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Improving Security in Poor Areas Public Security and Spatial Justice in the Favelas of Rio de Janeiro

Nicolas Bautès | Rafael Soares Gonçalves

Translator : Laurent Chauvet

Abstract

This paper analyses the recent measures taken by the *Municipality of Rio de Janeiro* concerning public security in the context of several international events being organised in the city, including the 2016 Olympic Games. Falling within the framework of the Federal Programme of Security and Citizenship (*Pronasci*), *these measures aim first and foremost at improving security in several favelas of the city by establishing so-called Pacifying Police Units (UPP)*. With the study of spatial logics prevailing in the establishment of these units in strategically selected districts, associated with that of the daily practices of residents in several favelas of Rio alongside community-based police forces, we were able to characterise the close link between public security and urban policies. Beyond the displayed objectives of *social peace* preservation, we examine this link to question the permanence of social difficulties experienced by the majority of favela residents, and to question the underlying land and real estate stakes revealed by these actions. Does the evolution of intervention methods in urban public security, which appears to be closely related to territorial marketing strategies, reflect the unequal and possibly unfair treatment of some of the poorest areas of the city, or does it, on the contrary, lead to *considering* new means of security provision in areas highly affected by violence, poverty and a lack of public services?

Keywords

Public Security, Favelas, Community Policing, Urban policy, Rio de Janeiro

Introduction

Organising several international sports and cultural events¹ in Rio de Janeiro constitutes a major challenge for the municipality. More than ever, it compels the public authorities to work towards resolving the issue of insecurity which has been reaching surprising levels and is contributing to threaten freedom and human rights, mainly in poor areas. This phenomenon has been observed specifically in Rio de Janeiro and has been referred to as *fobópole*² by Lopes de Souza. According to him, a city is the perfect laboratory to study the social phenomena of fear, insecurity, crime and violence, as well as their main remedy: security or its improvement.

This article falls within the study of phenomena structured around facts on violent crime and feelings of fear and insecurity, as part of the domain of security policies, when crime, fear and insecurity lead the authorities to call on significant means to ensure the safety of their fellow citizens.

The measures recently adopted in Rio de Janeiro are a clear reminder that public security is central to the country's equilibrium. Locally, despite the recognised corruption and inefficiency of the police forces of the State of Rio de Janeiro, the highly-trained Special Police Operations Battalion or *Batalhão de Operações Policiais Especiais (BOPE)*, was consolidated during the 2000s. It was envisaged as a new form of supposedly honest and efficient police force. However, it remained resolutely violent. Nationally, this renewal resulted, in 2008, in the elaboration of the National Programme for Security and Citizenship (*Pronasci*) put forward by Justice Minister Luiz Paulo Barreto within the framework of the opening of the 12th Congress of the United Nations on Crime

¹ Indeed, Rio de Janeiro is due to host the Military Games in 2011, the Earth Summit in 2012, the FIFA Confederations Cup in 2013, the FIFA World Cup in 2014 and the Olympic Games in 2016.

² Lopes de Souza uses *fobópole* to mean "the fear of the city" based on the combination of the Greek terms *phobos* ("fear") and *polis* ("city") (De Souza, 2008: 9).

Prevention and Criminal Justice. According to him, this programme constituted a new paradigm in the country's politics³, particularly due to the new fact that it tried to reconcile the implementation of security and social objectives. Among the measures taken in relation to security and crime prevention, the programme provided for the creation of a so-called "community-based" police force. The policemen of this force who recently came out of the Police Academy and are therefore little exposed to the corruption and violence practiced by the current policemen, are employed on a new contractual basis, allowing for improved working conditions, more adequate training, working on different weekdays and salary increase). The Pronasci has been recommending the occupation of several favelas where Pacifying Police Units (UPP) have been established since 2008. This measure differs from former community policing projects in the financial means allocated by the Federal Government and in the number of policemen mobilised in these operations⁴. Indeed, the first units established there reported the end or at least a drastic reduction in the number of firearms in the favelas concerned, which contributed to a considerable reduction in the number of murders, thereby increasing the feeling of security among residents.

Nevertheless, beyond the "pacifying" logic⁵, improving security in these spaces reveals several economic stakes. The perspective of major sporting events organised by the municipality leads to accrued real estate speculation close to the places where police units settled⁶. This is all the more emphasised since the city is about to attract important national as well as international capitals in the form of real estate, particularly within the framework of the urban renovation policy initiated in several suburbs, including the harbour area.

In this context marked by rapid changes in current events which seem difficult to follow, the objective of this article is to identify spatial logics inherent to security measures implemented in the favelas cariocas. We need to analyse where and how these changes are taking place, and how they are perceived by current favela residents confronted with a permanent police presence by questioning how these new initiatives are experienced in several favelas.

We posit that the way the authorities chose where to intervene is not just because of emergencies related to insecurity and violence in the suburb concerned, but also and perhaps above all because of a voluntarist strategy from urban public institutions aiming at making the city attractive to investors and future tourists. It is in fighting crime that public institutions can remove one of the main obstructions to land and real estate market in a city in full transformation. This principle seems to explain the rapidity with which the programme is being implemented.

Our research which begins by examining reflections on urban violence in Rio de Janeiro, is based on articles from the national and local press, and on empirical data obtained through direct observation, and by regularly following up on the meetings of residents affected by UPPs established in several favelas of the city. Under the pretext of resolving security issues, this new form

³<http://www.crimecongress2010.com.br> (Online: page consulted on 08/09/2010).

⁴ The programme undertook to train around 3 500 policemen in 2010, with the community police making up almost one third of local police forces in the near future.

⁵ The euphemism "pacification" is often used in political and media speeches to refer to police occupation aiming at restoring peace through armed intervention, as was the case in Brazil. For more details concerning its use in the French language, see: <http://nouvellemetropole.com/archives/2011/04/12/pacifier-pacification.html>

⁶ According to the journal O Globo of 11 August 2010, UPP expansion in Greater Tijuca pushed real estate prices up by 80% in the space of a few months.

of community policing tends to dissimulate the fact that public institutions are in fact re-appropriating strategic areas of the city.

