people, but for children, teens and young adults it's still scary.

“Here in Nova Holanda, Parque Maré and Ruben Vaz, where the Comando Vermelho's at, we rarely ever go to the Olympic Village. I don't let my kids go there to practice sports, because I'm afraid someone's gonna confuse things and kill them, just because we live here. It's a rival gang that controls the area around the Olympic Village.” [A NOVA HOLANDA MOTHER OF THREE, 2008]

People were so upset by the change of space chosen for the precinct that they protested, shutting down traffic in Linha Vermelha and Avenida Brasil, two of the main avenues in Rio. The protest, organized by people who lived in the area controlled by Comando Vermelho, was ostensibly

meant to complain about the mayor, César Maia, giving the space meant for the expansion of the Vila Olímpica to the state government. The protest ended in a conflict between civilians and police, and many people were hurt, including a 22 year old who ended up dying.

The media broadcasted that the protest was started by Comando Vermelho dealers. It isn't actually known if people involved with criminal activities took part in the protest, but the people's frustration at seeing a public service thought of as fundamental to the area being replaced by a questionable public service was clear, due to doubts regarding its ability – or the Public Security Department's interest – in decreasing violence in Maré.

Lucílio Mota Leal, the colonel responsible for an office in the Public Security Department at the time, used a curious argument regarding the discussion: questioned about the new choice of space for the precinct, considering that setting it up in the border could contribute to peace between conflicting gangs, he chose to reply with irony:

“The colonel said that the first space wasn't big enough for a 1,000 men precinct. He also said that the Public Security Department doesn't consider the people's argument regarding the precinct being installed in the so-called “border” between rival gangs valid. ‘We consider Terceiro Comando and Comando Vermelho as autodenominations. The only CV I know is Chapeuzinho Vermelho [Little Red Riding Hood], from children's stories’, he said.” [FOLHA ONLINE, SEPTEMBER 6TH 2001]

What was originally meant to be a community precinct started changing while it was being built. One situation contributed to changing its model: on April 17th, 2003, a bus carrying 22nd precinct officers was attacked, being shot at as it arrived in Baixa do Sapateiro, more precisely in an square called Praça do Dezoito. The driver lost control of the vehicle and fell in a ditch, hurting six officers. This attack led to a violent response from the police, that occupied the favela until they could arrest the people responsible.

"I wasn't here when the precinct was opened. What I heard was that, after the police bus was attacked by dealers in Baixa do Sapateiro, the people at the Public Security Department decided it would function like any other precinct. That incident hastened the transference of the 22nd precinct from Benfica to here." [22ND PRECINCT'S CHIEF OF POLICE]

The 22nd precinct in Maré was the first precinct of its size in a favela in Rio, maybe even in the whole country. It's worth noting that the precinct is in Maré, but the area it covers is much bigger, including many neighborhoods and favelas in the area.

Even though its initial model was changed, the Public Security Department still intended to establish some kind of relation between the precinct and the people. Thus, at its beginning, the precinct offered free IT classes and internet access to the public in a computer room. However, the people were afraid to go into the precinct, so the project didn't last long.

"I live across the street from the precinct. When it came here, for a moment I thought it would be nice to have police around, because the criminals would be afraid of dealing near my house. But when it started working I realized it's dangerous to live nearby. Now I feel threatened and afraid of hanging near my door. I'm afraid an officer comes to ask me something and then the dealers will think I'm 'telling', you know?"
[WOMAN LIVING IN TANCREDO NEVES STREET, IN NOVA HOLANDA]

The difficulty of bringing together the officers and the people of Maré is deep, serious and complex. It goes beyond a simple perception of a local unwillingness to get along, that could be overcome through establishing specific assistive actions, for example. It's historically built, visceral and deep-seated, dominating the bodies and going beyond rationality.

"I can't imagine the people respecting the police and asking them for help. I'm afraid of the police. I think that when it comes closer it's just so that they can get a leg up. I grew up watching the police beating people who weren't carrying documents when they were stopped. Sometimes, I could see that they were angry at us. They don't even look us in the face. They talk loud and think we're all criminals. It makes me angry and upset; I don't know what the police is for!" [WOMAN LIVING IN PARQUE UNIÃO]

The fundamental issue regards the belief that the police can act according to the true interests of the people in the favela. The same posture, as we'll see later, is part of the officers' attitude.

"I work in the Maré precinct, but I don't see it as a favela precinct. The way we work here, we could very well be anywhere else. I have no idea what actually goes on in there. They don't come here, we don't go there. I also don't see how it could be any different. It's impossible for the police to act like it should because the people here don't want the police to act right and to fulfill its duties. For them, the police has to be performing social actions, which is not the role of the police." [OFFICER IN THE MARÉ PRECINCT]

As we can see, there's something in common between the woman and the officer: none of them believe that the police can be useful or necessary in the favela. Indeed, the people living in Maré can't understand what role the police could fulfill when it comes to public security. There's a deep chasm between what could be an officer's job and the indisputable demand for security from those who live in the favela. It seems that only regular, long term actions could create the basis to overcome the historic mistrust between involved parties.

Similarly, the cabins were more frequented by the people, who went to make complaints, which were sometimes resolved by the officer then and there, even, sometimes, arresting the accused in a temporary cell, until they could be taken to the 21st Police Station, where the official Maré bookings take place. Despite that, authoritarianism was very present, dominating the social practices, which angered the population:

“When I was a child, there was a police station near my house. I saw a lot of things happen there, both bad and good. One time I saw an officer stopping a young man who was walking past the cabin. When the man stopped, the officer asked him to put his hands up, and started to search his pockets and his bag. Then, the officer pulled down the man’s pants, leaving him only in his underwear in the middle of the street. Boy, was I scared, waiting for the moment the man would react and start a fight. Just think about how disrespectful that officer was, shaming that man in public: he had to button up his pants and get from the floor everything that was in his backpack, including his lunch bag, because he was just coming back from work.”
[WOMAN WHO LIVES IN NOVA HOLANDA]

“One time, the police cabin was broken into and some guns and other things were stolen; then, the officers were tied up to the streetlights in front of the cabin. A police van had to rush in to take down the officers. I think they had it coming. They were always beating up the people.” [WOMAN WHO LIVES IN NOVA HOLANDA]

The remaining Community Stations (PCCs) have lost all their purpose, which was meant to be a space to facilitate contact between the people and the police. Instead, the remaining cabins are destroyed, filthy places. The officers work under undignified conditions, spending their shifts – in the case of the Vila João cabin, for example – inside the building, locked in, with no

contact with the people, who don't even come near the place. A completely incomprehensible situation, because qualified cabins inside the favelas are needed and should be positive, offering support for various integrated actions and establishing an organic relationship to the population.

The precinct's officers don't walk around at night and most of them don't even work inside Maré. They go in and out through Linha Vermelha, and have no relation to local daily life. The contact is usually established when they need to act inside the favela, situations filled with tension and terror.

"I must admit I'm afraid to work here in the PPC. I'm afraid of coming in here and leaving in a body bag. I ask myself what I'm doing here, if we're ACUADOS. People don't come in here. We don't have anything to do, unless there's a conflict in the community and we go in as backup for other officers in certain situations. Otherwise, we're here with no support, in a humiliating structure, and we can't even go out." [22ND PRECINCT SERGEANT]

"I've been working in this precinct since it's been moved from Benfica. I saw how things were done from the beginning. To be honest, I really like working here. It's a nice work environment, I have lots of friends. The whole problem, as I see it, is that it's in an awful place. It's killing me that a precinct was set up in such a high risk place. Sometimes we leave and hear gunshot. What would be the right thing to do? The police should go in there and see what's up. But we can't do that. If we go in, the conflict escalates. So we see that, knowing it should be different, and we feel quite hopeless." [22ND PRECINCT SOLDIER]

The information that arrives in the precinct is usually given through the phone, frequently anonymously. It's hard to find a civilian inside the precinct. The entrance is through the Linha Vermelha. The interviewed officers unanimously said that they'd never been approached by people who

live in Maré for any complaints. Every call the precinct got to act upon any violent situation has been through the phone.

"I don't think I've ever seen a person from Nova Holanda, for example, coming in here. I'm saying that since the precinct has been here, even when we had the computer room with classes open to the public. They are afraid. They know that, coming in here, they might give the criminals the impression that they're telling on them. Now, they do call the precinct to talk about wars between the dealers. When a group tries to invade a rival area, it's a mess; they call to ask the police to keep the criminals from getting in. When the Comando Vermelho invaded Timbau, the people there wouldn't stop calling to ask us to go there to take them out. It's only then that they remember we exist." [OFFICER IN THE MARÉ PRECINCT]

It's known that the precinct isn't supposed to receive complaints from the people; those complaints should be placed at the police stations. However, there aren't stations like that in the favelas. The closest station to Maré is the 21st DP, in Higienópolis. The PPC used to fulfill that role, but that was lost with time.

"I've been working in this area for 25 years. I worked in the Nova Holanda PPC when it closed. We used to know the people, know the honest workers and those who weren't. When a husband beat up his wife, or when neighbors got in a fight, they'd all run to the PPC. And when a husband got home drunk and wanted to beat up his wife, she would run up to the PPC. Then we'd go to their house, bring in the guy and put him in jail. We had two cells in the Nova Holanda PPC. If it was serious, they'd be taken to the 21st DP. Nowadays, I don't know who lives there. We can't show ourselves to them. Even I am afraid of going in

there. I know work with traffic in Benfica and I'm out of the favela operations. By the way, what are you doing inside the precinct? I met you as a kid in the corner store. Aren't you afraid of coming here, of the criminals doing something mean to you?"

[SOLDIER IN THE MARÉ PRECINCT]

The procedures to deal with requests regarding public security are quite confusing at the moment. Certain complaints and violations that would be reported to police stations across town are dealt with differently in the favela. From the point of view of the officer, there's a judgement regarding what kind of complaints a person would make in a station and that leads to a belief that placing certain law enforcement institutions in poor parts of town would be useless, since the population doesn't want that kind of service. This is a very contradictory belief, since those are the areas with the most right violations.

From the point of view of the people, there's resentment and mistrust regarding their demands being met. Actually, people are even scared of going near the precinct to ask for help. The most frequent argument is that it's not worth it to go to the precinct because they're treated as criminals there. And if it's a complaint about police action, the same officers can retaliate somehow later. And dealers can also think you're going to the precinct to tell on them. This is how most people and most officers think.

"I can't see how the people of Maré can come here to complain. They often don't even know their rights. They can't say anything when the dealers force them to do certain things or when they come into their homes without permission, for example. Actually the people comply with the drug trade. I'm not saying they like it, but they grow used to it and accept it naturally."

[OFFICER IN THE MARÉ PRECINCT]

"I've had to go to the police to lodge a complaint twice since I moved to Maré. But I'll tell you: I didn't know what to do. I don't go into the precinct. The station is too far. My husband tried to beat me up twice, when he got home drunk, and he's spent all his paycheck partying in bars. The last time, I had to hit him with a broom so he'd calm down. I thought: should I go to the precinct talk to the officers and ask them to talk to my husband, or should I just go to the drug joint to talk to the boys? The last time it happened, I talked to my boss and she said I should go to the Woman's Station [Delegacia de Mulheres]. I didn't even know that existed. I did go, but I was afraid that my husband would go to the drug joint to tell them I was calling the cops."

[WOMAN LIVING IN MARÉ]

In this context, some basic questions should be made regarding these institutions in Maré. If it's hard for the officers to go in and out of favelas, due to criminal conflicts, why do officers have night shifts in those places? What's the point of PCCs, if they're not integrated to some greater work the police could do in Maré? Mainly, why keep state structures that waste resources, put professional's lives in risk and don't do anything they were created to do? Many questions came up during my visits to the PCCs. It was certainly an unsettling experience to realize that the mere existence of public structures, even precarious, isn't enough to guarantee effective services, at least in the favela. It's sad to see public resources being wasted with no concrete results, when there are so many pressing needs in the field of public security.

Decrypting violence in popular spaces

An attentive look at the constitution process of Brazilian society and State shows us how historically established practices are impregnated by fundaments and principals dominated by the naturalization of unequal access of different social groups to public services and to full citizen rights.

When it comes to the story of the Brazilian State, its most iconic aspect is the confusion between public and private interests. As said by José de Souza Martins, “the ‘favor politics’, which is the foundation for the Brazilian State, doesn’t consider the distinction between private and public” (1994, p. 20). The confusion between those instances starts with the arrival of the Portuguese, with the identification of new lands as part of Crown property, which was confused with public property, with no space left for goods that belonged to the people. This identification went further with the hereditary fiefs and the full power given to its owners, even over the people who lived there. This process of constructing an order supported by inequality has as its (re)productive fundament the very definition and recognition of who could enjoy public goods. According to Martins,

“(…) the idea of personhood, as we know, was limited to pure-blooded white catholics who were also pure of faith. The impure, that is, biracial people, native slaves, black slaves, as well as the moors and jewish people, were subjected to exclusions that went from goods owner to owner’s goods.” (Martins, 1994, p. 22)

Thus, the future Brazilian state is born as a classic instrument, as Karl Marx would say, to guarantee the power of a specific social actor, in the case of colonial Brazil, the patriarchal oligarch. Consequently, libertarian movements in social history have as their fundamental goal to break up the oligarchic tradition and to build, even if sometimes unconsciously,

republican institutional arrangements, changing the sense of the term throughout the historic process, depending on the groups' ideological identifications. In that search, different alliances were built, and our history is until this day marked by advances and retreats in the rupture of the patrimonialism still present in Brazilian social structure.

In the same direction, Sérgio Buarque de Holanda, in his classic *Raízes do Brasil*, published in 1936, analyzes the country's modernization, also realizing, since its beginnings, the interwoven public and private spheres. The author criticizes this promiscuous relationship, considering that the State shouldn't be just a continuation of the family, especially of dominant families. According to him, there shouldn't be "a gradation, but rather a discontinuation and even an opposition between family and State" (Holanda, 1995, p. 141). The author then says:

"(...) family relations, based on a patriarchal rural colonial family, would be very negative when it comes to bringing up responsible men. It's usual to this day to see men in public office who can't distinguish public from private. There's a lack of impersonal order that characterizes life in the bureaucratic State." (Holanda, 1995, p. 147).

Contributing to the constitution of those institutional relations is the birth of a social being defined by Holanda as the "cordial man". However, it shouldn't be understood as a civil or polite man; the adjective is closer to "*cordes*" (heart): to the realm of emotion. It would denominate a subject who doesn't establish relationships through a common realm of universal and public rights and duties, but through dependence and the establishment of social spaces defined through relationships; a man who'd be the product/producer of specific forms of state organizations.

Holanda considers the figure of the king, when it comes to Portugal, to have had a fundamental role in creating this social architecture. Indeed, during colonial times, the bonds between subjects and their liege were characterized by different forms of interdependence, a situation that frequently led to conflict and instability. Thus, access to land, for example, was granted upon the recognition of service to the Crown; in other words, it was left to the king to decide who would receive such a benefit, therefore what was

received was a gift, a reward, not a right supported on principles beyond the whims of the ruler. In this case, it's impossible not to remember the autocratic power of drug lords in Rio de Janeiro favelas.

Considering the mentioned order, the socially oppressed groups claims to their rights frequently took advantage of occasional conflicts between socially dominant groups. In these disputes, however, the force balance was never altered to the point of revoking the privileged access of the richest and most powerful to state goods. Thus, for centuries, most of the population kept being excluded from the fundamental goods of the nation.

Sérgio Buarque de Holanda then states that Brazilian social movements focused on reorganizing the society were usually done from the top down, that is, with no real population involvement.

His claim can, however, be relativized and considered in a different way: subaltern social groups have almost always historically identified the State as a repressive force in service of dominant interests. Therefore, many of the movements that questioned the social order didn't mean to reform the State, but to go beyond its structures. The *quilombos*, the jesuit reductions and the millenarianist movements (such as Canudos and Contestado) didn't question the State or asked it to take on a different role; they simply saw it as an adversary and ignored it whenever possible. It's not an accident, then, that the modern order defended by poorer social groups in the favelas and in urban or rural land occupations generally sees the State as an adversary or at least as an actor that's indifferent to these populations' historic demands.

Victor Nunes Leal, in *Coronelismo: enxada e voto* (1960), describes and analyzes the structure of Brazilian society during the First Republic (1889-1930) from the oligarchic relations materialized in the figure of the colonel. He author analyzes the role that period's most symbolic character played in the web of municipal, state and federal government relationships. According to him, *coronelismo* is the result of a new actor that was born with the republic: the state governors. They are fundamental to the strengthening of state power – and to the loss of private total power –, with strong feudal characteristics of landowners, founded basically in family relations.

The governors were chosen by the parties, establishing power pacts involving federal, state and municipal dominant groups in a stable chain of appropriation and privatization of public resources, both materially and

symbolically. The pillar of the *coronelismo* was the agrarian structure of inner Brazil, characterized by huge concentrations of property in the hands of very few owners, a structure that was maintained thanks to the pacts between urban and rural political groups. Not even the so-called Citizen Constitution, enacted in 1988, could end this historic class agreement.

