

From 'pacification' to 'licence-to-kill': Favela residents' experience with the UPP from 2011-2018

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Abstract

This article draws on longitudinal ethnographic fieldwork to explore residents' everyday experiences of living in the 'pacified' favela Cantagalo-Pavão-Pavãozinho in Rio de Janeiro. The findings indicate some residents' satisfaction with the police pacification unit (UPP) during its first years, when weapons were taken off the street. However, since 2017, shootouts have occurred daily, and favela residents now state that they feel like hostages between the police and traffickers and believe that the UPP never worked. I argue that the pacification programme operates drawing on 'coloniality of power', while unfolding new forms of militarisation/pacification as a changing-same, increasingly 'borderising bodies', as Mbembe writes. Simultaneously, as bodies are increasingly being borderised by the work of death, the struggles to decolonise territories also unfolds beyond the physical borders. The increased legitimisation of militarisation towards favela residents draws on a 'racial axis', wherein certain bodies are seen as threats becoming contested 'borders'.

Resumo

Este artigo baseia-se em uma pesquisa de campo etnográfica longitudinal para explorar as vivências cotidianas dos residentes da favela "pacificada" Cantagalo-Pavão-Pavãozinho, no Rio de Janeiro. Os depoimentos indicam a satisfação de alguns moradores com a unidade de polícia pacificadora (UPP), nos primeiros anos, quando as armas são retiradas das ruas. No entanto, desde 2017, os tiroteios acontecem diariamente, e os moradores da favela agora afirmam que se sentem reféns entre a polícia e os traficantes, e acreditam que a UPP nunca funcionou. Eu argumento que o programa de pacificação opera com base na 'colonialidade do poder' enquanto desdobramento de novas formas de militarização / pacificação na qualidade de um 'mesmo mutante', um outro do mesmo, (changing-same), isto é, cada vez mais os 'corpos se tornam fronteiras', como diz Mbembe. Simultaneamente, à medida que os corpos são cada vez mais fronteirizados pelo trabalho de morte, as lutas para descolonizar territórios também se desdobram para além das fronteiras físicas. A crescente legitimação da militarização em relação aos favelados baseia-se em um 'eixo racial', em que certos corpos são vistos como ameaças que se tornam 'fronteiras' contestadas.

From 2008 to 2018, the favelas (low-income marginalised neighbourhoods) located in strategic areas close to mega-event sites and rich neighbourhoods in Rio de Janeiro were 'pacified'.¹ Despite the government's investment in police officers trained in human rights, numerous cases of abuse have been reported since 2014, notwithstanding the decrease in visible weapons, homicides, and confrontations during the first years of the programme. In 2017 and 2018, there were daily shootouts and weapons were back on the streets in the pacified favelas of the privileged South Zone. Residents in Pavão-Pavãozinho and Cantagalo (PPG) remarked that 'it has changed a lot, hasn't it?' and expressed that the situation was back to 'normal', or even worse than before the installation of the police pacification unit (UPP). In 2018, numerous UPPs were dismantled and the killings of mostly young black men by the police reached a twenty-year high (from 236 in 2013 to 1,810 in 2019), despite federal military intervention in Rio (ISP, 2020). Using a longitudinal approach, I seek to understand residents' diverse experiences of living in a pacified favela, particularly their daily reflections in a changing militarised urban space over a decade.

In this article, I depart from the understanding of the pacification of Rio's favelas as a combination of necropolitics, disciplinary power, and biopolitics (Alves, 2018; Mbembe, 2001), re-actualising the 'fiction of race' (Mbembe, 2017, p. 89; author, 2020, p. 351). In the pacified favela, these dispositifs are combined, and favelados (favela residents) are treated as 'living dead' targeted by necropolitics, termed by Mbembe as the 'work of death' (2003, p. 16); meanwhile, despite pacification being considered an 'inclusive' approach 'granting' citizenship rights to residents, residents from the favelas are 'let [to] die' in terms of biopolitics (Foucault, 2004, p. 241), and furthermore, killed by police forces that exert disciplinary power with the sovereign 'right to take life' (Foucault, 2004, p. 241). I attempt to go beyond these dispositifs and understand the interrelated forms of power at stake in the pacification of the favelas, through 'coloniality of power' (Quijano, 2008) and 'borderising bodies' (Mbembe, 2019).