Violence and Urban Poverty in Rio de Janeiro – Favelas as Places of Violent Sociability

The link between marginality and illegal urban space has been the subject of many studies in the Brazilian urban context, with some authors trying to clarify the reasons explaining the progressive assertion of spaces generically referred to as favelas over the last two centuries (Abreu, 1994; Gonçalves, 2010; Valladarès, 2008; Silva, 2005; Zaluar, 2007). Favelas, which represent some of the main elements of the urban social landscape of Rio de Janeiro in the 20th century, are the materialisation of, among other things, a drastic lack of housing solution following a badly controlled urban expansion movement throughout the last century. Despite a great diversity of situations as far as social history, land status and residents' socioeconomic conditions are concerned, favelas today remain mainly associated with negative social representations. Where they have become marked and marginalised over time, drug trafficking which prevails since the 1980s has only been reinforcing this situation. Drug trafficking has been expanding quantitatively as well as spatially and uninterruptedly to the point of constituting an important source of revenues for some, and an environment in which criminal social principles prevail.

Drug trafficking being concentrated inside favelas can be explained socioeconomically as well as geographically. Indeed, while favelas more than often lack in basic public services as regards health, education and employment, they are also home to part of the urban poor (Telles, 2006). Their unique spatial configuration, i.e. their location on hills overlooking the so-called formal city or on the outer suburbs, and their morphology, i.e. with a maze of alleys and streets difficult to access, make of favelas places where drug traffickers can withdraw and feel protected, which contributed to the rapid expansion of this activity which, in the space of a few decades, went from the sale of soft drugs (i.e. psychotropic substances) to that of hard drugs (i.e. cocaine and, more recently, crack) and weapons. In short, favelas have become hubs from where drug traffickers sell to the entire urban area.

The dismantling of the repressive State apparatus following the country's return to democracy, and the establishment of the lucrative cocaine trade – more profitable than that of marijuana – favoured from the end of the 1970s the rise of drug trafficking in the favelas⁷. There, drug traffickers slowly imposed their authority not only by using weapons, but also by reproducing a traditional system based on patronage. By filling the political void found in the favelas and by playing the role of arbitrator, police and benefactor, drug traffickers initially won the support of the population. Making the most of their strong sense of belonging and the morphological particularities of favelas, drug traffickers establish their domination by following a territorial appropriation principle, thereby reinforcing the social representation of favelas as urban enclaves. Charity, together with fear, enabled them to take control of favelas while protecting themselves against potential denunciations (Goirand, 1999:160).

Police violence was another element which explained the acceleration of drug trafficking in the city from the end of the 1980s. The presence of public authorities in the favelas, at the time, boiled down to mainly violent and arbitrary police activities (Gonçalves, 2010), a police force that often had

⁷ The creation of the criminal organisation called *Comando Vermelho* (Red Commando) marks an important phase in drug trafficking in Rio de Janeiro. According to de Souza, drug trafficking is a multi-scalar reality which appears as an international network as well as a simple criminal organisation inside a *favela* (De Souza, 1996:1067). Drug sales outlets in the *favelas* only represent the most visible aspect of this structure.

a hand in drug trafficking. Under these conditions, the presence of the State was much criticised and even rejected by the local population.

The drug trafficking structure underwent deep changes from the 1990s onwards after the emergence of new criminal organisations. As explained by de Souza, organised crime in Rio de Janeiro was not as structured as the press made it out to be. The various “commandos” sharing favelas operated like criminal co-operatives (De Souza, 1996:428-429). They maintained conflictual as well as co-operative relationships among themselves and with the police forces. This situation partly explains why the police force was able to occupy the favelas so easily, especially during the period when UPPs were established there.

Today’s relations between the new generations of drug dealers and the residents are based on a fear and silence principle, and the close charity ties established initially declined progressively over time, resulting in the public institutions’ access to favelas being very restricted, and in inter-favela mobility being extremely reduced. This situation makes any attempt at formulating social claims difficult – claims which could bring together all the city’s favelas, and at the same time weakens any policy aiming at improving living conditions in these areas⁸.

As shown by Dowdney, the recent changes in drug trafficking have had deep social repercussions on the favelas, and have directly affected the daily lives of residents. Today, apart from the fact that drug traffickers no longer respect residents, drugs are sold and taken openly. Drug traffickers can be seen carrying heavy weaponry. They have become increasingly violent and younger (Dowdney, C-2004: 36-40). In addition, the competition between various networks of drug traffickers and the excessive militarisation of their activities have considerably reduced their profit margins, which is pushing drug traffickers to seek new ways of obtaining resources, such as by imposing taxes on commercial and land sectors or on residents’ protection in particular. Territorial domination is also apparent through the control of residents’ associations and, more recently, through the appointment of local candidates to legislative posts (Lessing, 2008: 54).

In many of the city’s favelas, drug traffickers have imposed constraints to residents who find it increasingly difficult to access local public services. Whole families are being expelled and their homes taken over, civil servants are being threatened, and access to certain services is being blocked. All these issues keep contributing to the already strong inequalities between these and other areas of the city⁹.

By exercising this form of power, drug traffickers can occupy a position which would otherwise be the responsibility of the State, by imposing an order or even a form of local ‘justice’. The sanctions applied by the leaders of drug traffickers, via what they call a ‘tribunal’, are particularly violent. Although the different favelas show similar elements when it comes to the application of local justice, there is no pre-established code and the rules being applied can vary from one leader to another.

Although most favelas have undergone considerable changes since the 1990s, resulting in particular from the spread and consolidation of rehabilitation policies and the strict legislative prohibition to conduct policies for the systematic destruction of illegal housing and the eviction of lodgers, favela

⁸ The fear and silence principle is more harmful than one could imagine. It prevents favela residents from having contacts with the outside world, and provokes a form of incommunicability inside the actual favelas, linked to fear and mutual distrust (Silva, 2004).