Victor Leal considers that the *CORONÉIS* were the only alternative to rural populations, since the State was absent. In other words: they were local mediators considering the State not having a calling for guaranteeing a social minimum to those people in a republican way. This absence worked to maintain social and political order, because it allowed this sort of clientele relationship to be established, supporting the political system based on favor exchange that was very characteristic at the time – and that still survives to this day, in new or old ways. Thus, the “*coronelismo* was expressed as the result of the superposition of developed forms of the representative regime to an inadequate social and economical structure” (Leal, 1997, p. 40).

From the mutually helpful relationship between farmers and parties that controlled the government, in its various instances, were born authoritarian and particularist practices, like the *mandonismo* and the *filhotismo*. Treating public goods as an exclusive object of dominant sectors led to state institutions’ complete inability to expand their roles and answer to the population’s basic social needs. This also happened, albeit in a smaller scale, in urban centers. In the absence of a collective tradition of organization and of overreaching political instruments, *coronelismo* was consolidated as a fundamental instrument of social order. Thanks to it, the republic barely changed the dynamic of inequality present in previous historical periods; on the contrary, it was proclaimed to guarantee existing domination processes.

More important than the establishing of the Republic was the abolition of slavery. The exposition done here is enough evidence of why Brazil was the last nation-state to keep thousands of people in slavery, on the cusp of

the 20th century.²⁷ Anyway, abolishing slavery was a turning point in the realm of politics and economy, although the same can't be said in the realm of social issues. The prohibition of the transatlantic slave trade and the arrival of free workers freed great sums of money to be invested in coffee production, in industrial production, in logistics and in urban structure.

With that process, cities progressively gained autonomy from the rural areas, and social actors started to question the traditional power structures and the State's subordination to oligarch interests.

These sectors gradually expanded their political pressure in the establishment of the Republic. New pacts were made, although still among dominant social groups, both those involved in government and the economically dominant ones. The main deal between urban and rural dominant groups, allowing the country's industrialization and guaranteeing significant portions of economical and political power in the hands of rural oligarchs, was established in the revolution led by Getúlio Vargas in 1930.

Therefore, the agreements between urban and rural dominant groups in the 19th and 20th centuries, especially after 1930, modernized the country without changing social and cultural relations that feed inequalities that are clearly visible in politics and economy. Thus, a modern and sophisticated model of reproducing inequality was established, with new ways to legitimize their discourses.

The temporal cleavage is expressed through a linear cut between tradition and modernity, past and present. In this paradigm, the hardships of creating a modern, republican country, dominated by Weberian bureaucracy, are presumed to be a result of both dominant and dominated groups being

²⁷ In April 12th, 2006, an op-ed in *O Globo*, written by a businessman, stated that most of Brazil's problems are a result of two wrongdoings in abolishing slavery: the fact that it wasn't postponed in a few months, in order to guarantee that the coffee would be picked, and that it didn't include financial restitution to slave owners. He didn't say a thing, however, regarding ex-slave rights to restitution or other social goods. The absence of any restitution to ex-slaves, the difficulty to have access to land and to school and the prejudice and the stigma regarding their social practices made black people's attempt at improving their lives a herculean fight, usually in opposition to state order and institutions. The tense dynamics between subaltern black groups and the social and territorial order of state organizations are still at work to this day, and it's a fundamental variable when considering the context of violence and social struggle in favelas and other poor areas.

unable to create a national project that goes beyond privilege, local advantages and private rights.

Concepts developed by authors such as Sérgio Buarque de Holanda, Victor Leal, José de Souza Martins, Caio Prado, Gilberto Freyre and Florestan Fernandes, among other scholars included in what is now known as the paradigm of Brazilian modernization, allow for a valuable wealth of interpretations.

However, this wealth didn't seem to be enough to explain the dynamics of Brazilian society in temporal (modernity and tradition) and spacial (regarding regional relations) terms. Likewise, I don't think the mentioned authors' writings account for the complexity of social groups in current urban centers, especially the relations between the variety of socially dominant and dominated groups.

As important as historical practices are, the central element in privatization practices being developed and the State being used for selfish means can't only be an issue of residual patrimonialist conscience. You only need to consider the frequent scandals regarding irregular spending of public resources by French, Israeli, Canadian politicians (or those from elsewhere) to realize that the confusion between private and public, between global and private interests, also happens in countries with very different histories. Indeed, what's frequently behind the explanation of a modern/archaic dichotomy in Brazil is a prejudiced and instrumentalist logic affecting political and social relations between powerful groups in Brazilian society, as we'll see below.

It's no accident, especially considering Bourdieu's studies about French lifestyles,²⁸ that the assumptions made by our modernization scholars are similar to those the French sociologist identifies in a part of his country's ruling class, the technocrats. The author shows how their reasoning is structured on two opposing poles: past/present or traditional/modern. Considering the influence of French thought in Brazilian universities in the 1930s, it's easy to identify the original references in the production of this paradigm.

The temporal cleavage – past *versus* present – was followed by a spacial cleavage – traditional *versus* modern. Thus, dichotomous interpretative

²⁸ Cf. Bourdieu. "Gostos de classes e estilos de vida". In: Bourdieu, 1994.

references are't only used in present-past relations, but also in regional relations. In fact, the idea of two Brazils, started in the 1930s, dominated the political and economical national thought for decades.²⁹ This proposition had the same dichotomies – modern vs. archaic, bureaucracy vs. patrimonialism etc. – expressed in that context by the rich, urban and advanced Center-South, as opposed to the poor, problematic, rural and archaic North/Northeast. Thus, certain actions and alliances between so-called modern political parties were and still are justified by the supposed lag in political groups in other parts of the country. Likewise, companies, both rich Center-South companies and multinationals, still act differently depending on whether they're acting in the Southeast or in the North.

Francisco de Oliveira, in its essay “Elegia de uma Re(li)gião” (1977), criticizes the supposed existence of these two distinct Brazilian worlds, showing the functionality of Southeast-Northeast relations, the links between development and underdevelopment, as well as the transference of economic resources from poorer areas to richer ones. Drawing from a wide range of examples, Oliveira demonstrates the impossibility of dichotomous thinking regarding the unequal but combined construction of contemporary Brazilian economic, social and cultural order.

A third limit in interpretative references regarding modern Brazilian society is the social cleavage. Silva (2002, 2005) identifies the guiding premise of studies and proposals as sociocentric. According to the author,

“(…) ‘sociocentrism’ is materialized when a set of comparisons is established between a certain social group’s beliefs, values and standards and those of another group, usually considered as inferior. The narratives regarding popular spaces and its inhabitants follow this pattern. They are usually defined by what they lack, because they’re not recognized as legitimate spaces and citizens.” (Silva, 2002, p. 67)

Looking at the theories of Brazilian modernization, this gap is clear: the recognition of sociopolitical contradictions in the constitutive dynamics of

²⁹ The concept was spread by the work of Pierre Lambert, a French professor who worked at USP (São Paulo University) at the time.

the present social reality is very fragile. Authors don't usually identify and recognize historical fights led by various popular social groups in order to achieve their effective emancipation and their constitution as deserving of rights: the profusion of *quilombos* or riots, spontaneous or organized, in the past; the construction of favelas and other popular habitats in the present; the fight for access to land and social services, such as school, electricity, pavement, etc.; the insistence on labor rights, even in informal work; the participation in parties and syndicates etc. All of these, in their difference, were and still are effective practices of affirming a social space, searching for visibility beyond dominant standards and construction specific sociability conditions.

Thus, the fact that popular classes assume a subordinate position in the formal social world, defined based on the rational state and the competitive market, doesn't mean they're excluded from the social world as a whole. Actually, the world doesn't end at these specific conceptions of state and market, because they aren't monolithic or representatives of all of social reality. Indeed, it's possible to say that these social groups affirm themselves through social practices, and not through the conscience of the citizen condition.

This condition isn't conceded by state institutions, but created in the fight for daily existence. Therefore, citizenship isn't something for which the individual is prepared, that's redeemed or that comes with the process; it's exercised since the human being joins the social world. Thus, occupying lands to plant and live, occupying the streets to work, in the absence of other, better, possibilities, and creating community institutions, as well as numerous other initiatives, are deep expressions of an acting citizenship in permanent (re)creation.

Without this interpretation, we risk seeing, on one hand, popular social groups as passive victims of a cruel historical process, that transforms our country, and other peripheral countries, in bigger expressions of injustice, violence and inequality; and, on the other hand, the perception that they wouldn't be responsible for transformations in institutional Brazilian life. Actually, there's strength, vigor and movement in the social world, marked by conflict and fight.

Another aspect to be considered when it comes to political and civil rights, is what this meant, since the 19th century, to the progressive materialization of a democratic and capitalist Brazilian society. To the part of

the population that's historically affected by inequality, not having access to numerous public services, as well as full voting rights, allowed them a significant autonomy from clientelist and physiological political relations.

It's also worth noting the process of republicanization of the Brazilian State, especially undeniable after the end of the military dictatorship, in the 1980s. It's also been materialized due to social fight, creating conditions for new rights to be awarded to citizens. This process, even if peripherally, involves and is driven by members of popular social groups who continuously expand the possibilities of exercising their social rights.

In conclusion, our search for a reading of the process of creating Brazilian social reality through the tension between affirming inequality and fighting to overcome it is clear. This tension, usually ignored by modernization scholars, has driven the construction of the central structures of Brazilian society and State. This tension is deeply reflected in the way State organizations relate to social groups, especially poorer ones.

Armed state interference in peripheral regions

*“They say it exists to help you
They say it exists to protect you
I know it can stop you
I know it can arrest you
They tell you to obey
They tell you to answer
They tell you to cooperate
They tell you to respect
Police! For those who need police!”*
[TITÃS]³⁰

Just another police raid

Just another one of many police raids, this time in Nova Holanda, executed by the Civil Police, on September 20th, 2008. Its objective was to find the parties responsible for the death of an officer who had been robbed and killed two days earlier, arriving at his house in Ilha do Governador – the killers were later found in Duque de Caxias, a Baixada Fluminense town. The police car was found in Morro do Timbau, one of the favelas in Maré ruled by a gang rival to that of Nova Holanda, which

³⁰ Translated from the Portuguese. “Dizem que ela existe pra ajudar / Dizem que ela existe pra proteger / Eu sei que ela pode te parar / Eu sei que ela pode te prender / Dizem pra você obedecer / Dizem pra você responder / Dizem pra você cooperar / Dizem pra você respeitar / Polícia! Para quem precisa de polícia!”

makes it all even weirder. I watch, as I have many times before, offices aggressively approach people in the favela.

It was a hot Saturday morning. The streets were crowded, the weekly open market in full swing, when CORE, the Civil Police elite, arrived, taking the favela's main street, guns in hand. The officers looked around, tense and afraid; they talked to passerby; they stopped cars, they barged into stores. Every time, they asked for documents and identification. They were cold and aggressive to the people who were, allegedly, suspect of something as of yet unknown to them.

I was just outside Redes, talking on the phone, when an officer wearing a cap and carrying a huge gun came nearer, close enough to listen in on my conversation. At first this annoyed me, and when I hung up he asked for my I.D. I said it was in my purse, inside the office. Aggressively, he said I should carry my I.D. With me. I asked why he was being aggressive. He then asked where I worked and what I was doing there. Once again I said I worked in the University and also in Redes, with social projects. At that, the officer replied, loudly: "What do you think I'm doing in this shithole instead of being home with my family?". At that moment, I felt very hurt, and replied: "You'd certainly prefer to be with your family, sir, but I also think the families that live here would like to be treated differently, at least more respectfully; or don't you think there are good decent people living here too?"

At that point the officer grew furious; another officer nearby commented: "She's probably here to pick up pot." Shocked, I asked: "What are you talking about, sir? Do you think there aren't good people here? People like me can't be here for anything other than drugs?". The atmosphere was tense, and the officer who'd first approached me decided to leave, bringing with him his colleague, who was already up in my face.

This particular experience, quite frequent in police raids in favelas, was a confirmation that thinking about the professional public security practices in the city, especially when it comes to police intervention in certain areas, should be a priority. The officers are also usually from peripheral areas, areas that also face violent actions coming from law enforcement. However, it's not enough to map out current representations and practices; we need to go deeper, investigate the historical and cultural pillars of those actions, that frequently pit oppressed against oppressed, black poor people against their social peers.

The Military Police is a fundamental actor in the contradictory relationship between State and certain social groups. The Constitution of the Federative Republic of Brazil's 144th Article regulates public security as "the duty of the State and the right and responsibility of all, is exercised to preserve public order and the safety of persons and property".

The execution of this job is attributed to Federal, Road, Railroad, Civil and Military Police, as well as Firefighter Corps. The Federal Police is responsible, among other things, for investigating national or international crimes involving drug trade, smuggling and tax evasion, as well as controlling police actions in borders, airports and at sea. Road and Railroad Police have as their main responsibilities patrolling federal roads and railroads, respectively.

Civil Police, as well as Military Police and the Firefighter Corps, falls under the rule of state executive powers, and is focused mainly on investigating crimes in each federation, helping the judiciary powers enforce the law. The Military Police is considered an auxiliary to the Brazilian Army, is responsible for ostensible patrolling of public spaces and is controlled by a colonel-ranking officer, the Commandant-General.

This is the corporation we will focus in, because it's the main state security force acting in Rio de Janeiro's favelas. Therefore, interviews, observations and experiences reflected here prioritize understanding and identifying possible relations between this State organization and the people of the favelas.

In Brazil, the police was confirmed as an independent force when the country transitioned from being a Colony to being an independent State, in 1822. Police institution as we know it was invented in modern times, originally in Western Europe in the late 18th and 19th centuries. From a liberal perspective, it was intended to create order and punishment for crimes through rational standards, ending the tradition of religious and punitive order, expressed by public torture in the medieval period. Thus, the prison system was created, remaining to this day the punishment model for those who are judged and convicted by the law (Holloway, 1997, p. 43).

The structure closest to what we know understand as police was created in Brazil with the arrival of the Portuguese royal family, in 1808. As said by Marino,

“Rio de Janeiro, that until then represented a demure dirty place, effectively became the capital of the Portuguese Kingdom, not of a Portuguese colony. This significantly altered the mechanisms for population control and discipline, as well as the entire reasoning behind territorial order.” (Marino, 2004, p. 30)

In May 1808, the Police General Intendancy of the Court and the State of Brazil (*Intendência Geral da Polícia da Corte e do Estado do Brasil*), a structure inspired by the french model and copied by Portugal in the mid 18th century, was instituted. The new police had as its responsibilities organizing infrastructure construction, taking care of urban cleaning, managing the city, as well as investigating and punishing crimes. Thus, the new structure incorporated all three powers – legislative, executive and judiciary (Holloway, 1997, p. 46).

As the executive arm of its actions, the Police Royal Guard (*Guarda Real de Polícia*) was created in May 1809. The organization was structured based on military standards, with the goal of maintaining order and capturing criminals. Since its creation, the chiefs of the Royal Guard were Army colonels. The first guards were also recruited from the Army. They received military training and guidance, and their daily job was to patrol streets near the capital’s center, more specifically around the living quarters of the Portuguese royal family and its court. This initial function defines the Military Police’s history and their historical commitment to protect dominant groups’ goods and interests.

According to Marino, the officers were also responsible for raising funds to support the police forces. Therefore, officers frequently acted with the economic elite, in order to get the necessary funds and materials to maintain the police apparatus. Naturally, the Guard became dependent on the elite, which meant measures that could harm the interests of those sponsors were not allowed (Marino, 2004, p. 32).

The Guard had as its main target black people and slaves, due to the ruling class, especially Portuguese Court, being afraid of some sort of social uprising – european courts at the time were traumatized by the slave uprising in Haiti, where many white planters were killed. Therefore, those who were persecuted and arrested at the time were slaves and ex-slaves whose behavior wasn’t in agreement with the ruling class.

Controlling and disciplinary measures aimed at subaltern groups were based on violence and brutality. As an example, it's worth noting the actions of a Royal Guard agent, Miguel Nunes Vidigal, who reached the rank of second-in-command. He became known for the strategy of forbidding poor people or slaves to gather in public, with the intention of cleaning and ordering the streets. In that case, whipping those who drank, laughed or sang was a way of relating to the poor people in the city.