I argue that these dispositifs of power are entangled through 'coloniality of power', while re-actualising a 'racial axis' in the socio-spatial control of the undesired population (such as the favelados) and taking new forms unfolded through the 'borderising of bodies' through the work of death (Mbembe, 2019, p. 11), beyond physical borders.

In the context of the necropolitical violence in Rio's favelas, such low-income neighbourhoods have been racially codified as black (Alves, 2014, p. 328; Vargas, 2004, p.

¹ The favelas are low-income marginalised or informal neighbourhoods in Rio de Janeiro, contrary to the formal city or the *asfalto*. See Perlman, 2010; Zaluar & Alvito, 2006.

455) and are considered criminally violent spaces with residents who need to be 'civilised' and 'pacified' through politics of death targeting blacks, who are increasingly being massacred by police snipers. Since 2018, the shoot-to-kill policy and extreme levels of police violence and war towards black Brazilians have been further encouraged by the governor Witzel and the extreme-right government of Bolsonaro.

Pacification and urban militarisation as coloniality of power

Militarised policing, socio-spatial control, and criminalisation of the urban poor have been the dominant approach in Brazil since the colonial period, entangled with 'pacifying' or 'civilising' the territories and bodies seen as threats (Valente, 2016, pp. 63–66). Such 'hygienisation' (Garmany & Richmond, 2020) and moral 'civilising' mixed with militarisation has a long history in Brazil. Pacification has been a fundamental colonial pedagogy that has existed for over five centuries, beginning during the 'civilising' and tutelage of indigenous populations by Portuguese and European missionaries (de Oliveira, 2014, p. 127). Pacification is entangled with militarisation and oppression of the 'other', taking the form of social and cultural lynching of blacks through whitening (Author, 2020, p. 349; Nascimento, 1989, p. 59). In the Brazilian context, 'pacification' has a cruel history of oppression (Batista, 2012; Valente 2016, pp. 63–66). During the dictatorship (1964 to 1985), the military also aimed at 'pacifying' civil society (Gonzalez & Hasenbalg, 1982, p. 11).

I argue that pacification implies both physical oppression through militarisation and a 'civilising' and moralising mission through 'social lynching' (Nascimento, 1989), entangled through the notion of 'coloniality of power' (Mignolo, 2008, p. 228; Quijano 2008, p. 185).² This matrix comprises both military power and a 'colonisation of the imaginary' as a 'civilising goal' made possible through the idea of 'race' as 'a mental category of modernity' (Quijano, 2008, p. 182).

The Royal Police guard in Brazil was established in 1809 and aimed at protecting the white elites and royal court, thus targeting black Brazilians. The Capitão do Mato (bush captain) were deployed to chase fugitive slaves during slavery preceding the police. In 1821, nearly half of Rio's population were slaves. After the abolition of slavery in 1888 and emergence of favelas in the late 19th century, the freed slaves and poor were evicted from the central areas, and the favelas and cortiços (tenement buildings) were demolished (Valente, 2016, pp. 49–50). The urban renewal reform of the early 1900s aimed to create a

² The concept developed by Quijano refers to a 'new technology of domination/exploitation', in this case race/labour articulated as they appeared naturalised in the colonisation of the Americas (Quijano, 2008, p. 185).

modern 'civilised' capital (Abreu, 1988, p. 60; Meade, 1999, p. 43). There were mass removals of the favelas in the 1960s and 1970s. In the 1980s, policing became increasingly militarised and violent, drawing on strategies from warfare and military tactics.

Pacification of the favelas

The so-called pacification of the favelas and implementation of the UPP in 2008 marked a shift from the discourse of 'war' to that of 'peace' and the inclusion of favelas into the 'formal city', with a guarantee of 'social inclusion', security, and citizenship for favela residents (Leite, 2012, pp. 384–385). It also included social programmes (UPP social) and treating the favelas as markets and the residents as consumers (de Queiroz Ribeiro & Olinger, 2017, p. 223).