⁹ Although these situations do not systematically concern all the favelas of Rio de Janeiro (which accounts for as many as 1 000 favelas in the actual municipality and corresponds to around 1,2 million inhabitants), we still need to accept the fact that it is recurrent in many cases.

residents have not however managed to break away from the strong socio-spatial condemnation affecting them. An important reason for this is the fact that some of these spaces were considered, from the 1990s onwards, to be high risk areas, particularly as regards the violent deaths resulting from the regular armed confrontations between the police force and the groups of drug traffickers. Statistics in this regard show that 5 793 people were killed in the State of Rio de Janeiro in 2009 due to police-drug trafficker confrontations (Instituto de Segurança Pública – ISP, 2009).

All this phenomenon did was to confirm the relation which exists between poverty and insecurity, and which is characteristic of most favelas in Rio today, reinforcing the dualistic vision of the city, i.e. opposing the formal city to the favelas which have become ‘illegal territorial enclaves’ (De Souza, 2008: 51). In the end, the dramatic rise in the level of violence linked to the expansion of drug trafficking cannot prevent such difficulties nor stimulate, whenever possible, investments from residents.

The expression “high risk areas” (De Souza, op.cit.) today is commonly used to designate the favelas of Rio de Janeiro. It illustrates the strong concentration of deadly violence in makeshift housing areas, and particularly the fact that “it is the residents of poor areas who receive precarious urban services who are most exposed to violent deaths and, vice versa, it is the most privileged social classes living in the best areas of the city that are the most protected from this type of violence” (Cano, 1997: 38, quoted by de Souza, *Ibid.*). De facto, violence seems to introduce an additional social and territorial inequality in a city that already contains many (Cano, 1997:39).

Analysing the issue of violence in Brazil, A. Peralva remarks that Brazilians tend to co-produce “the violence of which they are the victims, through a multitude of adaptive behaviours which have always constituted a general logic of social life adjustment in the country” (Peralva, 2001: 148). The traditional Brazilian *jeitinho* (“resourcefulness”) has given rise to mechanisms of tolerance to violence which, in turn, have led to “a privatisation of security beyond all tolerable limits, which weakens the capacity of Brazilians to define where crime begins” according to the author (Peralva, *Ibid.*). Yet, the weakness of relations to legislation, precariousness, the corruption of the repressive apparatus and the progressive adaptation of residents to insecurity, have contributed to raise the level of risks collectively accepted at previously unknown thresholds, which in turn has contributed to feed the spiral of violence further (Peralva, op. cit.: 148) and, paradoxically, its counterpart: the security industry.

As such, violence and its perpetrators generate their own rules and regulations which replace or add to the constitutional rules which public institutions find difficult to impose.

Public Security Policy and Pacifying Police Units in Rio de Janeiro – An Old Novelty

Implementing a public security policy in the post-dictatorial Brazilian context represents a fundamental challenge. This was already on the agenda during the first years of the country’s return to democracy in 1985, during which the administration of the Governor of the State of Rio de Janeiro, M. Leonel Brizola, unsuccessfully sought to modify the violent practices of the police force in popular areas, i.e. mainly in the favelas. The newly instituted public authorities were then becoming aware of the urgent need – which was pointed out in particular by the vigour of the social claims and the rising violence in the country – to work in favour of a political system emphasising the rights of the most vulnerable citizens. Indeed, law and order progressively tended to be defined within the framework of a “State action mediating various conflicts and interests” (Bencheoga, Guimarães, Gomes and Abreu, 2004: 120). It could no longer defend only the interests of the powers in place and had to take into account the diversity of social requirements and safety matters in particular. This represented a major challenge for the democratic government which was anxious to

switch from a controlling police system to a responsible police force. In other words, to reduce violence and crime which were in full expansion at the time, counting on the collaboration of the populations seemed unavoidable.

The first measures in favour of establishing a community-based police force concerned with prevention, were implemented at the end of the 1980s. This initiative was inspired by the constitutive elements of citizenship as defined in the Constitution of 1988, which insisted on "the protection of individual rights and freedoms in the face of threats which the power of the State's institutions represented (police abuse in terms of control and violence) and the protection of the life and property of citizens threatened by criminal predation (social control)" (Paixão, 1993). Under the influence of various measures taken by many countries and the United States in particular, where they constitute "practically the only alternative available to administrators pretending to improve relations with the public", (Moore, 1994, quoted by Kahn et al., 2000: 2), several Brazilian States were progressively moving in the direction of pacification and commitment. As such, the first groups of community-based police officers were established in the town of Guaçuí and Alegre in the State of Espírito Santo in 1988, then in the suburb of Copacabana in Rio de Janeiro in 1994-95 (Beato, 2004:5). This conception of security was progressively reinforced on the scale of Rio de Janeiro, where the police was being increasingly called upon to interact with residents through preventive activities within the community (leisure activities, extra-curricular educational activities, awareness of environmental issues and helping people to integrate the professional world) (Barkan, 1997). The community-based police force was then seen patrolling on foot rather than in vehicles, which was supposed to favour relations between police officers and residents. These initiatives, according to their designers, were also supposed to lead residents to contribute to public security endeavours, communicate information on observed criminal activities and take part in community projects more willingly. Although these initiatives are recognised by the public authorities and civil society as a sure progress in the police system which, until then, had been marked by inefficiency, lack of resource and violent behaviour, their implementation did not manage to curb crime nor corruption and deviant behaviour within the police service.

In Rio de Janeiro, the experiences of community policing in the favelas turned out mostly inefficient. Police units had very little human resources at their disposal and were not in a position to take on drug trafficking activities directly. For police officers, the perspective of such a job was more like a punishment, i.e. forced to put their life at risk without adequate means of defence. Moreover, as important as they could have been at all territorial levels, investments up until then remained mostly insufficient to resolve the delicate problem of criminality in a society as unequal and confronted to violence as that of Brazil.