“Instead of the military saber, the equipment preferred by Vidigal and his followers was a whip with a long heavy handle and leather strips, that could be used to either lash or bludgeon. After being perversely and indiscriminately beaten up, slaves were brought back to their owners or brought to the intendant or his assistants, the judges, for a trial. Non-slave prisoners were kept for a short amount of time in the “guard house” at Largo do Paço (now Praça XV de Novembro), where some of the more physically able ones were, without any legal formality, recruited to serve in the Army or the Navy, and the rest were sent to serve bigger sentences in one of the city's prisons.” (Holloway, 1997, p. 49)

Vidigal also raided the *quilombos* and slave settlements hidden in Rio's hillsides, which is very similar to today's police raids in the favelas, in particular regarding the perception of those who lived in *quilombos* or in favelas as effective or potential offenders. This stereotypical and prejudiced image of lower social classes has been and still is part of a lot of law enforcement officers' perception.³¹

Actions like those described above had no legal ground other than the intendant's authority. According to an English observer, as said by Holloway, the law was so flawed, or it's execution was so flawed, that white people seemed to, little by little, have convinced themselves to be above them.

Few white people were arrested, except when it came to crimes against the State; biracial people could also be an exception, depending on how light or dark their skins were. Actually, the author continues, very few non-slaves

³¹ This representation will be further analyzed in the chapter where we talk about daily life in Maré.

were punished by law, proving that the law's main role was to protect the ruling class and maintain slavery.³² It was in these oppressive and anti-republican grounds that law enforcement was created in Rio de Janeiro, becoming an institution mainly devoted to the interests of a small part of society.

The 1824 Constitution started the institutionalization of a new state order. In 1827, the roles of Commissioner of the Peace and Police Chief, previously existing in Portuguese Court, were reinstated. Another central initiative to the new public security order was the establishment, in 1832, of the first Penal Code (*Código de Processo Criminal*), the legal basis for police action, which was used until the Republic was proclaimed.³³ In its establishment, it was an embryonic stage of the judicial police, that later originated what we now know as Civil Police. The Police Intendant office was replaced by the role of Police Chief.³⁴

The Municipal Guard, created in 1831, acted in each judge's jurisdiction. However, unlike the Royal Guard, the Municipal Guard was composed of civilians, not military. The candidates should be free, preferably white, and rich, so as not to risk those they should protect: local elites.

The creation of the Municipal Guard was meant to answer to a specific context, after Dom Pedro I's resignation, when many social and political conflicts were made themselves felt in the new country's capital. The National Guard was also created in 1831, due to the belief that the Municipal Guard, because it was based on paramilitary models, couldn't handle all the jobs involved in maintaining safety in an city that was becoming denser and more sophisticated. A group of Royal Guard members rebelled in July 1831, motivating the government's decision to extinguish the Portuguese institution and to create a more elite police institution, based on Army structures.

³² Slave or former slaves were 50% of the population, but 99% of convicted inmates, with the vast majority having been born in Africa. Cf. Holloway (1997, p. 50).

³³ An article of the Code that clearly shows the distinction between slaves and free men stated that free men couldn't be physically punished, especially through whipping, while slaves could.

³⁴ In this work I didn't try to analyze the role of Civil Police in public security. This very brief allusion only aims to show how public security institutions were created in the early 19th century, when Military Police was conceived.

The National Guard was structured in every unit in the country, starting with the capital, Rio de Janeiro. Its recruiting criteria included income and obligation, so as to guarantee that members of social and economic elites were in control. Its structure was militarized and its men well armed. The Guard didn't offer payment, and its members were supposed to pay for their uniforms, which meant the police force was created through a class bias. According to Marino (2004), serving in the guard meant to extend the responsibility for protecting private property and social order to the members of society who were interested in maintaining the *status quo*.

The National Guard fulfilled its role in nearly the entire country, but it was different in the capital. The richer people in the city refused to participate, so the troops consisted mostly of small business owners and poor white men. Because of that, the Permanent Corps (Corpo de Permanentes) was created in Rio de Janeiro in October 1831. Responding directly to the Ministry of Justice, the new institution was composed of volunteers who were better paid than the army lowest-ranked soldiers. The Permanent Corps had as its central goal the repression of social riots and rebellions, and it was the basis for the Military Police.³⁵

The "new" Military Police structure was a little different from the Court's Royal Guard. The idea was to create a police force with young men who would be well-paid, instead of Army recruits. However, the salary, quite high for its time, only attracted people from poorer classes. Feijó, the minister of Justice, wanted the police soldiers to be well-paid, but he knew that only the lower free classes would consider the offered salary as an interesting income (Holloway, 1997, p. 93).

This observation is important to understand the origins of the professionals who composed the Military Police. As described, since its origins, the officers come from the poorer layers of society. Therefore, there was a clear distinction between the new institution's creators and commanders on

³⁵ The "Permanent" title was formally taken off the Guard Corps title in 1858. In 1866, the institution started calling itself the Court's Military Police Corps and, finally, in 1920 it became the Military Police. Actually, until it settled on the name PMERJ (Polícia Militar do Estado do Rio de Janeiro – State of Rio de Janeiro's Military Police), the institution had many names that were modified according to political and government changes in the state of Rio.

one side and, on the other, the individuals who were willing to bring urban order, repress crimes, go after lawbreakers, that is, to fulfill their role as State repressive agents.

The social origins of most officers in the Military Police is meaningful. Indeed, one of the people interviewed during my research, a Civil Police Chief in Rio de Janeiro, considered that the officers' origins is one of the most positive aspects of the institution:

“A good thing of police institutions is its popular origin, except for the higher ranks – but, even then, you sometimes have people of humble origins. If you look at the Military Police chiefs, the Civil Police chiefs, you’ll see it’s not an aristocratic or elitist corporation. It’s composed of the Brazilian people. And I think that’s a very positive aspect. I believe that, at some point, this can allow for the corporations to change attitudes, when its officers, identifying themselves with their cultural and historical yearnings, can change the game. At some point, the corporations can understand that what they do is only benefitting the elite’s political games, and not their own interests. It also won’t guarantee the safety and the social recognition we need as professionals.” [J. ZAMIR,³⁶ RIO DE JANEIRO’S CIVIL POLICE CHIEF]

³⁶ Not his real name.

Images of violence: the perspective of affected groups

The extremely high rate of lethal violence in Brazil is one of the most dramatic aspects of contemporary national reality. From the 80s to the early 21st century, the number of murders increased by three-fold, especially in the main urban centers. The number of deaths grew as armed gangs in the favelas consolidated their power. I had the unfortunate opportunity to watch lethal violence rise since the beginning, which allows me to tell a dramatic story to illustrate the painful process of lives being destroyed that, at the moment, has become simply statistics.

The tragedy happened in a family with seven sons and four daughters living in Parque Maré. Its culmination, in 1986, was certainly one of the most memorable in the history of violence in the neighborhood, even though other similar episodes have played out in Maré. I could witness the tragedy very closely; like few other moments, its burned in my eyes and memory until today, as well as in the eyes and memories of many other people in Maré.

The parents of those 11 children had migrated from Campina Grande, Paraíba, in the 70s, and worked as shopkeepers in a small favela store, which provided the family's income. The family drama in 1986 was preceded by a harsh reality that shook the family to its core: the death of the youngest and the oldest sons, that happened on the same day in 1981.

The first-born used drugs and, for reasons unknown to the family, was indebted to the local dealers. He was executed by them in the middle of the night, "to set an example", a sort of killing that was becoming usual in the favela. In the afternoon of the same day, the youngest child, about 4 years old, was playing in a street near their house when he was fatally wounded by a stray bullet coming from the confrontation between local gangs.

The family suffered an even bigger loss five years after the death of those two sons: one of the remaining five brothers was involved in criminal activities and had just been released from prison. The boy wasn't part of the armed gang responsible for the drug trade in Parque Maré at the time. He acted as an independent contractor and outside Maré, specializing in robbing buses and stores, the reason for his arrest.

Even though he'd only recently been granted freedom from prison, the young man planned a big robbery, alongside other criminals in Parque Maré. After a successful attempt, they decided to celebrate with a barbecue – the habit of celebrating successful robberies was ordinary in Maré. The barbecue was held in a Friday evening, just outside the family's house, with other brothers attending, as well as the partners in crime. The brother who was responsible for the robbery, after some drinking, started talking openly about having stolen a lot of jewelry. He bragged about having so much money that, if he wanted, he could buy enough guns to take over the drug trade from the drug lord at the time. Apparently there were no indications that he actually intended to do that. One of his brothers was even part of the ruling criminal group at the time.

In the favela, however, these stories make the rounds very fast. When he heard about the young man's bragging, the drug lord understood that the robbery was intended to raise funds to buy guns and ammo to take over his turf. His interpretation was that the celebration, that gathered the criminal's partners and other four brothers, had been the moment of preparation for the upcoming attack.

The "lord of the favela" then invited everyone to a party on Saturday night, a day after the barbecue. Many of the young men who were on the barbecue came. The party was going on as usual when two of the five brothers showed up; they were immediately captured by the gang. One of them was the one who bragged, the other one the gang member. They spent the night being tortured.

Upon hearing what was happening, still in the middle of the night, another brother, not involved in crime, went to where his brothers were held captive. On the way, however, he was met by the "lord of the favela"'s "soldiers", who were coming to capture him due to his participation in the celebratory barbecue. Shots were fired and he was killed right there in the alley.

At the break of dawn on Sunday, the youngest brother, now 14, who wasn't involved with crime, heard what had happened to his three brothers and went to the drug lord to ask for mercy for the brothers who were still alive. He found the dealers with

his captive brothers in Nova Holanda's Main Street. The two young men, who had been seriously beaten, were tied up to poles. The teenager still tried to explain that the story going around wasn't accurate; however, the drug lord himself shot his two brothers in front of him. According to those who lived nearby, the teenager, very disturbed by what he had witnessed, started screaming, promising revenge. The same men responsible for his brothers' deaths then turned to him, shot him and he went down, under the poles where his dead brothers were still tied up. The other men involved with the robbery fled, but, from what people heard some time afterwards, they were also killed across other favelas in town.

Four brothers brutally murdered in the same weekend. The crimes deeply upset the people, who did a vigil where the crimes had happened, a common practice in the favelas. After losing six kids in such grueling situations, the family decided to move out of Maré, even though the drug lord didn't force them to. Only one son remained, already married and not living in Maré; three of the four daughters were also married and living elsewhere.

The funeral for the four brothers was poorly attended, because the circumstances that led to their tragic deaths made friends and neighbors afraid of showing up. The father was mourning in Paraíba and couldn't come to Rio for his sons' wake. The family thought it would be safer for him not to come back to say goodbye. The mother and the youngest daughter then went to Paraíba to join him, and they never came back.

I still remember vividly those young men, from the Northeast, like me, tied up to the poles, completely disfigured, and the young boy fallen to the ground. When I think about them, I can't help thinking about my parents: they had also left Paraíba and arrived at the favela; there they settled with their six living kids (another six died as kids, from natural causes), full of hope for a better life, with new opportunities and new shots at happiness. The same hope and belief were certainly in the heart of that family, torn apart over the course of one weekend in Maré; one of many marked by pain, violence and brutality. Two families, two fates, two deep expressions of the pains and joys of existing in the favela. In this context, it's worth reading the lives behind the numbers, behind hope and death, so as to never forget what guides our existence: searching for a purpose and a deep desire for a better life.

The intense picture portrayed in this book up until now wasn't sudden. It's the expression of a long historical process, with its main pillar the State's inability to recognize all citizens as deserving of the same fundamental rights as the economical and social elites. My hypothesis is that the people of the favela's ignorance of their status as citizens is a result of the State's being captured by private interests, and used as a instrument to maximize the power and wealth of traditionally dominant groups.

The latin expression *res publica*, according to Othwaite and Bottomore (1996), implies that public things should be of public interest: it's the active citizens who should manage the State, not the kings, the aristocratic oligarchs or even one party. The citizens treat each other as equals. The public culture of politics, in this sense, is very different from the private decision-making in autocracies. Republicanism isn't necessarily democratic, but it has a more participative spirit than individualist liberalism.

The historical construction of the Brazilian state, as well as its society, wasn't based on that notion of public. The State's privatization, since its colonial origins, was followed by social and cultural practices based on an enslaver logic and on the elite's relationship to their subordinates. The slave-owning culture and the privatization of state actions became elements of deep resistance to republican practices in the country. The absence of a political culture that recognizes basic equality among all citizens and the construction of an economic project that hinders the access of huge parts of the population to public resources create institutions, such as law enforcement, that legitimize and reproduce inequality.

The republican shortcomings resulted in a paradoxical context in Brazil's sovereignty over its national territory. Sovereignty is a state's ability to independently formulate and enforce specific laws in its territory, not depending on the wills of other states. Therefore, the state has to be able to enforce its decisions in the territory over which it has political control. This sovereign power is usually legitimated through the will of the people, expressed in elections, and is exercised by specific party governments for set periods of time.

The concept of legitimacy is central to the exercise of sovereignty, because it's revealed as the recognition of a state's, a group's or an institution's right to exert a specific social practice. Thus, legitimacy is different from

legality, because the latter is based on the law and the former is based on common recognition of individuals who share common codes, territories or practices.³⁷

Research on Rio de Janeiro's territorial configuration shows that, indeed, the state has no political or legal power over extensive parts of the city, especially favelas and other peripheral spaces. It doesn't regulate property ownership, building norms or urban planning, it doesn't remove lawbreakers from social life or prosecute them legally, it doesn't guarantee the citizens' safety, it doesn't control the offer and maintenance of public services, nor does it guarantee the right to walk freely in a set space or between different areas of the city. The state's unwillingness to exert their sovereignty in popular spaces and to regulate the relations that take place in them as it does in the most valuable areas of the city, privatized this power, turning it into market value. In this conflict space, armed criminal gangs started acting.³⁸

The most curious and contradictory phenomenon of the presence of criminal groups in favelas is that, in order to become legitimate in the eyes of the people, they have taken over the role of the police. As I said, we became used to confusing institutional identity and function. Therefore, we name state law enforcement as police (2001). However, Bayley (2001), in his

³⁷ During the Brazilian military dictatorship, the groups fighting for democracy said that the laws at the time were legal, but illegitimate. This distinction is the basis for developing resistance to actions exerted by certain instances without popular or constitutional grounds. In the definition of power proposed by H. Arendt, legitimacy is an inherent and fundamental element to power being asserted. Cf. H. Arendt, 2009, p. 69.

³⁸ When it comes to Rio, ACGs (Armed Criminal Groups, or *Grupos Criminosos Armados* – GCAs, in the original Portuguese) are criminal cores or networks that act in illegal, extortionate and/or irregular economic activities, from a specific territorial place. Activities include drug trade, gambling, security services, irregular mass transit, market monopoly, etc. The control of their activities is based on coercion – especially through firearms –, naturalization of activities (such as video poker or *jogo do bicho*) and on legitimacy, because they have the power of ordering local collective practices. There are four of these groups acting in the Greater Rio de Janeiro area, as well as in other urban centers: gambling (including *jogo do bicho*, videopoker and illegal casinos), death squads (who usually offer private security services), drug trade and the militias. All these groups are based on controlling certain turfs, through negotiation or conflict with other groups. The two latter groups are usually characterized by bringing daily gun violence to the communities in their control. Cf. Silva & Barbosa (2005).

classic study of police institutions around the world, defines police characteristics through some basic criteria: “the word ‘police’ refers to people authorized by a group to regulate interpersonal relations inside that group through physical force” (Bayley, 2001, p. 20).

The described features, in great measure, are present in criminal groups that regulate social relations in the favelas, especially the oldest militias: an armed group, with explicit hierarchical power relations to local population, with objective power to establish sanctions and punishment to those who disobey the rules, some of them in agreement with the population’s interests – forbidding robbery, rape, excessive use of force, unauthorized occupation of public spaces, etc.

It’s worth considering an important element in Bayley’s definition and applying it to favelas in Rio: the degree of consent given by local population to the criminal group regulating local social order. Most people from other areas, as well as mass media, tend to believe that the favela population supports, legitimizes and defends the criminal groups. This perception is entirely wrong, because it ignores that there’s no population participation in the process of criminal groups occupying certain territories; it’s a domineering, private process, established through the use of armed forces, like most dictatorships are established.

Anyway, no territory can function if its social relations aren’t regulated: there’s no continuous power void in these spaces. After all, it’s possible to live in social worlds with different regulations, but it’s impossible to live without them. Therefore, social relations in the favelas were created through particular regulation tools, in order to make up for the State’s absence. Historically, the power of regulation, or at least of some level of discipline, was in the hands of charismatic people or people who were linked to politically or socially influential people in the city, including cops.

Until the 80s, when the drug trade started taking over favelas, the *mineiras* – private militia groups composed mostly of local people – and/or the *bicheiros* – the people who ran illegal gambling games called *jogo do bicho* – had the role of regulators in most popular areas. In this case, there was an expressive level of legitimacy due to charisma or to a supposed interest in protecting the community from occasional local crimes and possible

external threats.³⁹ There was a lot of property protection, which generated a meaningful balance in the community that had people or groups in that police function. Thus, they fulfilled the criteria for police presented before.