The UPP programme, launched in 2008 by Rio Governor Sérgio Cabral and secretary of security José Mariono Beltrame,³ was developed in preparation for upcoming mega-events (World Cup 2014 and Olympics 2016). It was inspired by the 'policing of proximity' model, in which specially trained police officers permanently enter a territory after expulsion of armed traffickers to 're-claim' it for the state. The UPP aimed to return 'peace and public tranquillity to the local residents' so they may exercise 'full citizenship that guarantees both social and economic development' (UPP, 2013) implying a moralising and differential approach to citizenship. However, the state had never been completely absent from the favelas (Novaes, 2014, p. 214).

Researchers have emphasised the increased legitimisation of the militarisation of everyday life for poor residents living in the favelas. Despite a decade of UPP,⁴ residents are considered threats and enemies (Leite & Farias, 2018, p. 257). Scholars have stressed the need to study how residents experience living in urban militarised areas (Pasquetti, 2019, p. 848). Many studies on UPP have focused on its positive evaluation during the first years (Cano et al., 2012; Mundial, 2012), while others analysed the 'decline of UPP' after the World Cup (2014) and Olympics (2016). Many studies of pacification have emphasised the criminalisation and militarisation of the urban poor (Fahlberg, 2018; Franco, 2014; Leite, 2012; Valente, 2016), where residents are treated as internal enemies (Leite & Farias, 2018, p. 240), drawing on a 'civilising' approach (Valente, 2016, pp. 63–66), enabling the 'genocide'

³ The UPP programme was sponsored by private investors such as Eike Batista, once the richest man in Brazil (Werneck, 2010).

⁴ For an overview of research on UPP in different phases see: Leite & Farias, 2018; Franco, 2014; Cano et al., 2012; Banco Mundial, 2012.

of black Brazilians (Vargas, 2008, p. 754), a 'double negation' of black enemies (Alves, 2018, p. 8) unfolding 'racism as a perfect crime' in the context of necropolitical violence in Rio's favelas (Håndlykken-Luz, 2020; Munanga, 2012).

Most research on the UPP and urban militarisation focuses on a specific period, ignores the longer-term effects of the intervention and urban regeneration (Degen, 2017, p. 142), or disregards the afterlife of resistance and protests (Frers & Meier, 2017, p. 128). I address this gap by drawing on longitudinal ethnographic research by analysing residents' everyday lived experiences in a pacified favela from 2011 to 2018.

Pavão-Pavãozinho and Cantagalo

The neighbouring favelas of Pavão-Pavãozinho and Cantagalo (PPG) are located on the hillsides of Copacabana and Ipanema, in the affluent majority white South Zone and consist mainly of residents' self-built homes that have been constructed over decades since the early 20th century.



Figure 1. The main street in PPG with numerous shops, restaurants, schools, banks, and churches. Photo walk with Pedro who suggested I photograph the youngsters playing with a kite on the roof, in order to capture the police officer further down the street. The police are not visible here, and could not be photographed in 2018, in contrast to 2011 where the police often posed for photos with visitors (photo by author, 2018).

Since 2009, numerous houses have been marked for eviction in the context of the federal public infrastructural investments provided through Programa de Aceleração do Crescimento (PAC, Growth Acceleration Programme).



Figure 2. Houses in PPG marked for eviction (Author, 2012).

The community has been gentrified, or rather 'hygienised' (Garmany & Richmond, 2020), while residents from the *asfalto* have moved in.



Figure 3. View towards Copacabana from PPG (Author, 2012).

When I returned to PPG in 2018, public works had been abandoned; houses were rebuilt by residents or traffickers who had occupied the evicted spaces (Håndlykken-Luz, 2019). The pacification police were rarely to be seen on the streets, and would not enter the top of the favela, where traffickers controlled the area.



Figure 4. View from PPG towards Ipanema and the elevator providing access from the Metro station in Ipanema with access to the favela Cantagalo. Constructed as part of the PAC. A soccer field in the favela can be seen on the right (Author, 2018).

According to official data, PPG is home to 10,338 residents (Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística [IBGE], 2010). Local residents have emphasised that the actual number might be over 30,000. In December 2009, Rio's fifth UPP comprising 176 police officers was installed permanently in PPG. Since 2007, the federal PAC programme has invested R\$35.2 million in infrastructure (Mundial, 2012, pp. 58–59).