Whether on the scale of the State or the city, the confrontation policy and the military conquest of public space which were central to the public security policy during the dictatorship, had however not been completely questioned. In addition to the experience of the Brizola government and despite several dramatic incidents which had been tried in a Court of Justice¹⁰ and had brought the public authorities to rethink the security issue, the successive governments of the State of Rio de Janeiro, in an attempt to eliminate the recurrent crime problems, often resorted to a policy centred on violent and arbitrary military operations in popular areas. With the election of Eduardo Paes as Mayor of Rio de Janeiro in 2008, the 'zero tolerance' policy implemented by previous Mayor Cesar Maia during his second mandate (2001-2008), was sure to be prolonged. By calling his policy

¹⁰ We can mention, for example, the cases of the street children who were murdered in front of the Candelária Church in the centre of Rio on the 23rd of July 1993, or still, the massacre of several residents of the Vigário Geral favela on the 29th of August of the same year, where both were orchestrated by the police force.

choque de ordem ("order chock"), the objective of the municipality was to fight against all uncivil and illegal activities by fighting land occupation, hawking and illegal parking. This policy, which was the showcase of the municipal administration, was fairly well accepted by the city's middle and upper classes who, in the reassertion of the public control of urban space, saw a possibility to improve their quality of life. In this context, the discourse on the partial or total re-housing of the favelados (after an eviction procedure), which had been progressively abandoned during the 2000s, today tends to be reactivated, while the community-based police force system generally tends to receive little support from the organs in charge of public security.

While the municipalities are constitutionally responsible for managing local policies, the policy on public security is dealt with at the Federal State level. Since the end of the dictatorship, the governors who followed one another at the head of the State of Rio de Janeiro had to face the urban violence problem, which has indisputably become one of the major problems of the city.

The much mitigated success of these operations only superficially weakened the power of organised crime groups, and led to the high death rate of *favela* residents who were often the innocent victims of these confrontations. At the same time, this contributed to spreading a feeling of insecurity shared by the entire city, reinforcing the negative representations of the city in the national and international press. Not only did the criminal violence phenomenon remain unanswered, but corruption often seemed to affect those in charge of operations aiming at improving the security of the urban space. In short, it looked like the city was entering an impasse.

Even if the procedures of the Mayor's office and the State of Rio de Janeiro as regards police intervention are relatively distant from the policies of the Lula government, the party of the current Mayor and Governor (PMDB)¹¹ is allied to the Workers' Party at the national level. This political union, which has not been seen in Rio de Janeiro for many decades, led to the establishment of a trusting relationship between the various levels of government, facilitating the transfer of important resources to the city. The fact that the city is organising the Military World Games in 2011, the Earth Summit in 2012, the FIFA Confederations Cup in 2013, the FIFA World Cup of Football in 2014, and finally the Olympic Games in 2016, can serve to reinforce investments and tourism. This succession of projects at the service of economic and political ambitions led the Federal Government to adopt a new position as regards the issue of violence, at the centre of which is that of public security. This position in fact led to a series of armed interventions in the favelas, which were supposed to precede a phase of pacification by consolidating a community-based police force inserted in popular areas.

At this stage, we need to differentiate between the financial and media investments of the pioneering initiatives of the last decades, and those of current operations. While these two elements do not show a break in the public institutions' concept of security, they still make it possible to envisage new ways of tackling the issue of crime and violence from a social approach.

Under the Lula government, the federal administration became involved in a vast project founded on the principles of a community-based police force. Initiated by the Department of Justice in 2007, the National Programme for Public Security and Citizenship (Pronasci) came across as a novel initiative as far as fighting against crime in Brazil was concerned. It considered articulating security policy and social action, privileged prevention by emphasising the identification of causes leading

¹¹ The Party of the Brazilian Democratic Movement is one of the most important political parties in the country. It comes from the Brazilian Democratic Movement (MDB) which was officially recognised as the opposition party during the dictatorship. It takes part in the government since the democratisation process and includes representatives from different ideological movements.

to violence, without nonetheless moving away from a strategy of social and public security organisation (Ministério da Justiça, 2010). The programme was to be applied by the Federal Authorities and was to count on the active participation of federal organisations, in collaboration with the federated States and municipalities, and in collaboration with families and the entire community via technical and financial projects and interventions. Social mobilisation was invoked as a central element making it possible to improve public security. Among the main lines of the programme were the improved status of public security professionals (salary increase and training in human rights), restructuring the prison system, fighting against police corruption and residents' commitment in preventing violence¹². It targeted the 15-24 year olds in particular, who potentially represent the age bracket most affected by trafficking activities, with some of them having already been the subject of legal proceedings and/or having been imprisoned, and others still occupying important functions in the organised crime system.

The implemented proposal involved 11 metropolitan regions in the country¹³ which were listed by the Department of Justice and Health as being the country's most violent regions, and which included Rio de Janeiro. These regions served as examples in setting up the programme in the other regions of the country, which did not include only urban areas. Close to 90 interventions were to be set up¹⁴. The Pronasci was co-ordinated by a federal secretariat, relayed at State level by a team of people whose task was to ensure the execution of the programme in collaboration with the Municipal Integrated Management Cabinets (*Gabinete de Gestão Integrada Municipal* - GGIM). These were responsible for "ensuring the link between the representatives of the civil society and the different security forces – civil and military police forces, the firemen corps, the municipal guard and the public security secretariat" (Ministério da Justiça, Pronasci, 2010)¹⁵. The Pronasci also required from partners that they involved populations more in the management and control of objectives displayed locally by the project, by creating Popular Forums of Public Security. To date, the programme has been extended and implemented in 150 towns, representing 22 States. Despite its preventive and community-based discourse, Article 6 V of Federal Act nº11.530 of 24 October 2007 still requires that local partners hire "police forces to pacify the territories".