The military power of criminal groups involved in the drug trade ended that balance. The 80s were filled with confrontations, with one of the most significant happening in Rocinha between the drug trade and the gambling group, as well as the one in Favela Para-Pedro, in Acari, between the drug trade and the *mineira*. From that moment on, the drug lords, especially those linked to bigger criminal organizations, asserted their violent authority on the favelas. Under the pretense of being “community protectors”, they gained legitimacy through autocratic violence: prison, judgement and punishment. They also started acting as social action operators, especially in more vulnerable social groups, and as legislators regarding the use of land the way institutions would work.

Since the 90s, due to the intensification of the conflict between rival gangs and to local groups’ needs for more direct support from external parts of the same organization, the relations changed. First, the significant increase in military power intensified the local criminal group’s feeling of safety regarding the police, which meant they didn’t need popular legitimacy as much as before. The members of those groups also felt more belonging to the gangs than to the general community. Therefore, they felt less committed to their original communities, and didn’t feel they needed to keep up the appearances that they were there to protect them; the gang and their goals became more important.

Lastly, the average age of entry in those organizations decreased during the 90s, going from 15-16 to 12-13 years old. Therefore, the gangs now had less educated members, who hadn’t lived as long in the community, who

³⁹ An example of the “efficiency” of the regulative power of criminal groups in Rio favelas is the near-total absence of casual murders in those communities, even though they are crowded and there’s a lot of drinking. The chief of the armed group has the sole right of deciding who dies in his territory, and that’s known by all. On the other hand, the closing of bars at the end of the night in Diadema, a city in the Greater São Paulo area, was pointed out as a necessary measure to decrease homicides. In Rio favelas, that’s not a relevant variable. This shows the importance of diagnosing precisely the specificities of local realities in order to institute efficient public security policies.

had a smaller social network in the favela, and whose lives were entirely taken up by the dynamics of the criminal groups. This also meant these teens aren't as connected to their origins and, consequently, aren't as worried about respecting the people.

In conclusion, the state's sovereignty crisis in most Rio favelas is a result of its republican inefficiency in serving the interests of the whole population, regardless of social or economic conditions. In this process, sovereignty itself is privatized, and the ability of regulating social relations, especially in urban centers, becomes the role of specific criminal groups.

Thus, police forces representing the state don't act in the favelas as institutions that regularly control the city's territory, but as invaders on a territory controlled by enemies.⁴⁰ Therefore, the civilian population in such places is also seen as part of the enemy territory, and treated as such.

The state's inefficiency in its republican role, the crisis in the monopoly on violence and authority in urban spaces, the privatization of social order in most popular spaces, especially favelas, and the prevalence of war-like strategies in public security policies are some of the reasons I identify for the way the police acts in Rio favelas, as well as in other social spaces. In this book, I try to understand how these factors are historically structured, paying special attention to modern inequality in the country and to the military police institution's action model. Expanding on this reflection, I highlight the state government's public security propositions from 1983 to the present day.

Next, I'll identify and analyze the practices and representations of both police officers and people who live in Maré. I believe it is possible to develop a wider perspective on the phenomenon of police action in the favelas, focusing on Maré, and to propose new paths to create a citizen approach to public security.

⁴⁰ In the latest Rio de Janeiro state governments, especially since the Benedita da Silva administration, in 2002, certain initiatives, said to be "social invasions", have taken place in favelas. The concept's contradiction is self-explanatory, as you can't invade your own territory.

Recomposing history: the politics of violence

The Brizola administration as a Public Security reference

As I wrote the book, I chose the 80s, more specifically the first Leonel Brizola administration, as the cutoff point to analyze public security policies and law enforcement practices in Rio de Janeiro. My choice came from understanding that the conflict between the hegemonic public security models from then until now started at that time. On one hand, a hegemonic model for most of Brazilian history, focused on repression, especially to crimes committed by poor individuals, with no social control and total disregard for human rights. On the other hand, a new model, proposed by the security team of a governor called populist and authoritarian, loved by the people, hated by conservatives and criticized by most of the political left wing.

In the early 80s, Brazil went through a political opening, with the end of a military dictatorship that suppressed, among other fundamental rights, the citizen's right to participate in the choice of governors and mayors of states and cities considered strategic for national security. The possibility to vote for state and city administrators, since 1982, brought a new perspective to elected governments until that point. It came as no surprise that, after the dictatorship, huge portions of the Brazilian population chose to vote for administrators that were opposed to the previous regime. In Rio de Janeiro, Leonel de Moura Brizola, a politician from the South of the country, and the main adversary of the dictatorship, was chosen as the state governor. He took office in 1983 and, among many controversial proposals, suggested deep changes in the public security paradigm. This change was, apparently, detached from a worrying situation: the quick rise of criminal rates in Rio de Janeiro.

With Brizola, a new government program took place, prioritizing a human rights agenda and focusing on public security regarding the poorest populations in Rio de Janeiro. Expectations and hope for social change were

especially regarding the way the police treated people in the favelas and in peripheral areas. The new governor's promise was to create a new police action, based on respect and recognition of all citizens, including those in the favelas, who, until that point, were completely excluded from the right to public security.

The start of the administration was marked by serious tension in public security, due to a historic of various accusations: police involvement in numerous illegal activities, like gambling; strong repression suffered by prison inmates; offensive treatment of people in the favelas, etc. The Civil Rights and Judicial Police Department, responsible for organizing the Civil Police, and the Military Police Department, responsible for coordinating the Military Police, were created. In the previous structure, the state had a single department, the Public Security Department, responsible for both Civil and Military Police.

Besides the two departments, four councils were created: Public Security; Justice and Human Rights; Military Police Superior Council and the Police Council. These structures were composed by State and civil society representatives, in order to create dialogue in search for new public security policies that could take into account the interests of most of the population.

The biggest public security change, according to Holanda (2005), was overcoming the Military Police's historic subordination to the military impulses of the Army. Greatly worried about domestic security, the federal institution ordered the Military Police not to prioritize actions effectively based on the concept of public security. Therefore, the decentralization promoted by the Brizola administration was revealed to be a huge change from the rationale that conducted most of the Military Police history, especially when it came to the understanding of the organization's institutional role. That's because

“(...) the ‘contamination’ of the police by the Army meant the way criminality was treated was skewed, based on war terminology (“war on crime”) and on a violent logic. Social control strategies were mainly modeled on resorting to repressive mechanisms. The war metaphor operated the daily administration of social life.” (HOLANDA, 2005, p. 79)

As a symbol for the new policy, Leonel Brizola chose as the head of the Secretaria da Polícia Militar the Military Police colonel Carlos Magno Nazareth Cerqueira, a black man, known and respected for his seriousness and competence inside the corporation.⁴¹ The chosen head of the Secretaria de Polícia Civil was deputy Arnaldo de Poli Campana, an officer with no previous history of administrative participation, who stayed in office until mid-1986, when he was replaced by Nilo Batista, a lawyer. The work of these professionals in the Brizola administration was based on opening certain participation channels to the society, regarding public security elaboration and control, focusing on human rights.

In that perspective, one of the first measures of the new public security administration was to end the possibility of *bravery* promotions. According to Nilo Batista, quoted by Holanda (2005, p. 82),

“(...) the practice, praised by military police, especially during the years of political recrudescence, created inadmissible distortions, including spurious negotiations of the number of deaths in a police operation.”

Regarding favelas, there was significant change in law enforcement actions. For the first time since the beginning of these communities, the institution was, in some measure, seen by the people as a State presence that wasn't there only for repression. This change, perceptible from the residents' point of view, was materialized in actions characterized by the attempt at recognizing that there were citizens in these areas with identical rights to citizens in any other part of town.

⁴¹ Nazareth Cerqueira became an important national reference when it comes to proposing public security policies that took human rights, crime prevention, intelligence and research and closeness between police and community into account. His perception influenced many officers, researchers and politicians, who later started working on that theme, among them Luiz Eduardo Soares, the main researcher of a citizen public security policy in contemporary Brazil. Cerqueira was murdered in September 1999, already retired, by a police sergeant. Although the alleged reason was personal revenge, many of those who knew him suspect other people and interests were involved in his death. I talk a little bit more about his work and influence in Chapter 8.

“When Brizola was in office we didn’t have the Skull. He would certainly be against that. In his administration dialogue was possible, they talked it over before doing anything in the favela. The Neighborhood Association president was respected. They heard us. Another thing is that the police didn’t go in as violently as they do today. Brizola prevented the police from humiliating or degrading the people here.”
[FORMER NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION PRESIDENT]⁴²

“One time I was following the opening of a CIEP⁴³ and I saw governor Brizola on the podium saying that he wouldn’t let any officer kick down a poor man’s house under his administration. If you needed a search warrant to go inside someone’s house in the South Zone, the same should be done in the favela.”
[POLICE OFFICER]

Trying to change this context, Brizola pointed out that fighting violence should come from implementing public policies aimed at recognizing the serious social problem faced by poor people in the state. His belief was that investing in education would be fundamental to promote structural change and reduce criminality rates, that were rising and already making Rio de Janeiro’s population feel unsafe.

The CIEPs were guided by establishing full time schedules in public education, through an architectonic project by Oscar Niemeyer. The educational project was an important issue in Brizola’s first administration. It was controversial, and sometimes criticized by education professionals, because, even though it was only accessible to 10% of state public school students, it absorbed a significant portion of the education budget, leaving old schools without funds, fated to abandonment.

⁴² All stories mentioned in this chapter, either from officers or civilians, were collected by me.

⁴³ Public Education Integrated Center (Centro Integrado de Educação Pública), education center also known as Brizolão (“Big Brizola”).

An emblematic issue in the Brizola administration concerned the lack of value given to public security professionals and to the law enforcement institution as a whole. This political option can be seen, for example, in the fact that new officers weren't asked to occupy posts left by retired officers. The creation of the Civil Defense Department also contributed to restricting the Civil Police's structure and range of action. There were also no investments in new security equipments, nor in training officers to act according to what they should defend.

At the time, the criminality rate increased significantly. That generated a contradictory situation of mistrust regarding the government: on one hand, in police corporations, it was said that the government wasn't committed to law enforcement institutions, only using them for political gain, and looking to demoralize law enforcement professionals; on the other hand, most of society felt that violence was growing rapidly. As a result, the population of Rio de Janeiro, especially its rich and middle class people, felt unsafe and unsatisfied.

"Brizola's administration was awful for us officers. Actually, the rise in crime in Rio dates to that time. We couldn't work well in the favelas. We heard that to talk to someone there we first had to introduce ourselves and be polite. Our usual raids couldn't be done, we needed warrants. These limits, created so that the officers couldn't work, resulted in criminals feeling comfortable enough to engage in criminal activities and walk around freely in the favela. That's what created what we see today: the officers can't go inside the favelas in civilian clothes, only inside an armored police car." [MILITARY POLICE OFFICER, 22ND PRECINCT]

There's actually no accurate data regarding the rise in violence during that time. Data regarding violence and police operations only started to be systematically gathered in 1985, even if incipient.⁴⁴ Anyway, some data from the time can help us understand the alleged rise in violence.

As we can see in the following table, there was a significant rise in second degree murder; looking at the two last years of the administration the rise is clear. An important question, then, is what was actually the reason for that situation? Were those years, from 1983 to 1986, determinant for the rise in violence and the situation we live today?

All researchers who study public security in Rio de Janeiro recognize the coincidence between a new security model focused on respecting the rights of people in the favelas and peripheral regions and the drug trade's growing strength in the city. This latter process was mainly a result of the rise in criminal organizations who focused on controlling popular spaces, like the ones that would come to be called *Comando Vermelho* and *Terceiro Comando*.

The two things aren't necessarily related. Rio de Janeiro had become, in the early 80s, a strategic point in the international drug trade route, especially for cocaine. Colombian cartels, especially those of Medellín and Cali, started to control the international cocaine supply, and it reached a much lower price than its historic average. Due to this *cocaine industrialization*, its access became more democratic, which resulted in an exponential rise in its consumer market. In this context, Rio de Janeiro also became an important consumer. Thus, considering the history of law enforcement being absent from the favelas, there were perfect conditions for these spaces to be controlled by drug trade gangs.

⁴⁴ The media's strong opposition certainly contributed to the population feeling unsafe, because it frequently emphasized how much state security was getting worse. Therefore, during the Brizola administration, there was a detachment between the objective public security reality and its representation. Especially because violence, especially lethal violence, was a result of the establishment of the drug trade, among other reasons. This started happening inside the favelas and hadn't yet reached the richer parts of Rio de Janeiro. We'll discuss this further when talking about *favelas and representation*.

TABLE 1. SECOND DEGREE MURDERS REPORTED BY CIVIL POLICE IN RIO DE JANEIRO FROM 1985 TO 2006, BY 100,000 PEOPLE

YEAR	POPULATION	NUMBER OF SECOND DEGREE MURDERS	NUMBER OF SECOND DEGREE MURDERS BY 100,000 PEOPLE
1985	5.268.004	1735	32,9
1986	5.303.464	1915	36,1
1987	5.338.925	2135	40,0
1988	5.374.386	2463	45,8
1989	5.409.847	3131	57,9
1990	5.442.424	ND	ND
1991	5.480.768	3.467	63,3
1992	5.508.048	3.545	64,4
1993	5.547.033	3.733	67,3
1994	5.577.141	4.081	73,2
1995	5.606.497	3.744	66,8
1996	5.551.538	3.081	55,5
1997	5.569.181	2.852	51,2
1998	5.584.067	2.119	37,9
1999	5.598.953	2.361	42,2
2000	5.857.907	2.737	46,7
2001	5.902.587	2.437	41,3
2002	5.947.852	2.718	45,7
2003	5.993.707	2.574	42,9
2004	6.040.160	2.653	43,9
2005	6.087.219	2.406	39,5
2006	6.134.892	2.465	40,2

SOURCE: Data from the CESEC website.

HOMICIDES, RIO DE JANEIRO'S CIVIL POLICE: 1985 to 1989: # of reports; 1990: no trustworthy data; 1991 to 2005: # of victims.

Therefore, the Brizola administration's limit wasn't the human rights agenda, but its failure to create an effective crime repression model, that took into account the growing power criminal groups involved in the drug trade had in the favelas. Actually, the paradigm that was being created at the time couldn't materialize into a viable alternative to the public security model centered on indiscriminate repression and institutionalized violence. Thus, a representation of inaction, disinterest and despise for police corporations was crystallized in the corporation itself and in large sectors of society. In that context, there was also a deep sense of mistrust from political left-wing groups regarding public security institutions, due to their history of repression. The focus on social politics was seen as a refusal to security actions, disregarding law enforcement's role in guaranteeing public security and crime repression.

The Brizola administration was also marked by an inability to efficiently face the vices present in Rio police culture. Therefore, he was accused, multiple times, of accepting illegal money – coming from the gambling criminal groups – and of complying with corruption. He also accepted in PDT (his party, Partido Democrático Trabalhista), or allied himself to, politicians with a history of corruption, clientelism and physiology, especially those who worked with former governor Chagas Freitas. Due to these allegations and to his authoritarian approach to popular social groups, his main supporters, Brizola was also attacked by numerous civil society sectors and other progressive parties.

Faced with this range of conflicts and with 1986's peculiar economic conjuncture, dominated by Plano Cruzado, which froze prices and paychecks, PDT's candidate Darcy Ribeiro lost to Moreira Franco, elected by PMDB.

Rio de Janeiro under Moreira Franco

Wellington Moreira Franco governed Rio de Janeiro from 1987 to 1990. A former federal deputy and former mayor of Niterói, in Rio de Janeiro, he won the election with an explosive promise: he would end criminal violence in six months.⁴⁵ The focus on that issue was due to the deep feeling of insecurity that had spread over the greater Rio de Janeiro area and to the clamor of dominant sectors of Rio society against the way the previous administration had treated public security policies. Actually, at the time an opinion was crystallized that Brizola hadn't satisfactorily acted to repress and punish illegal activities; instead, he allowed criminals to act freely, with no proper repressive actions.

Moreira Franco took over office claiming to fight violence focusing on the law, protecting lives and reinstating the authority of law enforcement institutions. In the speech excerpt below, we can see him reaffirming that fighting crime would be one of his priorities.

"We have a public commitment to reducing criminality, which makes us all daily and helpless victims. We won't lose sight of the fact that poverty is the original component of this problem, nor will we use violence to fight violence. However, I assure the population that the state will fulfill its undeniable duty of guaranteeing the right to life, reinstating law enforcement's authority and efficiency." [MOREIRA FRANCO'S SPEECH UPON ASSUMING OFFICE, MARCH 15TH 1987]

The new governor also pointed out the State's responsibility to guarantee to real citizens – those who paid taxes – their due safety, through the city's effective order guaranteed by Public Power. The proposal resonated

⁴⁵ Years later, in a personal speech, the former governor said he regretted making such a promise and claimed he was led to error by his campaign's marketing advisor. There he started his electoral campaign on public security and he failed so hard that he was never again elected for public office.

deeply with rich and middle classes in Rio e Janeiro. The central allegation was that governor should act firmly and severely, in order to take the reigns of the apparently chaotic situation.