Methodology

The ethnographic fieldwork presented in this article was conducted in two phases: from 2011 to 2013 (20-month period) and in 2018 (six weeks). I also went back to the neighbourhood, living for six weeks in Rio in 2017, meeting informally with residents. In

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2017, the situation was tense with daily shootouts in PPG. I mostly met with residents on the street where I was living, which provided access to the favela. During the first phase, I lived for three months in PPG. I spent the remaining time living on a street that provides access to PPG, which facilitated daily interactions, participant observations, and walks in the neighbourhood. I also participated in events and community meetings organised by resident associations, the family health clinic, and monthly UPP meetings held during the first years. In 2018, it was difficult to find residents who agreed to be interviewed again due to the tense situation. This was also probably due to the increase in shootouts, police operations, and presence of armed traffickers. The unexpected and unplanned (Frers, 2009, p. 155) were integral to the fieldwork; I had to adapt both methods and a situated ethics (Perez, 2017, p. 2) due to numerous changes in the field. In 2018, I conducted several photo walks, walking interviews, and follow-up interviews with residents I met during the first phase of the fieldwork.⁵ Most of the interviews were conducted while walking (Evans & Jones, 2011; O'Neill & Roberts, 2019) and through informal conversations. Some days we had to cancel walks and interviews due to police operations and shootouts.

'It has changed a lot, hasn't it?': Perceptions of changing insecurity

When I went back to PPG in June 2018, many residents were afraid to speak due to the tense situation, feeling like hostages between the police and narco-traffickers. I talked with Ronaldo, whom I met regularly between 2011 and 2013. He told me now that the UPP ended, 'the trafficking is back to normal', while the UPP only come for a short time and stay inside the police unit.

⁵ All interviews were conducted by the author in Portuguese and translated into English. I am responsible for any mistakes.



Figure 5. Photo of public housing to the right, and the UPP block in PPG on the left (Author, 2018).

Between 2011 and 2013, the only people visibly carrying arms were the police. In 2018, we could now see traffickers carrying heavy weapons on the street, teenagers with machine guns at drug sale points, and children watching out for the police as they communicated through walkie-talkies. Paula, a 52-year-old woman whom I met frequently, commented, 'Have you seen that there are fewer street children down in Ipanema now? That's because they are now recruited by the drug traffickers'. Residents would remark that 'It has changed a lot, hasn't it?', followed by silence.

When asked about the arrival of UPP, Paula responded: 'The change was to not have so much violence, but the (drug) trafficking continues everywhere'. Children could grow up without witnessing shootouts every day or playing with weapons and bullets on the street. As Paula said,⁶

⁶ The names of the participants are changed to protect their anonymity.

The first period many did not like it (UPP). After a while, they got used to it, with the silence, children running on the streets, (...) so children got a healthier life, a better life. And when it came to the end, during the Olympics in the beginning of 2016, people already started to perceive that change. (Interview, 2018)

The first years of the UPP were marked by a mainly positive presentation and reports promoting its results and success. Surveys from 2010 to 2013 showed that there was general support for the UPP (de Oliveira, 2014, p. 175). A study by Menezes and Corrêa (2017) lists some elements of the success of the UPP. However, residents pointed out numerous problems with the UPP, being aware that they were deprived of rights (de Oliveira, 2014, p. 108). From 2011 to 2013, the UPP received more criticism regarding failures of social investments, rising non-lethal crime, and property speculation.



Figure 6. Inauguration of the new UPP headquarter in PPG, September 2011 (Marina Azevedo/Governo do Rio,Globo, 2011).