In the context of future major sporting events and under the effect of the local policy of 'zero tolerance', establishing UPPs in the favelas of the city constitutes the priority project of the Pronasci in Rio de Janeiro. Beyond any reference to already well-proven community-based police models which did not produce the expected effects, partnership strength – which was little established in the domain of security in Brazil up until then – between public institutions and organisations emanating from civil society seems to have a major role to play.

Pacifying Illegal Spaces

Security at the service of land speculation and urban marketing

¹² Implementing this programme involves government financing of 6,7 billion Reais by the end of 2012 (around 3 billion Euros).

¹³ These are Belém, Belo Horizonte, Brasília (Entorno), Curitiba, Maceió, Porto Alegre, Recife, Rio de Janeiro, Salvador, São Paulo and Vitória.

¹⁴ Among the many initiatives in this programme, let us mention the « Mother of peace » project (Mães da Paz), a study grant for women who wish to become involved in joint actions with the police force. They will be trained to defend human rights.

¹⁵ <http://portal.mj.gov.br/pronasci/data/Pages/MJF4F53AB1PTBRNN.htm>

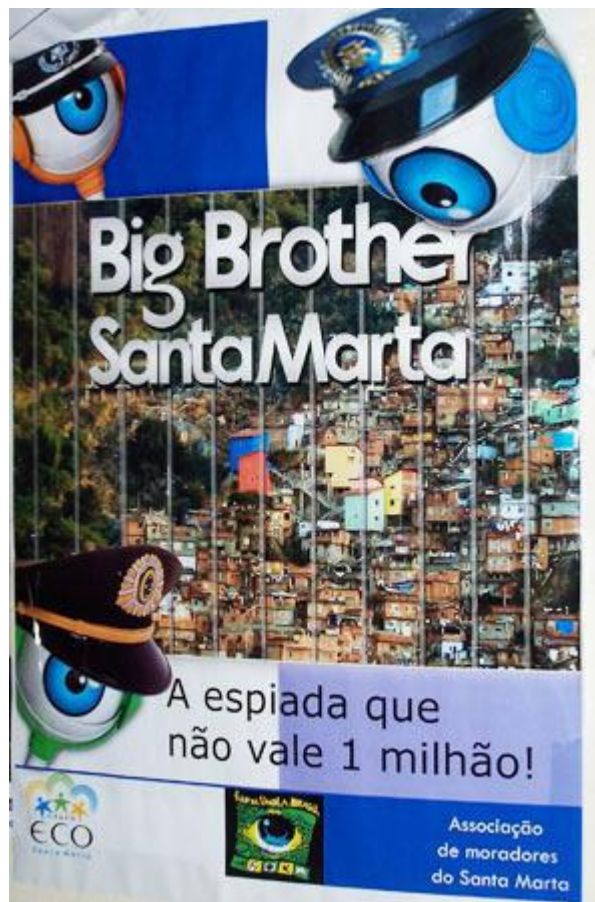
Apart from being partially financed by federal funds under the aegis of the Pronasci, the original scope of the project for the establishment of the first UPP can be explained by the local circumstances of public security policies, and by the city's aspiration to turn to its advantage the fact that it is going to host several sporting events. The first three units were set up between the end of 2008 and the beginning of 2009, in response to armed conflicts with drug traffickers, with no real apparent spatial criterion. At the time, however, the need for pacification became all the more urgent since the perspective of organising the Olympic Games was becoming clearer.

The urgency with which the city is confronted since then, certainly explains the fact that the first operations of the community-based police force in the favelas do not in any way replace but, rather, succeed to the more classic – and violent – methods of intervention of the police. Indeed, the favela of Santa Marta, which is situated at the centre of the Botafogo suburb in the south area (see Document 1), and which is one of the most favoured places of the city, has been the subject of a vigorous police invasion which was given a lot of media coverage, after which it was decided to place CCTVs in the streets.



Document 1 – In the foreground, the favela of Dona Marta with, at the bottom, the suburb of Botafogo (Photography: N. Bautès, September 2007)

This situation provoked a strong reaction among residents who mobilised against this decision (see Document 2). Considering the central location of Santa Marta and the pioneering nature of the security initiatives, this favela became the laboratory and showcase of the public security policy of Rio de Janeiro's military police, as reflected in the permanent establishment of UPPs from December 2008 onwards.



Document 2 – Poster elaborated by the residents’ association of the favela of Santa Marta criticising the implementation of a CCTV system in the streets (Source: Agência de Notícias das Favelas)¹⁶

In another spatial context, on the western outskirts of the city, the suburb of Cidade de Deus, made up of several favelas and important multi-occupancy housing areas, was the second place to benefit from a UPP (2009). In this case, Cidade de Deus was selected as a priority due to its direct proximity to the Olympic complex under construction, and to its extensive media coverage in the early 2000s. Indeed, Cidade de Deus was made internationally famous due to its criminal violence which was illustrated in Fernando Meirelles’ 2002 film of the same name. However, the size of this suburb meant that the process to rid the place of armed drug traffickers took longer and was more violent than for Santa Marta.

Finally, the favela of Batan, also situated in the western area of the city, was only occupied after the incarceration – there again mostly relayed by the media – of a former policeman nicknamed “Batman” who used to control the militias of this region. The establishment of a UPP in this case constituted a response to public demand, showing that the police was fighting drug traffickers as well as militiamen who emanated mostly from the police force.