Composing the new public security team, Marcos Heusi, a PMDB-affiliated lawyer, took over as the head of the Civil Police. Colonel Manoel Elysio de Freitas was appointed as the head of the office responsible for the Military Police, and he stayed in office until retiring, being replaced by colonel Jorge de Paula.

The choice of appointments wasn't based on professional competence, but on political convenience. Heusi was a lawyer affiliated to the party that put the governor in power and, due to a party articulation, was put on that job. Manoel Elysio was put in office through an internal corporation decision that even predicted how much time he would stay and his future replacement, Jorge de Paula (Marino, 2004, p. 98).

In his short six months in office, Heusi handed hundreds of cars to military and civil officers in an exaggerated public solemn display in a rich area of town, Aterro do Flamengo. This symbolic action was meant to show how different this administration would be from its predecessor, who allegedly didn't offer basic work conditions to officers.

Fired due to his lack of results, Marcos Heusi was replaced by another lawyer, Hélio Saboya, state prosecutor. Although he wasn't a career professional, Saboya became very well-liked by officers, due to his actions to improve their work conditions. He stayed in office until April of the last year of the administration. Deputy Heraldo Gomes, long-time law enforcement professional, took his place until the end of the administration.

“Hélio Saboya was very good to cops. He valued the police officers, fighting for better pay. One time he got us a raise in three installments, first 17%, then 20% and 20%. It had been a long time since we'd had a raise like that. Another important thing Hélio Saboya did was helping the officer's self-esteem. One time he hosted a lunch to celebrate Police Officer Day, September 29th, at Clube Portuguesa, in Ilha do Governadora. He organized a barbecue for all civil police officers and he invited

singers Alcione and Aguinaldo Timoteo to perform for us. That only happened that one time.” [CIVIL POLICE OFFICER]

The new administration didn't make any daring changes in public security management, and didn't create any new structures beyond those created by Leonel Brizola. Their action was based on what would become a tradition in following administrations: heavy investment in cars and arms, more and more lethal each time. Only a few precincts were remodeled and the maximum security prison Bangu I was built.

Hélio Sabyoa's and Manoel Elysio's times as heads of Civil and Military Police, respectively, was marked by many operations with the intention of capturing drug lords in the favelas and apprehending guns, with its results shown to the press personally by the governor. These practices demonstrated the definition of favelas as the arenas where crime was fought, with a clear effort to create a public security policy entirely opposed to that of the former administration. The traditional war-like doctrine was reinstated to armed forces on the war on crime, and the favelas were progressively represented as the responsible for more crime and violence in the city. Then drug lords were demonized and became the primary public enemies.

The return of *raids* – unannounced police invasions – in the favelas meant a setback in human rights for people of the favela, especially regarding the privacy of domestic spaces.

“The return of unannounced police invasions in Maré was very bad for us. We went from a situation in which the police had to respect the workers to a total lack of respect for those who live in the favela. One day I lived that with my family. I had a brother who was an alcoholic and was always in the streets until very late. One day he saw the police and started running away. He was high. When he got home, the police went behind him and went up to the rooftop. When my brother saw the police going after him inside his house, he freaked out, waking up my mother and another one of my brothers.

When the officer got to the rooftop he started shooting, and my brother got shot. When everything was already messed up and my brother was being operated in the hospital, they figured out he was an honest worker and that it was surreal for anything like that to happen.” [MAN LIVING IN VILA DOS PINHEIROS, RELATIVE OF A VICTIM OF POLICE BRUTALITY]

The combat rationale adopted by the state government resulted in a response from the criminal organizations. The armed groups who controlled the drug trade in the favelas expanded their war capabilities, both in quantity and quality of their arsenal. As a perverse effect, the “arms race” devalued some guns, like revolvers and pistols, and their use became more common in petty crimes. Therefore, the number of deaths didn’t stop growing, just like the violence faced by the people in the favelas.

The increase in violence, the growth in armed groups and the conflicts between rival gangs in the favelas made drug repression a priority in public security agendas. The fight against drug dealers in the favelas intensified, with a disproportionate focus on the groups who sold the drugs, instead of worrying about high scale drug dealers, responsible for getting the drugs to the favelas.

“An incident from that time that clearly illustrates the growth of armed groups was when one of the drug lords in Morro do Adeus, in Ramos, called Uê,⁴⁶ attacked the 21st Precinct, in Higienópolis. He went by with a group, everyone gathered in different cars, in what we call a troop, and they shot at the station. Many officers were hurt. I have a friend who’s in a wheelchair because of it.” [POLICE OFFICER]

⁴⁶ Uê would eventually become one of Rio de Janeiro’s most powerful criminals, creating his own gang, ADA – Amigos dos Amigos, after leaving the Comando Vermelho.

With rising violence in Rio de Janeiro, governor Moreira Franco reached the end of its administration unable to fulfill his original promises and entirely demoralized due to his alleged commitment to ending violence in a very short time.⁴⁷ There weren't actually any substantial changes regarding public security, popular social groups were intensely unsatisfied and the administration didn't follow-up on the good experiences of the previous administration. Thus, Leonel Brizola was still the reference for huge parts of the population, especially poorer people. Defeated in the first presidential election after the dictatorship, in 1989, he ran for governor again in 1990. The PDT candidate was elected for more than half the votes, becoming, for the second time, governor of the state of Rio de Janeiro.

Leonel Brizola's return to government

The old *caudillo's* new administration, from 1991 to 1994, was meant to continue projects started in the first administration that were interrupted when Moreira Franco was in office. The easy win was a result of two main factors: Moreira's loss of reputation due to the significant rise in violence and to the general feeling of insecurity, and the dissatisfaction expressed by people in favelas and peripheral areas with the violent and repressive attitude of law enforcement. Thus, Brizola's victory shows how important public security became in his definition as a governor.

There were no structural changes, and the two departments, one dedicated to Civil Police and the other to Military Police, continued to exist. Carlos Magno Nazareth Cerqueira, the Military Police CORONEL who headed the latter department in Brizola's first administration, was invited to return to his former post. The Department of Justice and Civil Police was headed by Nilo Batista, who was also vice-governor, part of Brizola's party, and a very influential lawyer, having presided over the Rio de Janeiro chapter of

⁴⁷ A fact that symbolizes the governor's exhaustion and the failure of his crime fighting policy was the reception, at the end of his term, of a group of notorious criminals, linked to gambling, at the Guanabara Palace, the government headquarter.

OAB, the Brazilian bar association, for many years. He had professionally acted in Brizola's defense during his return to public life after Brazil's political opening.

On one hand, the society expected the police to stop acting violently where drug trade criminal groups ruled, i.e., the favelas. On the other hand, the same sectors who had been opposed to the first administration were afraid of what could happen to Rio de Janeiro, as they considered Brizola to be responsible for the rise in violence and accused him of complying with certain criminal groups.

Considering the tense context, Nilo Batista invested in the idea that they needed to better equip the police and prioritize fighting certain crimes, such as robberies and kidnappings, that directly affected the middle and the upper class. Because kidnapping became more common, as part of the criminal groups' actions, the Anti-Kidnapping Division (DAS, *Divisão Antissequestro*) was instituted. The government's immediate response to the violence that affected the upper classes, who had more political power, didn't happen in the same way when it came to lower classes.

Unlike Brizola's first administration, different kinds of violence intensified in favelas, as well as the police's perspective of disregarding the people there as equal citizens. The intensification of police violence and the autonomy of some parts of the institution were more famously expressed in the slaughter that occurred in Vigário Geral in 1993. Twenty-one people were murdered by a criminal group composed of military police officers, called Cavalos Corredores (Portuguese for "Running Horses"), as an act of revenge. It's a very illustrative fact because it shows the prejudiced and perverse representation that only criminals and suspects live in the favela. A statement given by one of the men I interviewed is impressive due to its clarity and its resentment towards the way people in the favela are treated in Rio de Janeiro.

"The people who died in the slaughter of Vigário Geral showed me how who lives in the favela isn't worth a thing. When do you hear in the news about police raiding Ipanema or Barra or barging in into buildings, busting down apartment doors and shooting without even knowing who's there? Can you tell me

if that has ever happened? There, they investigate for a long time, they look for the right target, they wait for official authorization to go in and arrest someone. There, they arrest, they don't kill without even knowing who they're killing." [MAN LIVING IN NOVA HOLANDA, WITH RELATIVES FROM VIGÁRIO GERAL]

Despite the difficulties in the relationship with citizens from popular spaces, some important projects were developed in Brizola's second administration to strengthen the ties between police and society. One was the Complaint Center, a phone system that allowed people to place anonymous complaints. This service was connected to the vice-governor's office, and it was the first attempt at what's now known as Disque-Denúncia. Another innovative project was the CCDC. The original idea was to have public security professionals at hand and offer certain services, such as the issuing of official identification and access to the public defender's office, directly to the people in these areas. This structure remains until this day, including in Maré, but its mission has since become hollow.

In April 1994, Leonel Brizola left his office as governor to run for president again. Nilo Batista took over, keeping up with the same spirit as Brizola. Chief Mario Covas took his place as the head of the Civil Police department; Covas was known for his competence and honesty as a police officer. In the short time Nilo Batista was governor, however, there was a significant rise in violence, and not a lot of population support for the measures meant to combat what had become, according to popular opinion, an uncontrollable situation. That's when a new candidate comes as a new hope to overcome the crisis – a former PDT leader, who had cut off ties with Brizola and joined PSDB (Partido da Social Democracia Brasileira, Brazilian Social Democracy Party): Marcello Alencar.

Marcello Alencar is elected governor

In the same public security crisis faced by the three governor administrations during the newfound democracy, Marcello Alencar was elected to act as governor from 1995 to 1998, stating he had concrete solutions to the problem of violence in Rio de Janeiro. During election campaigns, candidates considered the rise in violence and previous administration's neglect of illegal activities, especially in the case of Leonel Brizola. Alencar was elected with the promise of an energetic fight against criminal groups.

The governor decided to go back to the old public security structure, the one from before Brizola's first administration. Therefore, military and civil police were both in a single department: the Public Security State Department. The governor's main idea was to define unified instructions for state police forces, in order to guarantee synergy instead of the historical rivalry between corporations. The head of the Public Security department was general Euclimar Lima da Silva. Colonel Dorazil Castilho Corval was chosen as the new chief of the Military Police, due to his honest and dedicated career in the corporation. Deputy Dilermando Amaral took over the Civil Police, being replaced, a few months later, by deputy Hélio Luz, who had been linked to PT (the Brazilian Worker's Party) and to social movements.

The concepts of order and combat, both expressing military principles, defined the new administration's public security logic, based on partnering up with the Army to create a strategy to fight crime in Rio de Janeiro. The expectation when handing over this issue to a general was that, as in 1992 when the international event Eco-92 was held in Rio, the Army would take over patrolling the streets and controlling who went in and out of the favelas, among other responsibilities. The Armed Forces presence in the streets of Rio de Janeiro was an old demand made by more conservative groups, seen as a way to fix the issue of crime, particularly regarding criminal organizations in the favelas.

The new head of the public security department, who had organized the Army's actions during Eco-92, assumed office saying that

“(…) reducing crime in Rio de Janeiro could only happen with the armed forces being actively present in urban policing, and that the Army’s presence in the streets was essential to overcome the crisis the city was facing.” (Marino, 2004, p. 115)

The measures based on repression and violence, especially in favelas, resulted in a growing number of confrontations between criminal groups and the police, but didn’t contribute to lowering violence rates. Actually, the feeling of fear and insecurity only grew, as did the government’s inability to provide convincing answers on this subject. Under pressure, general Euclimar da Silva quit his post as the head of the public security department. He was replaced by another general, Nilton Cerqueira, part of the most repressive flank of the military dictatorship and responsible for the death of an icon of armed rebellion in Brazil: Carlos Lamarca.

Cerqueira presented to society a harsh discourse, focused on defending social order. He identified favelas as the places where violence was born, and the origins of all the evils that affected the rest of the population in Rio de Janeiro. According to the general, the State, through the police, should occupy these spaces, controlling the lives of those in them.

“The moment when we fought most criminals in the favelas was under general Cerqueira, during Marcello Alencar’s administration. At that time, we had a command, we had order. The officers were recognized as professionals responsible for order, and our actions had proper backing. Now, the government is worried about what gets to the press and how it resonates in society. Us officers, we have to submit ourselves to a situation where we can’t even go inside the favelas. The criminals took over. And why did that happen? Exactly because there’s no firm control, like we had when we were under general Nilton Cerqueira.” [MILITARY POLICE OFFICER, 22ND PRECINCT, MARÉ]

One of Nilton Cerqueira's main – and most controversial – measures was rewarding officers who acted against crime, reinstating the bravery promotions, and also authorizing officers to use a second gun in the field, giving them more firepower. These attitudes had a determining role in the rise in homicides involving public security professionals, but homicides committed by police officers were identified as “resistance followed by death” – considered by human rights organizations as a way to protect officers, giving them a license to kill. With these measures, the public security department indicated to police officers that they were allowed to act with brutality, especially in popular spaces, without fearing punishment.

The orientation to act aggressively, as if during a war, affected directly the daily lives of those who lived in the favelas. The recognized target were members of the drug trade, considered, by police and by the media, the ones responsible for all the violence across Rio de Janeiro. The attack on these groups' turf, identified by organizations that controlled specific areas, was made through violent raids on the favelas. With their *neighborhood* turned battlefield, the people's daily lives were marked by terror and fear.

The most curious element in general Cerqueira's management was the participation of deputy Hélio Luz, a lawyer who had a long history of fighting for human rights. Luz was asked by the head of the department to take over the Anti-kidnapping Division, and then to become the Civil Police chief. In a book that presents his public experience, he says that, despite their ideological differences, he was able to work with Cerqueira in what pertained directly to public security. At the time, when asked by a journalist about how he felt working with the man who, 25 years prior, had killed Lamarca, Luz replied: “(...) I'm a career police professional and the country is different now. At the time of the dictatorship, me and the general would be on opposing sides. I wouldn't kill Lamarca, I would be on his side” (Benjamin, 1998, p. 38).

After taking over as the police chief, Hélio Luz faced strong opposition inside the corporation. Upon realizing the officers were on a sit-down strike, Luz got together a group of officers who had been on the force longer, commissioners and inspectors, who headed investigations, in order to demand effort and commitment to fighting identified crimes. From that meeting, the Astra group was born, becoming fundamental to fighting crime and making arrest.

“When Hélio Luz was the chief of police we had the most serious and active moment here. It was then that investigations went all the way to the end. The officers felt stimulated to work and do everything until the end. Another important thing I saw when Hélio Luz was chief was police officers being valued. At the time there were a scheme for offering food to prisoners and officers, and the food was all bought at overpriced values. When he took over, he ended that contract and started giving us meal tickets.” [CIVIL POLICE OFFICER]

We can identify a series of measures Nilton Cerqueira and Hélio Luz were taking to show the public that the government was trying to overcome the issue of violence. Operations to arrest drug dealers, to stop gambling and to prevent kidnappings, among others, happened frequently. At the time, many people accused of running the drug trade in the favelas were arrested.

However, the rise in violence didn't slow down. It actually became steeper, showing how stimulating fighting crime through use of force by the police was ineffective in terms of making people in Rio de Janeiro feel more safe. The administration was also worn out because of corruption accusations regarding the indiscriminate privatization of every state institution in Rio de Janeiro during that time, and because of their inability to present innovative proposals to change social issues. It's in that context that PDT, through a never before seen alliance with PT, elected their candidate who had lost in 1994, Anthony Garotinho.

Governor Anthony Garotinho

Something never seen before happened on the election for governor in 1998: for the first time a politician from the country, not from the center, was elected to govern the state, result of the fusion between Guanabara and Rio de Janeiro in 1975. Former mayor of Campos, city at the far north of the state, his name was Anthony William Matheus de Oliveira, better known as Anthony Garotinho.

The new governor, different from the politicians that came before him, talked about public security from an innovative point of view. His chosen approach was to bring together scholars and researchers of public security to think about other ways of dealing with violence. Most of them, it's worth noting, were aligned with the paradigm proposed by colonel Nazareth Cerqueira. Anthony Garotinho's campaign speech, then, was based on giving due value to public security professionals; on fighting crime through the development of intelligent strategies and the strict word of the law; and, above all, on recognizing every citizen's right to public security.

Professor and sociologist Luiz Eduardo Soares was invited to run candidate Garotinho's public security program, and he was the main creator of his proposals in this field. The idea to bring a different approach to public security was summarized in a book called *Violência e criminalidade no estado do Rio de Janeiro* (Violence and crime in the state of Rio de Janeiro), a result of meetings between the future governor and the team of researchers led by Soares.

The feeling shared by part of the researchers was that that was the opportunity to put into practice the proposals they had constructed after years of study, with the certainty that the subject would be a priority in the agenda of any governor who wanted to get serious about public security in Rio de Janeiro.