Since 2014, the situation was marked by more violent conflicts between traffickers and the military police (Hilderbrand, 2014). In 2017 and 2019, the police killed two teenagers and hit a woman with stray bullets in PPG (Sansão, 2017). When I arrived in June 2017, a guard working in Copacabana who lived in PPG was killed by a grenade. The police reported that they were attacked by traffickers. The situation was tense, and the police came shooting towards the favela frequently; at several occasions we had to hide from bullets. Bullets also hit the façade of the block I was living in and a dead person was found on the street. There were no regular times for police operations; it often happened when children went to school. During 2011-2013, I rarely heard shootouts, and police operations would normally occur early in the morning. I spoke with Ronaldo in 2012, who said,

You will see no one with arms anymore except for the police. So, it gives us the feeling of security. We don't have to worry about having to hear gunshots or encountering criminals while walking home at night. I think the situation has gotten better. (Interview, 2012, age 29)

Ronaldo's experiences of the changes in 2011 and 2012, and later in 2018 illustrate how residents would mention the 'feeling of security', although many would say that it continued as before. Despite a decrease in violent confronts, people would disappear and the 'war' would shift to other parts of the city. We also met at some community meetings, where plans for the PAC programme and legalisation of property rights for residents were presented. Ronaldo told me that these initiatives were presented simultaneously as residents were living in houses marked for eviction, and many did not even know. He found out that his house was marked for eviction, and later, the plans were changed. The locus for these projects as many residents said, was 'a make-up' before the Olympics, and resulted in rising property prices and a 'gentrification while residents from the asfalto (the so-called formal city) moved into the community', as Paula told me.

In 2017 and 2018, residents pointed to the return of traffickers who seized more power over the past two years (i.e., post-Olympics and economic crisis in Rio), and said that 'UPP never worked'; it was a façade and a 'make-up'. While some residents in 2018 expressed that the situation was back to 'normal', others contested this view. Paula said,

With the return of the trafficking, I feel very shaken up (...) People who came here in the last 4 to 5 years think that shootouts are normal. Sometimes I say, 'how absurd', and then people say, 'it's normal, don't worry'. Guys, I don't find this normal. (...) I don't accept this situation as something normal! (Interview, 2018).

Paula questioned the opinion of many residents that the situation was now back to 'normal', and that 'it is like before UPP; we're used to living with this insecurity, the violence, and the shootouts in the territory'. She said, 'the UPP from the first years, I miss it very much'. Paula contested that living with violence and shootouts is not 'normal'.

I went for numerous walks in the community with Pedro. He commented that it is pleasant when it rains because 'there are no shootouts when it's raining'. I asked why, and he responded that this is because 'the police don't like the rain'. Pedro's comment then indicates a predictability of police behaviour. Another resident said, 'Today is the day off for the traffickers', 'so it is a nice day to go for a walk in the community'. I asked if this was regular. She said that it happened once in a while, but it was not clear how and why. Another resident pointed out that there is a pact of respect between the different police forces and traffickers:

And as you see there, there is a, a pact of respect. Look, 'you come here, and I stay here'. And that's it, everyone does their job. The military police, the civil police do their job. And the bandits do their job. (Interview, 2018)

These examples indicate a certain collaboration between traffickers and police for maintaining some level of conviviality and predictability, or a 'co-production of local insecurity' (Richmond, 2019, p. 72). Although the state might have never 'pacified' the favela with the UPP, and the drug factions would have still been present (though less visible), I argue that one also has to consider those residents who had a positive experience of the UPP for a certain time (Fahlberg, 2018, p. 318). The children and many residents emphasised that, for a certain period, they experienced less violence and shootouts as the power of the 'law of traffickers' appeared to decrease. The violence shifted to other parts of the city or was manifested by bodies disappearing from the pacified favelas; increasingly 'borderising bodies' (Mbembe, 2019) beyond the physical territory.

Many residents explained the changes over the years and emphasised that it became worse than before. The 'pacifying' police were losing legitimacy as they were shown to be involved in massacres and necropolitical practises (Alves, 2013), contrary to their aims of 'pacification' and dialogue; residents said that they would arrive shooting towards the favela, from 'down there' (pointing to the street below in Ipanema and Copacabana). Dona Silva, who grew up in PPG, commented on the changes over the past years and the behaviour of the police:

And now that they're leaving (UPP), it all started again like that. The exaggeration of the shootouts, lack of respect, right. (...) Now when the police arrive, they already arrive shooting. I thought this was not true, but because I live down here, I see the police when they arrive shooting. (Interview, 2018)

The police would not shoot in the other direction towards the rich white neighbourhood around the corner, and as Dona Vieira said, the UPP would fire shots for anything (in the favela), thus 'drawing racialised boundaries' (Alves, 2013, p. 328), and 'borderising bodies' (Mbembe, 2019).