The first establishments effectively led to the end or, at least, to a drastic reduction in the number of weapons in the favelas, which contributed to a considerable reduction in the number of deadly

¹⁶ <http://www.anf.org.br/2009/10/14/santa-marta-o-lugar-mais-vigiado-do-rio/>

crimes¹⁷, thereby increasing, according to public institutions, the feeling of security among the favelados and the residents of the surrounding suburbs. This discourse was widely broadcast as resulting mainly from the Pronasci by former Brazilian President Fernando Enrique Cardoso, who explains that "while the use of drugs might still continue, violence, organised crime, fear and terror are all finished."¹⁸

The climate of peace following the establishment of the first UPPs led to an increase in property value, in the favelas as well as the surrounding suburbs. The increase in the price of houses in the suburb of Botafogo for example, where the hill of Santa Marta is situated, reached 148,89%¹⁹ two years after the establishment of the UPP.

The success of UPPs in the media and, undoubtedly, the relative real estate explosion they provoked, contributed to the decision to extend the pacifying system to other favelas in the southern area of the city in 2009 (Babilônia/Chapeu Mangueira, Pavão-Pavãozinho/Cantagalo, Tabajaras/Cabritos) (see Document 3). Seeking to ensure security around areas likely to receive real estate investments, the government established a UPP, in March 2010, in the favela of Providência which dominates the harbour area. The occupation of this favela became an imperative condition for the success of the gigantic project of Porto Maravilha²⁰.

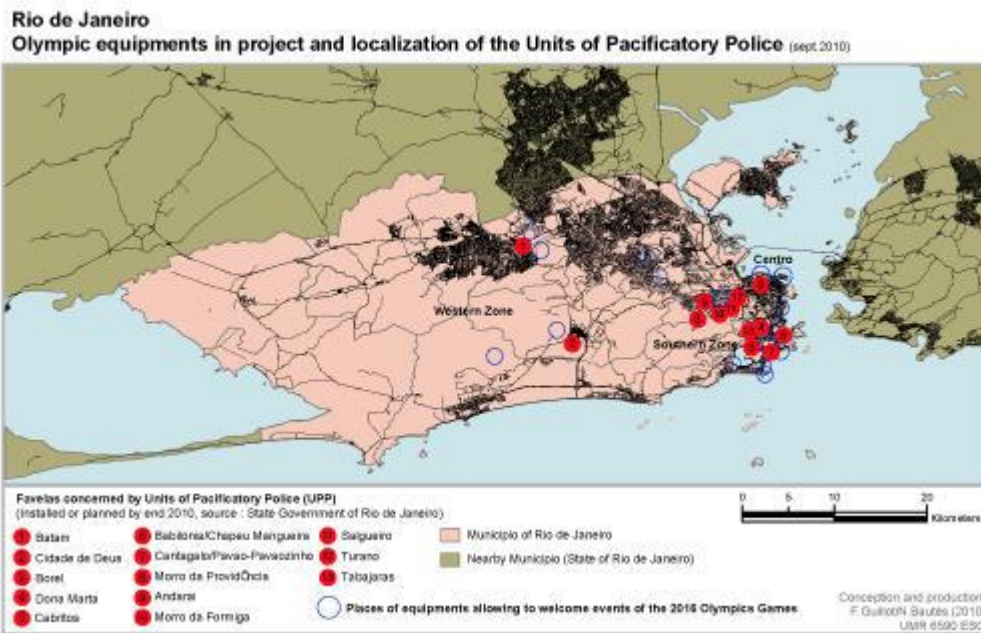
¹⁷ Since the establishment of the Pacifying Police Units, it seems that crime indexes have decreased considerably, this effect of this being a reduction of close to 80% in the number of homicides. Between November 2007 and November 2008, the Civil Police Force recorded 34 murders in Cidade de Deus. Over the same period between 2008 and 2009, only 6 murder cases were recorded. The number of thefts over the same period went from 68 to 11. Assaults during the same period decreased by 70,9%, going from 141 to 41 cases (Instituto de Segurança Pública, 2009).

¹⁸ Interview with British newspaper The Guardian dated 12 April 2010: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2010/apr/12/rio-de-janeiro-police-occupy-slums> (page consulted on 26 September 2010).

¹⁹ See the following website:

<http://www.sidneyrezende.com/noticia/79341+valorizacao+no+santa+marta+chega+a+100+apos+instalacao+de+upp> (consulted on 10 September 2010).

²⁰ This is the leading project of the current municipal administration: <http://www.portomaravilhario.com.br/>



Document 3. Location of UPP and main Olympic facilities (JO 2016) in Rio de Janeiro (Source: Polícia Militar do Rio de Janeiro; Instituto Pereira Passos; Rio 2016 (<http://www.rio2016.org.br> / Réalisation: N.Bautès/F.Guillot)

More recently, pacification also concerned the northern area of the city with the establishment of the first UPPs on the belt of favelas situated around the Maracanã Stadium, which is the seat of the future World Cup of Football and the opening ceremony of the Olympic Games. Since April 2010, this project has been implemented in the favelas situated in the suburb of Tijuca (near the Maracanã Stadium in the northern area), and in suburbs close to the city centre (e.g. Santa Teresa)²¹. As such, it reached the favelas of Andaraí, Borel, Formiga, Casa Branca, Cruz, Salgueiro, Turano, Macacos, São João, São Carlos, Prazeres, Foqueteiro and Mangueira, the latter being one of the favelas the most affected by cocaine trafficking.

What Security, and For Whom?

The feeling of “climbing a favela” occupied by a UPP is at first, for a non resident, a surprising sight²². It is very easy to appreciate the absence of armed drug traffickers or drug dealers. With the feeling of security being experienced due to the large number of policemen walking in the streets, the population can again move about and use previously unused common spaces. An activist-resident of an important favela of the northern area shared with us the fact that, despite her criticism of the project, she could definitely see happiness on the faces of the residents who, until then, had only known fear of armed conflicts between drug dealers and police officers. We were

²¹ Two years after the establishment of UPPs, the value of the buildings of this suburb increased by almost 80% (Journal O Globo dated 11 August 2010).