"I'm convinced that the problem of public security in our country, especially in some big cities, is so serious and urgent that demands that we overcome certain ideological prejudices, internal dissensions, and party schisms, so that we can form a national coalition for civilization and against barbarism, bringing together conservatives, liberals, social-democrats, socialists and communists of all walks

of life. Everyone who's willing to consider that imposing the law through legal and legitimate means is an inescapable condition of living collectively in peace." (Soares, 2000, p. 49)

However, even in the beginning of the administration, there were differences regarding the appropriate names for the team working with public security, although the structure inherited from Marcello Alencar had been maintained. The new governor chose José Siqueira as the new head of the public security department, a professional that, since the beginning, had identified with the ideas of general Nilton Cerqueira. This choice wasn't in consonance with the team's trajectory until then and antagonized those who had created the electoral proposals regarding public security.

Garotinho, when faced the first public security crisis, proposed to Luiz Eduardo Soares the creation of a group that, alongside general José Siqueira, would prepare his administration's public security program. This group would include civil society and Civil Police representatives, the head of the public security department, as well as Soares, named Research and Citizenship undersecretary. The plan created by the group included various measures, from modernizing precincts, through the project Legal Stations, to creating new Military Police units and providing better education and wages to law enforcement professionals. Programs to improve the relationship between law enforcement and the rest of the population and councils with civil society participation were also proposed.

Specifically regarding security in the favelas, the new administration proposed a project called Peace Task Force (*Mutirão pela Paz*), based on the partnership between different public agencies, such as Transit, Social Action, Education and Health departments, as well as the Public Prosecutor's Office, among others, in order to better understand the people's demands. The idea was to combine police occupation with social actions. A new approach to the relationship with favela populations was also intended, with stress on the creation of a new relationship culture between police and civilians.

In June 2000, a new community police proposals was put into practice through the Special Areas Police Group (*Grupamento de Policiamento em Áreas Especiais*), better known as GP AE. This project, a little more complicated than the Peace Task Force, proposed a space inside the favelas where

actions would be developed with the people there and partnerships would be established. When implementing this initiative, the NGO Viva Rio was a strategic partner, formulating and trying to insert local organizations into the project. The first favela to receive the GPAAE was the Cantagalo, Pavão and Pavãozinho complex, in Rio de Janeiro's south zone.

The establishment of the new police unit inside the favela took into account everything from educating the officers to mediating the influence of armed groups controlling those areas. Centered on cherishing life and mediating conflicts, the GPAAE was an audacious project, which seemed to be one of the paths to rethink police action in the favelas. Until the end of the Garotinho administration, GPAAE was expanded to the following favelas: Cavalão, in Niterói, and Formiga, Chácara do Céu, Casa Branca and Vila Cruzeiro, in the city of Rio de Janeiro.

The choice of Civil and Military Police chiefs was also the stage for some discomfort between general Siqueira and Luiz Eduardo Soares. After some negotiating, the governor opted for names identified with the latter's proposals: deputy Carlos Alberto D'Oliveira as the Civil Police chief and colone Sérgio da Cruz for Military Police.

The government had to face, from very early on, the inherent contradictions of its choice of joint performance between antagonistic principles and ideas, combining an innovative security approach and the direction of a general that thought force should be used to fight violence. In that context, general Siqueira left the administration, being replaced by colonel Josias Quintal, Garotinho's political partner in Campos. Deputy Rafik Louzada Aride took over the post of Civil Police chief, but he was discharged a few months later due to accusations of corruption. Deputy Álvaro Lins was his substitute, continuing until the end of the administration and in the following administration, under Rosinha Garotinho.⁴⁸

With the new head of the public security department, the discomfort continued, albeit more discreetly, until Josias Quintal questioned Luiz Eduardo Soares'

⁴⁸ Identified as the head of a corruption ring inside the Civil Police and of involvement to organized crime, Álvaro Lins had his rights as a state representative, his office since 2006, revoked, and served time in penitentiary Bangu 8 until June 2009. He's now free, although still answering to his crimes through different lawsuits.

visibility and independence. After a disagreement regarding filmmaker João Moreira Salles' choice to help a drug dealer leave his life of crime – Marcinho VP, from Santa Marta –, the governor publicly fired Soares, in an interview on the biggest TV networks in Brazil.

Thereby, the governor turns around his innovative public security proposals and goes back to the traditional project that had been used by Marcello Alencar. Thus, the first public security project that actually tried to account for the complexity of the issue in Rio de Janeiro ended quite sadly; a program that tried to provide “a transformative and radically democratic approach to public security, particularly to ‘police behavior’, which would have been decisive to effectively and completely democratizing Brazilian society” (Soares, 2000, p. 41).

In April 2002, due to Garotinho's claim at presidency, vice-governor Benedita da Silva, from PT, took over as governor. At that time, the governor was already at odds with PT and PDT, and created a series of traps for the temporary government that would act for nine months. Luiz Eduardo Soares was invited back to create the public security program and to refer people to the team; he also accepted the invitation to participate in the PT ticket, as a vice-governor candidate. The new head of the public security department was Roberto Aguiar, a scholar from UnB (Brasília University), who had occupied a similar position in the Cristovam Buarque administration in the federal district. Colonel Francisco José Braz, a black policeman, was chosen as the new Military Police chief, and deputy Zaqueu Teixeira, member of the same party as Benedita da Silva, was chosen as Civil Police Chief.

In spite of her short time in office, Benedita da Silva's main action was fighting more closely against the three main criminal organizations leading the drug trade in Rio de Janeiro.⁴⁹ Violence rates, especially lethal violence, kept rising, and feelings of insecurity were still part of the population's lives.⁵⁰

⁴⁹ The fact that Terceiro Comando and ADA, in an alliance against Comando Vermelho, expanded their territory in over 40% during Garotinho's administration led to rumors of a backroom deal between police and these organizations in order to weaken CV. Those accusations were never proved.

⁵⁰ A series of attacks led by Comando Vermelho on September 30th 2002, in order to get benefits for their leaders in jail, contributed to the feeling of general insecurity. It culminated in a rebellion in maximum security penitentiary Bangu I and in the murder of the main leader of rival organization ADA, Arnaldo Medeiros, also known as Uê.

Benedita da Silva's and Luiz Eduardo Soares' candidature lost due to how hard it was to stay in government amidst an election, and to a wide range of contradictions and disagreement during the campaign.⁵¹ A strong investment in welfare-focused social policies and their social capital in the country and in neo-charismatic churches, favelas and Baixada Fluminense led most of the population to vote for a continuation of Garotinho's administration, expressed in his wife's, Rosinha, candidature. Her administration followed the political logic adopted by her husband, who was the *de facto* governor.

Governor Rosinha Garotinho

Anthony Garotinho showed his electoral weight by electing, on the first round, his wife Rosângela Barros Assed Matheus de Oliveira, better known as Rosinha Garotinho, as the new state governor, from January 2003 to December 2006. The first woman elected for governor in Rio, Rosinha Garotinho promised to continue the projects started by her husband, who left office to run for president. The reason for the couple's victory came from their popularity with the state's lower classes, although they were extremely rejected by the middle class in the city of Rio de Janeiro and by voters identified with PT or other progressive parties.

The Garotinho couple's popularity in favelas is contradictory, due to their disagreement with Leonel Brizola – only coming closer to the former governor at the end of his life – and to their traditional public security policies. This shows, on one hand, the fundamental value given by most of the population in favelas to social policies, usually deeply welfare-focused, asserted by the couple. On the other hand, it also shows a certain feeling of hopelessness regarding other possibilities for public security policies. After many attempts, even the leaders inside the favela weren't as willing to deal with that issue. Furthermore, neighborhood associations were taken over by people involved in the drug trade or in the militias, which meant these organizations stopped being able to represent the real interests of the favela population.

⁵¹ During the campaign, for reasons unknown, the vice-governor candidate was withdrawn by PT and had almost no input in the process.

As a way of showing the importance of public security issues, Anthony Garotinho himself took over as the head of the department. Without doing anything new, he was replaced, around a year later, by Marcelo Itagiba, Federal Police deputy historically associated with José Serra, PSDB candidate to presidency in 2002. Deputy Álvaro Lins returned as the Civil Police chief.

The use of armored cars by law enforcement was a heavy symbol of the strategies to fight crime. Nicknamed *Caveirão* (Skull), due to the skull logo used by the Special Ops Corps BOPE (Batalhão de Operações Especiais), the armored cars were justified as a way to protect officers' lives when entering favelas.⁵²

Data does actually show a significant reduction in officers killed in the line of duty after the introduction of the new vehicles:

TABLE 2 OFFICERS KILLED IN THE LINE OF DUTY IN THE STATE OF RIO DE JANEIRO, 2000-2006

YEAR	MILITARY	CIVIL	TOTAL
2000	20	3	23
2001	24	3	27
2002	33	7	40
2003	43	7	50
2004	50	0	50
2005	24	9	33
2006	27	2	29

SOURCE: Data available at the CESEC website.

On the other hand, the number of innocent civilians killed or hurt in the favelas rose significantly. The fact that the officers inside the vehicles are able to act without being identified leads to more use of force and guns against

⁵² In order to reduce the nickname's negative impact, law enforcement organizations named the armored car *peacemaker*, but this name is only used by the most senior officers.

civilians with no respect for life. Thus, the feeling of fear and tension in the popular spaces grew progressively bigger. The fact led to many civil society organizations campaigning against the use of the vehicle, but the government didn't change their strategy.

In this context of indiscriminate use of violence against favela population, the main news from the Garotinho couple administration was the notorious, although not entirely proven, identification of the police higher ups with militia groups. During that administration, counting on the good will of police structures, those criminal organizations spread their territorial power, controlling big parts of favelas, allotments and settlements in the city's west zone and, later, reaching Ilha do Governador and the Leopoldina area, including Maré. The association between, especially, Marcelo Itagiba and the militias became clear when he was the highest voted state representative in Rio das Pedras, a favela entirely dominated by the oldest and most important militia in Rio de Janeiro.

Many accusations were made regarding Civil Police higher-ups extorting drug dealers and accepting bribes from criminals, especially those involved with gambling, among other crimes. Thus, the widespread feeling in Rio society was that the *rotten crew* – term used by Luiz Eduardo Soares to identify the officers involved in criminal activity – had taken over the police institution, using it for their own interests.

The Garotinho couple administration ended in 2006, in bad waters and under strong attacks from the media and from left-wing parties. Still, the lack of sustainable political alternatives allowed senator Sérgio Cabral, rival of the couple inside PMDB, party they had joined after leaving PDT and spending some time with PSB, to win the 2006 election against former judge Denise Frossard.

Sérgio Cabral's administration and the UPPs⁵³

Just like Anthony Garotinho, Sérgio Cabral, a politician with strong influence in the legislative assembly, which he presided for 12, promised to follow new principles regarding public security. The promise that this issue

⁵³ Unidades de Polícia Pacificadora, Peacemaking Police Units

would be treated differently, as a priority, led his campaign. During the electoral race, in different situations, he asserted, for example, that giving due value to police corporation would be a priority. He gave particular emphasis to the importance of significantly improving wages, considering that the low pay received by officers was one of the main factors in the serious public security issues faced in Rio de Janeiro. Excerpts from a campaign speech clearly show this commitment:

"I insisted on coming here, during the campaign's last stretch, only 12 years shy of the election, to say how much I believe that there's only one way to guarantee quality public safety to our population: giving due value to the Corporation; giving due value to law enforcement professionals. I want to say I'm not fond of false promises, of pre-electoral graces. I want to ratify here my commitment to compensating for the low wages. I hereby commit to this. I'm not going to say I'm going to pay up in one, two, three, four or five months. But we're going to establish a calendar, you will testify to my public management. I will promise, commit, to be a governor that's on your side. Not only regarding wages, which I'm committing to right now, I hope it's being recorded, so that you can collect, so that we can positively work together on those compensations."

[AVAILABLE ON "DIÁRIO DE UM POLICIAL MILITAR: O MUNDO POLICIAL COMO VOCÊ NUNCA VIU",⁵⁴ A BLOG ACCESSED IN APRIL 2009]⁵⁵

⁵⁴ "Diary of a Military Police officer: the police world as you've never seen it"

⁵⁵ After such a passionate promise, it's curious to notice something that happened a little over a year later, in January 2008, leading to the first commandant named by the governor being fired: "Reacting to a demonstration with around 300 Military Police and Firefighter protesters demanding better wages on Sunday (27), on the Leblon beaches, in the South Zone, the government declared that 'all the officers' – no exceptions – who were part of the protest will be removed and kept away from their posts until 'second orders'. At least eight commandant officers were at the protest. The act was considered 'offensive' and 'insubordinate' by the governor Sérgio Cabral and the head of the public security department, José Mariano Beltrame. Protesters got near Cabral's private home, in Leblon, that received extra police backup". (G1 news site, January 29th, 2008).

The intense discussion regarding public security and the promises to treat this issue under a different approach, one that hadn't been seen in the state of Rio so far, led to the governor's promise to reduce the use of armored cars inside the favelas. The candidate asserted a concrete identification to human rights and community groups, very critical of the vehicles, in an interview published after his win but before he assumed office:

"Police armored cars are on their last legs. Elected governor Sérgio Cabral Filho (PMDB) announced the retirement of the Military Police's ten 'skulls' and of the Civil Police's CORE 'peacemaker'. According to him, using these vehicles to go into favelas is 'a scary thing []. It's a trauma for the communities. You can't ensure public security with the 'skulls'", he said, adding that the police will go in 'to serve and guarantee the population's safety'". [O DIA NEWSPAPER, NOVEMBER 15th, 2006]

Cabral's promises were followed by the creation of a public security team aligned with the perspective of constructing a new paradigm, after all those years: José Mariano Beltrame, Federal Police deputy and former Federal Police superintendent in Rio de Janeiro, was assigned as the head of the public security department; a professional officer, considered a good choice by civil society human rights and public security organizations. Deputy Gilberto da Cruz Ribeiro, considered a serious, competent officer, committed to modernizing the police and with no links to the so-called rotten crew, was chosen as the new Civil Police Chief. The rotten crew, according to social movements, had taken over the Civil Police, led by Álvaro Lins, for most of Garotinho's and Rosinha's administrations.

However, the choice that was most celebrated by civil society was that of colonel Ubiratan Ângelo as the Military Police Chief. He was the real expression of a new public security paradigm: black, of humble origins, having worked for 31 years at the Military Police and acted in initiatives such as the GPAE and the law enforcement training school – where he

even organized a significant curriculum change, as well as being one of the creators of the seminar “The police we want”, in July 2006.⁵⁶

Ubiratan was known as a professional who had historically defended a police force committed to human rights, to better qualified officers and to better work conditions. Thus, he built a natural connection to social movements fighting for change in public security, and for a police force committed to cherishing life and respecting human rights.

However, the initial expectation many social sectors had about a change in the war on crime paradigm, synonym with a war on the drug trade in the favelas, didn't come to fruition. The first to leave his office was Ubiratan. His leaving was a direct consequence of the previously mention police protest for better pay, including many officers very close to him, in January 2008. There were no civil society efforts to keep him from leaving. Actually, Ubiratan's work was way below what was expected. For example, the Military Police didn't change their posture regarding the favela population. War-like incursions, with no planning or intelligence, in areas said to be ignited, still guided Military Police action. The armored cars were used just like in the previous administration. To make matters worse, under Ubiratan's management, the Military Police, supported by the National Force, undertook a “war operation” at Alemão, where dozens of people were hurt and killed.⁵⁷

The chief that replaced Ubiratan Ângelo was colonel Gilson Pitta Lopes, who directed a special unit in the corporation. Pitta took over as Military Police chief amidst a crisis with a group of officers who demanded better wages and better work conditions. The protest in the Leblon beaches, resulting in Ubiratan being laid-off for “not having control of his troops”, was part of that process. In the demonstration, 586 crosses were carried, in order to call attention to the number of police officers killed since 2004. The officers leading the protest were part of a collective of high-ranking Military

⁵⁶ The seminar involved both the corporation and civil society organizations, particularly Viva Rio, and aimed to assemble proposals to improve public security.

⁵⁷ The alleged reason for this operation was the murder of two officers by drug dealers in that favela.

Police officers called Barbonos Group.⁵⁸ Some of those who were part of the protest were fired by Pitta soon after he assumed office.

The second change in public security administration happened on April 17th 2009. Gilberto Ribeiro Cruz expressed criticism towards the head of the public security department's intention to allow public access to security data and also to officers' goods declarations. According to him, public access to those informations could be used by ill-intentioned people to harm members of the corporation. Considering it insubordination, as in the case of January 2008, the governor fired Gilberto Cruz.

Alan Turnowski became the new Civil Police chief. He had previously worked in operations and strategic planning. Alan Turnowski had already directed the Truckload Robbery Division (DRFC, Delegacia de Roubo e Furtos de Cargas) and the Drug Repression Division (DRE, Delegacia de Repressão a Entorpecente), now called War on Drugs Division (DCOD, Delegacia de Combate às Drogas). In February 2011, due to internal disputes in the Civil Police and to accusations of being involved with corrupt officers, Alan Turnowski was replaced by Marta Rocha.