At numerous occasions, I also witnessed police operations, tanks, and check points on the street providing access to PPG from Copacabana and Ipanema. The only residents who were searched on those occasions were people with an appearance of being from the favelas—young, poor, and Afro-Brazilians. White residents from the asfalto living in blocks on the other side of the street were not stopped. Residents from the asfalto living close to the favela complained about the police operations, said that they paid taxes, had the right to citizenship, owned houses, and should not be blocked due to police operations. Police were also shooting towards the favela from the street providing access to the community at numerous occasions without any visible tensions. Hence, bodies where borderised (Mbembe, 2019) drawing on a 'racial axis' (Quijano, 2008), beyond the favela's physical borders.

Thus, we can see how the pacification and militarisation represents a 'changing-same'⁷, treating the favela residents both in 'wartime' and 'peacetime' as people who need to be 'civilised' by the UPP to 'return peace to them' (...) so residents can 'exercise full citizenship' (UPP, 2013). While the UPP had some 'inclusive' projects, it was drawing on a moralising and civilising approach; for instance, funk parties and loud music in the favelas were banned, while weekly parties in the asfalto at a boutique hotel around the corner were not banned. The 'civilising' and 'moralising' aspect of the UPP was integral to the approach from the beginning (Leite et al., 2018, p. 13), drawing on a changing-same of pacification and militarisation entangled with coloniality of power (Quijano, 2008, p. 185) and borderising bodies through new forms.

⁷ I draw on Gilroy (1991) and his notion of a 'changing' same which provides a useful concept for understanding the dynamics of militarisation/pacification transforming itself in unforeseen and polyhedral ways that have targeted blacks and marginalised populations in Brazil for centuries. See also Rahier (2020) for an analysis of the 'changing same' of anti-black racism revealed in lawsuits filed by afrodescendants in Ecuador.

My neighbour Ana, who owns a small restaurant in a favela on the street bordering Copacabana, said that she was afraid to leave her daughter at the front door of the restaurant because children are being kidnapped. 'We don't know by whom', she said. She added that 'A Gente não vive, mas sobrevivem' ('We don't live, but we're surviving'). Her statement indicates that beyond the supposed naturalisation of everyday violence, there are new dynamics of pacification/militarisation unfolding a condition of a 'changing-same'.

'We're living a war' – bodies borderised by the work of death

While the UPP dismantled nearly half of its units in 2018, it is still present in PPG. The residents said that they just stay there and never leave the block. The situation is back to 'normal', one resident said, while the police always come to 'change services' and get their part of the money from the traffickers. Now, the 'law of the traffickers' is back. Another resident explained that the situation was even worse than before UPP due to the change in the organisation of factions. Now, the traffickers controlling the favela were from 'the outside' (fora), which means that their reaction to and treatment of the residents was quite unpredictable, as Paula and I experienced one evening walking home, where we had to stop on the street when traffickers were pointing a gun towards a man who came to buy drugs. They suspected him of being an informant due to his appearance, said Paula, and they did not know people in the favela. Allocating traffickers from outside was a tactic of Comando Vermelho to strengthen control over the territory. Residents said they felt like they were hostages between the police and traffickers. Paula elaborated that 'because of the return of the weapons (traffickers now carrying visible weapons), we're all suspects now. (...) We're also afraid of the drug traffickers'. Furthermore, she explained that while talking with the police, one could be suspected of being an X-9 (an informant), and she said, 'then you risk losing your life, as has already happened sometimes' (Paula, 2018).