²² The authors recently led several interviews in the *favelas* of the city. This field research called for our regular presence and required much attention on our part as far as weapons and violent conflicts were concerned. Since most *favelas* are situated on hills, it is common to talk about “climbing” to refer to any visit of *favela*.

also able to observe that, in this very favela, people spent more time in the streets and moving in and around places that used to be occupied by competing groups of drug traffickers. In fact, today the Brazilian Government is promoting tourism in the pacified favelas, training local guides to that end and making credits available for the renovation of houses and the establishment of commercial companies. Alternative transport (i.e. mototaxis and collective vehicles), which was illegal up until then, is now officially registered.

This feeling of security seems to be shared by the residents of the surrounding suburbs who saw drug trafficking as the major culprit behind urban violence. It can easily be seen in the suburb of Tijuca which is benefiting from an increase in the number of patrons in bars and restaurants. We can also observe an exponential increase in the price of real estate in and outside of the favelas. According to the Executive Director of the Union of Civil Building Industries of Rio de Janeiro, the presence of UPPs has opened up new spaces for the real estate market, particularly in the central suburbs which until then were not highly priced. Moreover, the increase in property prices throughout the city has become one of the main indexes of the project's success. Also, the drop in the number of car thefts in these suburbs recently led insurance companies to undertake to reduce car insurance premiums by 20%²³. Several major businessmen interested in expanding UPPs, constituted a fund of over 20 million Reais²⁴ per year to sponsor the purchase of equipment and the construction of UPP headquarters in the favelas²⁵. It seems that the project is becoming consolidated in Rio de Janeiro, to the point of representing a form of consensus among the various candidates for the government of the State of Rio de Janeiro, during the electoral campaigns of October 2010. According to the State's Public Security Secretary, the project's objective is to establish 33 UPPs, thereby reaching 165 in the 1000 or so favelas of the city by 2014.²⁶

It is also possible to observe a stronger presence of public service suppliers who in the past used to avoid favelas due to the presence of drug traffickers. There is as such a link between the various levels of State power (from local to federal), NGOs, private companies and, although less clearly, residents and residents' associations. For these actors, UPPs play a role in asserting public action in the favelas. UPP consolidation led the Social Aid Secretariat, with the support of the Federation of Industries of the State of Rio de Janeiro, to implement a programme of social action called UPP Social which is currently under the management of the Municipal Urbanism Institute Pereira Passos (IPP). Thanks to this initiative, local social demands are identified and social, cultural, environmental and economic development projects are being implemented.

Despite important investments in these favelas, to date it seems difficult to envisage UPPs as fully permanent as far as public social policies are concerned. Indeed, the institutional nature of these interventions remains, for the time being, precarious and politically unstable, dependent on private financing and subject in particular to potential changes in the government, conceivable since the senatorial and presidential elections of October 2010.

Although the first results of this security system appeared promising, they provoked criticisms and revealed a number of biases. Indeed, when we attended a series of meetings between representatives of the police force, residents and local leaders, we observed a major change in the organisation of the social life of these suburbs: it seemed that the police force had become the new and sole mediator between the State and the residents, and that the local UPP commander had

²³ See <http://noticias.terra.com.br/interna/0,,OI4410340-EI8177,00.html>, page consulted on 27 August 2010.

²⁴ About 9 million Euros (September 2010).

²⁵ According to the newspaper O Globo dated 24 August 2010, the EBX Group, Bradesco Bank, Bradesco Insurance and the Brazilian Confederation of Football, among others, agreed to contribute to the fund.

²⁶ Newspaper O Globo dated 4 July 2010.

become the main authority of the suburb. This tended to restructure the balance of power which, until then, had been held between one or several representatives of residents' associations, the reigning drug traffickers and, where appropriate, social workers, the latter finding themselves in new situations, some having been demoted to subordinate roles. Although, historically, relationships between police and residents have always been very conflictual, the new police force must now change its position towards residents, avoiding reproducing the violence and distrust observed up until then, failing which the success of UPPs could be challenged.

Favelas which were managed mostly through fear, with the presence of commandos and militias, are progressively being managed by a police force concerned with pacifying interventions. Once a favela has been pacified, the police force can, in the name of the residents, request the establishment of public services from the State, trying to resolve conflicts involving families or neighbours, forbidding or granting permissions to carry out cultural events, organising the removal of domestic refuse and, finally, playing a role in the surveillance of the suburb. In this light, the action of the police force goes beyond its scope of activities. While this, in itself, does not constitute a problem in other contexts where a committed police force fills the gap between sociability/services and the people living in difficult areas, we still need to consider the fact that, in the Brazilian case, reinforcing police monopoly in spatial contexts such as these can represent a potential mistake: as highlighted by Kant de Lima (2000:175), the risk is that "the police continue to function as an autonomous agency at the service of an imaginary State, in charge of maintaining unfair law and order in an unequal society".

Although, through the project, information meetings with the populations are being planned, it seems on the whole that residents are forced to take part in these meetings insofar as the project's main objectives were not established in consultation with them or even introduced publicly. Despite this, local meetings have led to changes in the operating methods of the police force, which testifies to the will of those in charge of the project to influence its implementation and voice their opinion as far as encountered difficulties as concerned. As such, we should not overestimate the efficiency of this form of 'participative' deliberation, as specified by S. Fainstein in particular, because it is part of a "procedural approach (...) which is certainly democratic but (which) fails to take into account the structural reality of inequality and power hierarchies" (Fainstein, 2009). The relationships between residents and police force are still problematic, due to the frequent cases of violent and arbitrary police interventions, as we were able to establish during a meeting between the residents and the UPP commander in a favela of the northern area, with several cases of police blunders reported to the local commander. Certain reactions from residents, outside the expected framework of participation, have nonetheless been listened to by public institutions, such as criticisms concerning the violent police interventions with the younger and black residents in particular, or still the question of organising events or baile funks (funky balls) which are systematically associated with drug traffickers, and are generally forbidden in the favelas occupied by the police.