The first year of Cabral's administration was characterized by the maintenance of the hegemonic public security model, focused on the war on drugs and disregarding the militias, who kept expanding their territory, albeit more slowly. No new relations to institutions and civilians were established, nor new ways of reducing lethal violence or improving the respect for human rights.

However, a great error committed by a militia group in the Batan favela, in Realengo, in Rio de Janeiro's west zone, changed the government's posture: the criminal group kidnapped and tortured for hours two journalists

⁵⁸ Barbonos Group – in reference to the historical name of the corporation's chief headquarters – was created in order to influence in the MP's modernization and institutional strengthening. In July 3rd 2007, the group sent an open letter to the governor, the head of the public security department and the MP's chief. In it they presented their demands, in a text defending the corporation and the hierarchy. The main demands were equal pay to the Civil Police, better equipments and legal and administrative changes. Failing to receive a response from the government, the process culminated in the January 2008 protest. Funny enough, Gilson Pitta was one of those who signed the group's central document, where everyone committed not to accept the position of chief. Cf. < <http://militarlegal.blogspot.com/2007/07/carta-dos-coronis-pms-do-grupo-barbonos.html>>.

and one driver from newspaper *O Dia* who were in the favelas to research for a story on the daily lives under the rule of the militia. The media reacted to this, demanding urgent measures against the militias. As a result, many social groups, both in public power and in media, who saw the militias as a “lesser evil” if compared to the drug trade, lost their standing. ALERJ rapidly approved the parliamentary inquiry commission on militias. It had been suggested in February 2007 by representative Marcelo Freixo, but it had never been put to vote, in spite of Felix Tostes, a police inspector and the known chief of the oldest militia in Rio, that of Rio das Pedras, having been killed on the same month.

In the case of Batan, the Military Police occupied the favela, the Civil Police arrested most of the local militia’s members and that was the point of no return, starting a process of fighting against the biggest militias, whether by acts of bravery committed by the members of the CPI, or by media pressure. The latter started to give visibility to militias’ repressive actions, murders and financial gains due to their control of various economic activities and extortion.⁵⁹

The media pressure regarding the militia problem resulted in a series of measures aimed at dealing with criminality in the favelas. Two of the most important measures were the occupation of favelas by military forces and the construction of walls around some of the favelas in Rio’s most elite areas (i.e. it’s south zone).

The strategy of occupying favelas, driving out drug dealers and establishing the State’s sovereignty in those spaces has as its main reference Bogotá, in Colombia. For the last few years, the success in lowering lethal violence rates and in reclaiming control on urban areas controlled by criminals in that city, as well as in Medellín and Cali, has been widely celebrated.

Unable to keep his campaign promises regarding a new perspective on public security in the favelas, Cabral bet everything on the Community Police strategy. Starting with a forced action by the police, aimed at driving out

⁵⁹ According to the CPI’s report, the militia called Liga da Justiça (League of Justice), led by police officer and city representative Jerominho and his brother, state representative Natalino Guimarães, could earn up to 4 million reais a month through criminal activities. Cf. CPI report, December 16th 2008.

local criminal groups, the strategy culminates in the establishment of UPPs, Pacifying Police Units (Unidades de Polícia Pacificadora), the new name given by the state to the actions in the favelas.

The military occupation started in Santa Marta in November 2008, reached Cidade de Deus in January 2009, Batan in February 2009 and Chapéu Mangueira and Babilônia in June 2009. In November 2010, Complexo do Alemão was occupied, the most politically and socially impacting occupation until then. In December 2011 the better known favelas in Rio, Rocinha and its neighbors Vidigal and Chácara do Céu, were occupied. Thus, at the end of three years, all favelas in the south zone were occupied, except for Santo Amaro, in Glória, and most of Grande Tijuca, including Mangueira, an also well known favela due to its ESCOLA DE SAMBA. In January 2012, there were 19 UPPs in the city of Rio de Janeiro. The government's goal is to reach 40 units until 2014, including cities near the capital.⁶⁰

The governor's success in his reelection campaign, in 2010, shows the popular and electoral appeal of the UPPs. The challenge, since then, has been to guarantee conditions to expand them at least around the capital and neighboring cities, and dealing with the consequences of police forces arriving and staying in the favelas. I'll discuss these challenges in the conclusion.

⁶⁰ In 2015, the state of Rio de Janeiro counts 38 UPPs. The government still aims to reach 40 units.

Recognizing differences

*Three things are left
The knowledge that we're starting...
The knowledge that we should go on...
The knowledge that we might be stopped
before were done...
Let's make a new path from interruption...
A dance move from the fall...
A staircase from the terror...
A bridge from the dream...
A meeting from the search!*
[FERNANDO SABINO]

When developing this study, the limits of public security strategies in Maré became more clear to me. Indeed, when we look at the favelas spreading through town, we see that, through their existence, some basic rights regarding public healthcare, education, waste management, electricity and, to some extent, culture and arts were improved. However, almost nothing changed in the sense of having access to justice or even to divisions meant to guarantee safety in areas with the same characteristics as Maré.⁶¹

There are numerous reasons for those localized absences. Among them, the range of representation that, even when apparently progressive, don't take into account the wealth of social practices in favelas and other popular settlements. Thus, focusing on the traditional concept of class struggle or of "conscience" (just like the stereotypes that guide the

⁶¹ A clear evidence is the fact that Rio de Janeiro's court of justice, in 2009, ruled that law enforcement officers aren't under obligation to serve people in the favelas, because these areas are identified as risky. This shows that the judiciary power, one of the Republic's pillars, doesn't consider helping to solve the current situation in the favelas as one of its roles.

way people look at popular social groups) doesn't contribute to a more sophisticated ethical and theoretical comprehension of the humanity of those who live in the favelas.

The traditional stigma attached to areas where the poorest people in the city live is the basis for the current public security policies, that ignore the rights of local citizens. The general understanding, from all social groups, that criminality in the favelas has become the biggest problem of the city doesn't help change this reality. It's just the opposite: the stigma has grown, as has the notion that informality and illegal activities are inherent to favelas and its inhabitants.

Being in direct contact with the three segments interviewed during my field research – military police officers, armed criminals and civilians – helped me to better understand the importance of hegemonic representations and their consequences. What these people said, the exchange between different concepts, the analysis and proposals regarding public security and social sciences (as well as coming into contact with innovative experiences in the field I chose to study) showed that alternative paths to the unmerciful conflict – responsible for pain, violence and fear in the lives of those who live in the favelas – are possible.

Recognizing and creating conditions to overcome those limits should be part of the actions upheld by state agents, civil society and private initiatives. The hegemonic strategy, focused on the war on drugs, can't be overcome only by the police, because its construction goes beyond law enforcement. A fundamental conclusion of this research, that I had guessed but now can confirm, is that public security can't only be in the hands of law enforcement, and won't be changed just from inside the corporations. Other social forces, especially civil society, universities and media, need to encourage another project, one based on republican and citizen perspectives.

This proposal isn't trivial. Many civil society organizations, for example, still adopt a critical posture regarding police practices without attempting to create dialogue, methodologies or conceptual proposals that contribute to the effective construction of new paradigms. They establish a relation to the State based on manipulation and distance, as if state institutions (especially public security ones) and their members were all possessed by a deep desire to harm poor people and keep on oppressing and exploring; there's no contradiction,

no complexity in this perspective, but only the desire to stay in a comfort zone and not have to face a sophisticated range of tensions and challenges faced by various actors in contemporary social reality.

Universities are still largely dominated by prejudices regarding public security – the best recent example was the fact that UFF (Universidade Federal Fluminense), in Niterói, refused to create an undergraduate major in Public Security in 2008. The central argument was that the theme was historically linked to authoritarianism. The distance from social reality, public security being a central theme of this reality, leads university to isolated, fragmented, low-scale practices, led by selfless professionals who understand the subject's importance.

It's widely known that most media is composed of middle class professionals. These people, therefore, express representations on crime, violence and favelas that reproduce their groups' usual perceptions of popular spaces and their people, obviously with the due understanding that the heads of media are responsible for the editorial standards. Thus, the notions that the favela is violent, not that their people are victims of violence, that the drug trade is an evil (“demonic”) force and that all efforts to fight it ought to be celebrated, including war resulting on frequent murders of civilians and young men who join the criminal network. The media also frequently reinforces the idea that favelas are spaces of void, including ethically and morally, homogenous spaces with no elements needed for life in society. Therefore, their people are usually represented as minor beings, with no effective citizenship conditions.⁶²

It's worth overcoming traditional conservative representation, but also so-called progressive representations that reinforce a simplistic and determinist perspective regarding the social reality of the favela and the State's

⁶² During an event in September 2009, former minister Reis Veloso, who's the director of a National Forum that yearly collects a huge part of Brazilian's PIB, mentioned, after a roundtable composed by many people who live in favelas, that he was impressed: “I thought I'd hear a bunch of crap, that I'd lose two hours of my life, but I heard some smart stuff, which shows the intelligence around here is growing”. Nothing can be clearer about so-called “elite”'s prejudices; unfortunately, this perspective is shared by most of the society. This story was reported to me by one of the speakers in the roundtable, who was half-ironic half-shocked by Veloso's ignorance and disrespect towards the people in the roundtable.

role. Innovative public policies for popular spaces can only be attained through creative and integrated proposals that articulate different social actors.

The hegemonic postures in the city are also hegemonic in the favelas and among police forces. Thus, the people who live in Maré, as we can see in interviews and research, state curious opinions regarding the space they live in and public security policies: on one hand, they say they're satisfied to live there, recognizing the numerous advantages of their space; on the other hand, they recognize their limitations, especially those related to violence; they're aware of the prejudice they suffer, and they SE LASTIMAM about it.

What they say reveal the contradictions present in the population's imagination regarding violence: they mainly incorporate the dominant representation of the favela as a problematic area in and of itself, as if it wasn't part of the city. They also can't create an interpretation of local reality that isn't relational, establishing an effective link between local reality and that of the rest of the city. They can't yet realize that the construction of a public equipment, like the City of Music in Barra da Tijuca, means less investment in the area they live, just like the choice to host most of the Pan-American Games events in the same rich neighborhood. The construction of an integrated outlook on the city and the need to reverse public policies priorities to popular spaces can only happen when the people who live in those spaces understand better how public policies are created and materialized, including the ones related to public security.

The contact with police officers was the most enriching for me, in both subjective and objective terms, in writing this book. Through that contact I had the opportunity to recognize the humanity beyond those professionals, their reasons to justify their practices, as well as the fears and representations that guide their actions as officers. This doesn't mean I agree with many of their practices or that I relativize their ethics. What stayed was the knowledge that it's possible to create strategies to improve police officers' working conditions, that give them professional value and that show their importance to society, even in favelas. Those actions can – I'm now sure – completely change the corporation.

For that to happen, the groups and corporations that rule the State need to adopt a different posture: it's imperative that they actually put public security policies as a priority, that they create new, stable and long-term possibilities

in that field and that they rigorously pursue their goals. Thereby, the society can be won over for a global solution, involving integrated, intersectional policies, with different groups, including social organizations, participating. They won't get there alone; it's up to social movements and organizations to consider in their agendas the need to convince public agents to work on designing new public security strategies to overcome the current ones, that are marked by failure and waste, both of public resources and lives.

It's worth noting that significant changes have been happening in public security in Brazil and in Rio, and they can't be ignored. The federal government has decided to act in that field, alongside other federative instances. In the year 2009, the 1st National Conference on Public Security was of note. The event involved hundreds of thousands of participants all over the country, despite the methodological limitations that restricted the process of participating and proposing more than it should have. The process allowed for wide discussion of the subject and for the definition of a set of principles that can guide the construction of policies with citizen references in the following years. It's worth considering a lack of articulation between social forces in general, and of human rights organizations in particular, regarding these paths. Thus, the government makes their position prevail, defining the debate's scope, the approved initiatives and their developments. It's undeniable that the conference served as a way to legitimize the federal government's policies. Still, I consider it to be a step forward, since no similar program had ever happened.

Another example of recent initiatives regarding national outlooks on public security was the Citizen Security National Program (PRONASCI, Programa Nacional de Segurança com Cidadania), elaborated by the National Public Security Department (SENASP, Secretaria Nacional de Segurança Pública). The program, in its conception, did some things right: it emphasizes the importance of an integrated security policy among federative agents; it invests in dialogue with civil society; it takes into account the importance of human rights when creating public security policies; it stimulates intersectional policies, emphasizing the social sphere; it greatly values community police, as a way of bringing law enforcement closer to the population; it encourages the creation of local councils focused on the subject, etc. The federal program's main problem is that most of those propositions

isn't materialized in concrete policies that actually reach the whole population, especially poorer people. That's because, among other limitations, the national program's dependence on state and city organizations makes it fragmented, with no scale and no impact. Especially, it can't deal with the fundamental factors that make access to public security harder for the favela population, which makes it invariably flawed.

A national public security program, as I realized in my research, should invest on two primary fields, in order to overcome the obstacles in policies aimed at favelas: working with the population's symbolic perceptions, and giving due value to officers.

Regarding the work with symbols, with hegemonic representations of violence, favelas and security strategies, it's worth creating an in-depth long-term program involving various social actors that go against traditional concepts of violence and of crime fighting strategies. Various studies⁶³ – and mine wasn't any different – have shown that the population of Rio, and of other parts of the country, defend a series of public security practices that allow for violence and for criminalizing specific social practices as central crime fighting strategies. Thus, the criminalization of drugs and abortion, the informal death penalty given to criminals by the police, the abuse of prisoners, the militarization of the war on drugs and police brutality towards poor people, especially in favelas, are defended or normalized.

Programs to fight violence need to apply resources in the realm of ideas, creating lasting global actions aimed at propagating a citizen public security policy. It's clear that this won't give immediate results, and that there will be contradictions, resistance and limits in its execution. Still, it would allow to face more clearly corporative resistance, corrupt groups and the limits of the military, authoritarian, "patrimonialist" and anti-citizen culture prevailing in law enforcement and society at large.

I believe we need to note, in this symbolic fight, how wrong is the moralist, conservative and prejudiced focus on fighting drug dealing as the priority of law enforcement. This priority is unreasonable under any lens you consider the phenomenon – economical, political, social, ethical or healthcare-wise.

⁶³ Studies mentioned throughout this book, especially by institutions working in public security, such as CESeC, CRISP, Nev, Observatório de Favelas, etc.

The costs – social, economical and in terms of human lives –, the state organization's fragility, the high degree of insecurity among the city's population and, especially, the total absence of practical results have all shown the mistake in that strategy to combat the drug trade.

On the other hand, it's clear the the main instrument of rising criminality and violence in the city is arms trafficking, especially of heavy weapons. Thus, even without discussing how it makes no ethical sense that drug dealing is forbidden and there are legal gun sales to civilians, it's clear the the violence spiral can only be interrupted when the focus of law enforcement becomes defending human lives. This can only come from efficient measures that prevent criminal groups from having access to guns and lead to dismantling national and international gangs responsible for arms trafficking.

Working in the realm of the symbolic is also fitting here: in Maré, most of the population is against drug decriminalization, and so are all the police officers. Most of the population sees prohibition as an unavoidable measure and believes that, without it, things could only get worse; even though other countries dealing with the drug trade show that its presence isn't the main responsible for the violence dynamics affecting countries like Brazil. Therefore, adequate information, conversations about the social costs of the war on drugs, the humanization of drug users and a strong emphasis on social, economical and safety costs of complying with arms trafficking and of the invisibility of those responsible are important measures.

In another direction, the importance of the growing value given to police officers was possibly the conclusion that impacted me the most during this research. Naturally, I thought it was important that officers were better paid and more respected as citizens, considering the various accusations regarding authoritarianism in the military corporation. However, what I realized is that the challenge is deeper. It's actually a question of re-signifying all the officer's work and professional condition.

The hegemonic representation of police officers was historically developed, as I presented through the course of this book. Changes in these fields demand deep and concrete actions. First of all, better wages are urgent; this is a necessary measure to bring in better recruits, with better education, interested in deeply investing in their professional qualifications. It would also mean that, when faced with the possibility of corruption, a

potentially dishonest officer could fear losing a valued job. The best way to obtain better wages would be creating some sort of National Police Officer Value Fund, similar to existing education funds. This fund would be used to guarantee a minimal decent pay to all officers and would complement those wages in all federative units.

Creating the proposed fund should come with creating a program to modernize police forces, allowing for better work conditions, better power relations inside the structure and the progressive demilitarization of the military police corporation. A similar program should be aimed at the Civil Police. Better wages won't influence in changing the long hierarchical tradition of police forces. The Military Police is marked by authoritarianism and by the distance between higher and lower ranking officers. It also reproduces a corporative logic, with military officers feeling different from civilians, worthy of superior rights when it comes to criminal justice. Overcoming this reality demands that officers are given more value as public servants, with inherent rights and duties, that a state security policy, not a government policy, be created, and that clear responsibilities be defined for law enforcement professionals, considering the chain of command and the social control of their strategies and activities. Those are some of the necessary initiatives to overcome the disbelief, hopelessness, frustration, stress and low self-esteem faced by most Military Police officers,⁶⁴ as well as giving more value to their social work.