Although the threat of violence linked to trafficking seems temporarily distant, it is still present. Apart from the fact that they rely on a long history of conflicts, relationships between favelados and police officers remain largely limited, on the one hand because of the traffickers' threats on residents who are afraid of being perceived as police collaborators, and on the other hand because of arbitrary positions exercised by certain police officers.

Moreover, it seems obvious that the interests underlying this community-based security system are not necessarily the same as those of the favelados, which can represent a potential economic threat for the residents. Indeed, the real estate speculation resulting from it leads to difficult situations for certain residents deprived of housing or access to certain urban services (water, electricity and

domestic rubbish removal, among others)²⁷. One of the main concerns expressed during UPP presentation meetings in the favelas, concerned the payment of public services. Despite their doubtful quality, it is well known that the majority of residents never paid for them. With the expulsion of drug traffickers and the registration of tens of thousands of new clients, public service providers finally decided to set up proper services and equipments²⁸.

The real estate pressure and speculation extended beyond the favelas, ending up affecting the residents of the surrounding suburbs, who saw housing prices increasing without their income being re-evaluated for all that. In the end, it is possible to conceive that this dynamic tends to modify the geography of inequalities at the city level, an aspect which ought to be analysed in precise terms when the major urban renovation and renewal works will be completed. The danger lies in pacifying certain areas of the city by modifying their socioeconomic characteristics, which would result in displacing violence and the poor elsewhere, towards the outskirts, far away from the more well-off areas of the city, out of sight of tourists and future athletes.

Conclusion and Perspectives

After three years of initiatives to improve the security of a forever increasing number of favelas, taking stock of all UPP interventions in Rio de Janeiro is a delicate matter. We ought to avoid offering a final judgment on this type of intervention. Indeed, too often, opting against police interventions leads to defending drug traffickers, as explained by Marcelo Lopes de Souza who denounces the attitude of many an academic and political personality who, accusing police practices, adopt an ambiguous viewpoint vis-à-vis crime bosses. Moreover, evoking the emergence and new vigour of the pacifying methods of the police, cannot make one forget that this model is implemented without truly questioning former police practices, particularly those of the special intervention forces in general, and the Special Police Operations Battalion (BOPE) in particular.

Therefore, we ought to adopt a critical vision vis-à-vis these new forms of public security management which, benefitting from the complete support of government institutions and private companies, are still weakened by the omnipresence of the police force which refers to the exclusive security management of these areas and safety of their residents. Debates on these issues are still intense in the public and political sphere. They mobilise favelados as well as those who live in areas where drug traffickers and private militias operate, and who remain on the margin of ongoing urban pacification. Such mobilisation is expressed through the opening of protest spaces in the form of debates that, while confined to meetings of initiatives, tend however to show a renewal of social movements that had slowed down drastically during the last two decades. While to date this resurgence is limited, it still represents an evolution which deserves our attention.

Yet, despite being widely supervised, pacifying interventions dissimulate recurrent practices in Rio de Janeiro as far as favelados are concerned: indeed, we see a covert return to evictions in certain suburbs illegally occupied by the poor, mainly those situated near facilities planned within the framework of future international sporting events. In this context, the idea is to discuss the true definition of this type of participative police action, where reality shows that residents are barely represented.

²⁷ According to the newspaper O Globo dated 27 April 2010, the price of a house in the *favela* of Santa Marta went from 10 000 to 50 000 Rs.

²⁸ Water and drainage company CEDAE implemented a 'social' rate of 15 Rs per household, a system which was not adopted by the local electricity company.

Real estate speculation, which is fairly high around secured areas, seems to outline a rent gap phenomenon (Smith, 1979), a sign which could lead to a process of gentrification linked to pacification and, at the same, resulting from operations led by the town planning municipal services which are prone to renew the residential offer. As such, the arrival of upper or upper-middle classes in these areas is an effective process, perceived also as an element of urban boosting the effects of which cannot, to date, be analysed accurately.

Moreover, the security policy cannot amount to these interventions. Pacification, which is desired by the instigators of the Pronasci could, as highlighted by Machado da Silva (2010), concern all the favelas of the city. And yet, it is not universal and cannot be standardise, to the regret of many government representatives who have been attending international conferences on security²⁹ in this regard.

Finally, many problems affect this policy and its interventions, from the local level where the efficiency of the process depends on police officers, to the metropolitan and federal levels where, despite economic and electioneering interests, this type of intervention reveals unequal access to public services. All favelas benefiting from security thanks to the presence of UPPs are due to receive public equipments and services, while all others have to wait for any public attention and intervention. This situation shows that the unequal treatment of the security issue in Rio de Janeiro, relates to opportunistic urban marketing strategies relying on unfair conditions when considering the issue of violence and, with it, that of urban poverty.

While contemplating a more fair security which, in Rio de Janeiro, imperatively requires considering a "(more) fair city" (Fainstein, 2009) and does not depend only on the participation of favelados in defining criteria with a view to reorienting, as needed, the projects of the community-based police force, such security cannot under any circumstances ignore the position of the populations affected by the omnipresence of the police force. Periods during which public institutions are under-represented or turn out to be inefficient in the favelas are usually followed by periods of permanent security control. Could not this presence, even if peaceful, constitute an obstacle in terms of equality between urban citizens likely to attribute the role of "second citizen" to the residents of the favelas concerned (Kowarik, 2000) or to restrict them to a "granted citizenship" (Sales, 2000)?

While UPPs are certainly a novelty as far as security police in Rio de Janeiro is concerned, these questions highlight the need to prolong the democratic debate in Brazil, in the light of the new spatial justice issues raised by the omnipresence of the police force.

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²⁹ The Pronasci was introduced as a pioneering and exemplary initiative to developing countries during the 1st Seminar on the Prevention of Violence (December 2009), during the World Youth conference organised by Unesco in Mexico (August 2010), and during the 12th United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (Salvador de Bahia, 2010).

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