Another element of the public security conjuncture that should be paid attention to and that demands a bigger debate is the role of UPPs. There are, indeed, some very relevant aspects to the initiative, that should be encouraged. However, that doesn't mean we should ignore the lack of a clear project, created under a broader definition of public security by the state government. It's worth noting that the head of department responsible for implementing the project is much more popular than the governor.

The criminal sovereignty exercised by GCAs in most favelas in Rio was a result of a historically inadequate State sovereign presence and of public

⁶⁴ Considering what was written in various other studies, usually done by social organizations and university groups that work with public security, it's possible to consider that the posture of officers interviewed in this book are representative of most officers in Rio.

security sectors complying with criminal groups. As a result, there's still a long way to go in order to undo the belief that favelas can't be thought about in the same way we think about other parts of the city, especially regarding people's safety. This limit is present in the UPPs actions and seems to me as the factor that threatens its success the most.

The strategy for arriving in the favelas to implement UPPs involves an understanding of the agents and forces that act in that territory. However, this understanding has been used to define how the police will go in and establish itself, but not as a way to discuss how civilians can participate in the intended security project. A worrying example happened in Batan. There, an officer who lives in the favela and works at BOPE went to the local neighborhood association and, with no clear intentions, convinced everyone to leave their positions. He also convinced members of the corporation to move to the favela. He then took over the association's presidency and his colleagues took over other offices. This was all candidly mentioned to journalists in the biggest and most influent newspaper in Rio de Janeiro.⁶⁵

This police intervention in Batan, legitimized by the media and the corporation, was also used by the militia, that overthrew the drug lords and chose a group of people they trusted to run the neighborhood association. The police's approach shows that the understanding of the favela is still twisted, dominated by the assumption that the people there have to always be submitted to an order other than what's defined by State and law. We don't see a Republican State, with people in the favelas seen as citizens, but a Police State, that acts according to local command's desires, to their idiosyncrasies.

Other examples of the risks of asserting a Police State in occupied favelas are the curfew and mandatory haircuts for teens and young people identified with funk, practices that have been publicized by social organizations since these actions started and that kept on happening; like an initial prohibition, in Santa Marta, of a funk party organized by the APAF (Funk Friends and Professionals Association), which led to city-wide protests. It's clear, then, that police forces have to make a continuous effort to create better ties to local population, especially local youth.

⁶⁵ Cf. *O Globo*, "Democracia nas favelas", August 9th 2009.

There are different challenges: creating a public security strategy that frees the favela population from oppression and that recognizes their inherent right to a safe life; state institutions should act in accordance with the republic, fully respecting the people's fundamental rights; creating an integrated public policy project, that contributes to placing favelas in the same development level as the rest of the city.

Finding answers to those challenges and to other similar ones demands breaking free from the segregating notion that public policies in favelas, for example regarding public security, can't have the same standards as those in other neighborhoods. Distinguishing between GCAs and the favela population at large is indispensable. If we think about these groups, about their activities, it's clear that the police should act towards them as they do towards any other crime. Recognizing the favela citizens as deserving of rights that are capable of understanding a state action aimed at protecting them is the first step to reverse the mistrust and disbelief held by those people regarding police honesty.

"I've been living in Maré for nearly 30 years and my dream was to one day see officers treating people here with more respect. The other day I saw the way a young man was stopped by an officer in the street and I was terrified. It hurts my heart, because I don't see a reason for officers to treat us all as criminals. They think we don't know our rights, just because we live in a poor place But they're wrong. Maybe people here have college degrees, earn a good living and like living here.

We just don't like the violence, it's awful. But, you see, I know the officer can't come break down my door and barge into my house like they do, sometimes with a master key when we're out at work. What we don't know, and that's why some people are afraid of reporting that, is who to go to, because everything's hard for poor people. But this will end someday, and I hope to still be around to see it." [WOMAN FROM PARQUE MARÉ]

It's worth clarifying, when I talk about trust in the police and in honest work – and that's a central conclusion to me regarding the Maré precinct –, that I don't agree with the general notion that corruption is the main problem in local police forces. Although it was brought up by people employed in the drug trade, by people who live in the favelas and, to some extent, by the officers, it's not generalized nor is it the main cause of the pain lived in Maré. The biggest limitation, as I've mentioned time and time again through the course of this book, is the traditional representation of the favela believed by most officers, no matter how honest they are. In that representation, the favela is very clearly seen as a *dangerous* place, where certain practices that wouldn't be appropriate in so-called formal spaces are allowed. Because of that, there are no limits, rules or control for police actions: everything's allowed. In the absence of ethical, disciplinary and legal standards to guide the officers' behavior, many of them act inadequately towards civilians and abuse their position, their use of guns and of physical force. These practices won't change through individual will, but through structural change, as I said.

Overcoming the myth of the *broken city*, then, is a fundamental step to establish a new outlook on the city that isn't defined by the city-favela dichotomy. A new outlook, supported by the recognition that Rio de Janeiro has different spaces, that should be marked by the specificities of life in a metropolis, not by social and economical segregation. Understanding that favelas are part of the city and that their citizens should have the same rights, as well as the same duties, will represent a paradigm-shift in public policies.

An encouragement, and a relevant fact for creating public security policies in Maré, is that at least 70% of those I interviewed said they liked living in the favela, in spite of the usual representations of Maré as a Brazilian Gaza, alluding to the area where Palestinian refugees live after being expelled from areas now dominated by Israel, and a place for daily conflict and war. The fact that those people, including those who work for the GCAs, feel they belong there reinforces the idea that there are more positive than negative aspects to living there. Some of the elements that are important to local population are: plenty of services and stores; Maré's localization; easy transportation; low living costs if compared to the rest of the city; and, still, questions regarding personal and collaborative relations usually established

in favelas, as well as family relations. The challenge here is to turn this feeling of belonging into participation in initiatives that help break the violence cycle, so that new actions for cherishing the population's lives and dignity can be created.

It's also worth noting the role of media in creating these representations of favelas and popular spaces, and the need for change in their treatment of facts happening in these spaces. I didn't prioritize this element in my study, but I recognize it's important.

At last, I can't help but noting that, during most of my research, I was taken over by a healthy internal unease regarding how to write something that could show the daily lives of Maré through their representations and experiences in the field of public security.

An expression of this process, and what seems to be the most concrete result of my work, was a movement towards fighting violence in Maré created in 2009. Local meetings with the education department and the 22nd precinct chief in order to talk about the loss suffered by people, especially public students, affected by violence, the 1st Open Conference on Public Security in Maré and, on September 20th 2009, a march, through the streets of Maré, involving more than 600 people who suffer the direct effects of the war between two rival gangs, were all innovative and revitalizing initiatives.⁶⁶ They illustrated the rising force of local civil society.

I'm very happy to be able to actively participate in this construction, alongside many people from Maré and from other parts of the city that believe we need to and are able to change current reality. I truly believe that life is worth it and that we can do with it as we wish, that we can always give it new meaning, becoming, with each day, with each fight, with each small victory, more and more human.

Let us keep walking, creating new theoretical and practical paths for transforming the real world.

⁶⁶ On Friday, September 18th 2009, the conflict led to many deaths and to the arrest of members of the drug trade. Some of the people organizing the event suggested its suspension, afraid for the safety of those who would take part. However, most of the group chose to go through with it, arguing that it was pointless to wait for the conflict to end before acting. The march was met with no hostility from either criminal groups or police.

GLOSSARY

POLÍCIA MILITAR | MILITARY POLICE – Police agency responsible for ostensive policing in Brazilian states.

POLÍCIA CIVIL | CIVIL POLICE – Judiciary police, responsible for investigating crimes in Brazilian states.

FAVELA AND FAVELADO (used in Portuguese) – Part of the city with specific characteristics regarding the population's ethnicity and socio-economical situation, construction, social norms and public space regulation. Those who live in the *favelas* are called *favelados*, sometimes used as a slur.

CAVEIRÃO – Military vehicle used for confrontations with drug trade organisations in favelas. Its name means “big skull” and comes from the skull used as a symbol of the Military Police Special Ops group BOPE. It is frequently criticised by Human Rights groups due to the high degree of violence that usually comes with its use.

MILÍCIA | MILITIA – Criminal group usually led by corrupt members of law enforcement, especially police officers. These groups occupy favelas and peripheral neighbourhoods, extorting money from the population and controlling certain economic activities. They are seen as enemies of both drug dealers and Human Rights organisations.

POLÍCIA MINEIRA – Groups of (illegally) armed civilians who banded together to control law enforcement in Rio's favelas and peripheral neighbourhoods. They were strong in Rio de Janeiro until the 70s, when they were gradually taken down by drug trade organisations. They were the foundation for the creation of militias.

JOGO DO BICHO – A form of gambling created in the 19th Century in Rio de Janeiro, based on a list of 25 animals. Even after it was prohibited by law, it has become very popular in Brazil, being controlled by known criminals known as “bankers”, who became very influential, especially in Samba Schools (*Escolas de Samba*). It lost some popularity in the last few decades, but it's part of Brazilian urban culture.

LAJE (AND “BATER LAJE”) – Concrete and iron roof typical of Brazilian houses. In *favelas*, the people use the term “*bater laje*” when they get together to work on the construction or improvement of a friend's *laje*. It's a moment of collective celebration, solidarity and collaborative work.

FUNK (AND “BAILE FUNK”) – Influenced by North-American music, *funk* a musical style that has become the most influential in Rio's *favelas* and urban peripheries, and spread to other Brazilian states. It's characterised by heavily sexualised lyrics and dancing, as well as by the occasional celebration or glorification of certain drug lords or drug trade organisations. The *baile* is a big funk party that happens every weekend, bringing together millions of young people in many Brazilian towns.

FORRÓ – Musical style from the Brazilian north-east that has spread to the rest of the country due to the migration pattern of many north-easterners to other parts of Brazil. Its lyrics are mainly focused on romantic relationships and the dance style is very sensual.

AFRO-BRAZILIAN RELIGIONS – Religious expressions with heavy African influence,

brought to Brazil by slaves native from various parts of the continent. Its biggest expressions are Candomblé and Ubanda. They have been historically persecuted by the State and, in the last few decades, by neo-charismatic evangelical churches, which have surpassed the Afro-Brazilian religions in *favelas*. Candomblé has been gradually more popular among white middle class believers.

GATO/GATONET – Clandestine illegal use of television and cable internet. It was started by the militia and has since spread to most of Rios's *favelas*.

TV GLOBO | CHANNEL 4 – It's the main communication network in Brazil, with the highest television audience in the country. It has been deeply criticised by left-wing groups due to its conservative disposition, and it has been historically accused of manipulation information in order to favor conservative right-wing political groups.

LINHA VERMELHA AND AVENIDA BRASIL – The two main roads in Rio de Janeiro. Linha Vermelha links the city to Baixada Fluminense – composed by neighbouring towns – and the nearly 50km of Avenida Brasil link the city Centre to the West Zone – a peripheral region, with the worst social and economical indicators of Rio de Janeiro.

DELEGACIA DA MULHER | WOMEN'S STATION – Police station specialised in crimes against women. They were created due to the amount of cases of violence against women in Brazil and the frequently dismissive or discriminatory treatment they faced when reporting crimes, especially rape or battery, in traditional police stations.

CAPITANIAS HEREDITÁRIAS | HEREDITARY CAPTAINCIES – First colonial structure in Brazil. It consisted of land distributed by the Portuguese Crown to important people, who became responsible for colonising the land, guaranteeing the territory's occupation. They had power over the lives and deaths of the people who lived in their land, especially slaves. These pieces of land were passed through inheritance and set the ground for the social and economical inequality patterns that still define Brazilian society.

QUILOMBOS – Lands taken over by slaves who escaped. They happened throughout the entire country and at some point housed thousands of people, including native people and poor white people. The one that became better known is Quilombo dos Palmares, between the states of Alagoas and Pernambuco, which lasted throughout the entire 17th Century. Zumbi dos Palmares, its last king, is Brazil's most important black hero and, in his honour, November 20th is "Black Consciousness Day".

CORONELISMO – Power structure typical of rural Brazil in the 19th Century and the first half of the 20th Century. "Colonels" received their symbolic titles from members of the oligarchies who ruled the country's rural areas and controlled the vote of the population living there. They guaranteed people voted for the dominant political groups and they controlled State resources in their territory. It is a central element in the historical democracy deficit that marks the country's history and in the maintenance of social and economical

inequality. This term is also applied to politicians who had a lot of power over peripheral urban areas of big cities since the second half of the 20th Century.

MANDONISMO AND FILHISMO – Terms related to *Coronelismo*. *Mandonismo* comes from “mando”, meaning “order”, and refers to the “Coronel”’s domineering practices. *Filhismo* comes from “filho”, meaning “son”, and refers to the transference of power to the next generation. It is still the main form of power transference and maintenance among conservative politicians in Brazil.

CAUDILHISMO – More usually used in the South of Brazil, typical of Spanish-language latin-american countries. It refers to the politician that controls a specific territory with a heavy hand and disregard for democracy. It has historically referred to both right-wing and left-wing leaders.

BRAZILIAN POLITICAL OPENING – The process of political liberation started towards the end of the 70s, during the military dictatorship. It was an effort taken by the law enforcement officers, civilian politicians and economical groups who ruled the dictatorship in order to create a formal democracy without losing political power. It was so effective that only 25 years after the beginning of the dictatorship and 12 years after the “political opening”, in 1989, did the country go through another presidential election.

CITY OF RIO X STATE OF RIO: What is today the city of Rio de Janeiro was the colony’s, the Empire’s and the Republic’s capital for nearly 200 years, until 1961. When the capital was transferred to Brasília in 1975, during the military dictatorship, the city of Rio de Janeiro was incorporated by the state of Rio de Janeiro, becoming the state’s capital. Those who live in the city of Rio de Janeiro are known as cariocas, and those who live in the state of Rio de Janeiro are known as fluminenses.

COMUNIDADE (COMMUNITY), FAVELA, COMPLEXO (COMPLEX), BAIRRO (NEIGHBOURHOOD) – Due to the strong stigma historically attached to *favelas* and their population, many *favelados* started calling the areas “comunidades” (“communities”). In the 80s, the term started being used by politicians and public management. However, the term *favela* is still claimed by many *favelados* and human rights organisations focused on *favelas*. They claim that the *favela* has historical, landscape, social, economical and cultural specificities that make it a singular type of space in the city, different from formal neighbourhoods, traditionally recognised by the State and by the formal market. The term “complexo” (“complex”) refers to a group of *favelas* sharing a common space. The *Complexo da Maré* (Maré Complex), for example, is composed of 16 *favelas*, each one with their particular characteristics.

THE ELECTORAL PROCESS – Voting is compulsory in Brazil, and in cities with over 200.000 voters it must have a second round (featuring the two candidates with the most votes) if no candidate reaches 50% + 1 votes in the first round.

THE CITY'S AREAS/ZONES – The city of Rio de Janeiro is marked by the presence of *favelas* in all its regions. However, considering its historical constitution, the Zona Sul (South Zone) is the area with the richest population – the social, economical and cultural elite; Zona Norte (North Zone), Leopoldina and Zona Suburbana (the Suburbs) are where the middle and lower classes live. Zona Oeste (the West Zone) became the area where the city expands, dividing itself in two sections: the Grande Barra da Tijuca (Greater Barra da Tijuca area) spawned a new middle class and part of a new economical elite, and the traditional Zona Oeste became an area of expansion for the lower middle class and for the worst social, economical and public service rates in the whole city; worse than many *favelas*.

NORTHEASTERN MIGRATION – In the historical process of the constitution of the social and economical structure of Brazil, the Southeast region became the epicentre of economical development and political power, followed by the South. The Northeast, however, became the territory with the worst social and economical indexes, serving as a provider of cheap, unqualified labor to Southeastern cities. Thus, a significant portion of the nine Northeastern states migrated to other Brazilian states in search of a better life. The Northeastern immigrant in Rio de Janeiro has been called “Paraíba” as a slur. The term refers to the state of Paraíba, where most of the migrants came from. In São Paulo, they are usually known as “baianos”, referring to the people from the state of Bahia.

TITÃS (CHAPTER 7) – Titãs is a Brazilian rock band started in the 80s in São Paulo. It has become one of the most popular Brazilian bands due to its lyrics criticising social inequality and the State’s authoritarianism. It is still active, but without most of its original members.

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Eliana gave us a beautiful book, valuable beyond the biographical itinerary of its author, and with a quality that shouldn't be attributed only to its origins. But beyond a notable book, valuable in and of itself, Eliana gave us an extraordinary example of transgressing patterns, prejudices and probabilities. An admirable example of citizen self-invention.

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