While residents expressed some satisfaction during the first years, Dona Vieira explained the changes that followed:

Since the UPP ... joined the community, it got worse than with the 'meninos' (the boys, referring to the drug traffickers). They (UPP) fired shots for anything... the past two years I can say ... it became bad (porcaria). For me really, UPP is the same thing as nothing. At first I liked it, but now, if they leave they will not be missed. (Interview, 2018, age 54)

In the South Zone, many residents were satisfied with the first years of the UPP, where arms were taken off the streets and children could play safely. One mother told me

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that 'now in 2018 the children celebrate when they hear shootouts'; the shootouts are again part of daily life. A woman I met in the favela said that her 11-year-old daughter had grown up with the presence of the UPP since 2009. Her daughter had never seen heavy arms in the favela, except those carried by the police; but this year, traffickers were visibly armed with machine guns. Furthermore, the army now regularly drove up the hill in military tanks, following the military intervention in February 2018. The army had not been present here before, as in other favelas such as Maré or Complexo do Alemão. The army is terrifying for the children. She said that seeing the Caveirão (tank) and trucks with soldiers is like a war scene. In Figure 7 below, the white 'pacification' Caveirão of the UPP can be seen from a child's eye level.



Figure 7. The white UPP Caveirão (Márcia Foletto, Globo, 2017).

I had seen the white 'pacification' tanks many times and in 2018, the military tanks were driving up the hill and the army walking into the community, pointing heavy arms at every corner.



Figure 8. Military occupation in PPG, 2018 (Antonio Lacerda. Source: EPA EFE)

The accounts of the children living in time of 'peace' and 'war' also unveil dynamics beyond the everyday naturalisation of violence, as bodies continue to disappear. During the time of 'peace,' the war was dislocated but still targeted blacks and favela residents — borderising bodies (Mbembe, 2019) beyond the visible physical territory of PPG.

In 2013, I interviewed Mario and we went for photo walks together. In 2018, he had moved out of the South Zone and said that, although he preferred to live in the favela, he would not return until the situation became quieter. Mario explained:

What the population is living in Rio today, is a civil war ... it's a civil war. The great truth is that it's being hidden... you see every day that 20 to 30 people are dying, victims of stray bullets. My friend lives in the Gaza Strip, in Israel. She says, not even in the Gaza Strip are there as many people dying as in Rio de Janeiro'.
(Interview, 2018)

This observation by Mario indicates how bodies are borderised by the work of death, while in addition to the numerous homicides by police and 'stray bullets', bodies are disappearing. In 2018, the first military intervention in democratic Brazil took over security in Rio de Janeiro for ten months, marked by a return to increased militarisation, rearmament, urban warfare, and necropolitics.

The assassination of Marielle Franco on 14 March 2018, a human rights and LGBTQ activist, critic of the militarisation and UPP, and the only female, black councilwoman in the city council of Rio de Janeiro has brought international attention to the police terror and urban violence in Rio. Marielle Franco was raised in the favela of Mare, and critiqued the military police, police violence, and military intervention.



Figure 9. Photos from protests against the killing of Marielle Franco and police violence in Rio de Janeiro in front of Rio's city council. A photo and a painting of Marielle can be seen in the images. A street in front of the City Council has been renamed after Marielle Franco (Author, July, 2018).

As a black woman and favela resident, her death illustrates the necropolitical violence, racism and police terror that she was fighting against. Marielle Franco also wrote her Master's thesis on UPP and was critical of the 'pacification' (Franco, 2014) and the 2018 federal military intervention in Rio de Janeiro. Worldwide protests and the resistance and struggles of Marielle paved a new way forward for black feminist politicians elected into office.

Despite military intervention, the numbers of deaths and clashes with police are increasing. The 'licence-to-kill' and impunity suggested by the justice minister, Sérgio Moro (Mattoso & Della Coletta, 2019), and Rio governor, Wilson Witzel (Kaiser, 2019), reveals that favela residents are targeted as criminals who are now being dealt with by snipers that shoot from helicopters. The numbers of homicides and police executions in 2019 are the highest since implementation of the pacification programme in 2008.

Pacification as 'borderising bodies'

Mbembe asks, 'what explains the migration from the border understood as a particular point in space to the border as the moving body of the undesired masses of populations? The answer is a new global partitioning between potentially risky bodies vs. bodies that are not' (2019, p. 9). Favelas as black(ened) spaces are seen as a threat to the white 'civilised' parts of Rio, and favela residents targeted as an undesired population—borderised by the work of death.

Beyond the apparent 'peace' and 'war' time in PPG, Afro-Brazilians were targeted, and race mobilised in the production of space and spatial governance of Rio's contested geographies. The increased legitimisation of militarisation towards the urban poor draws on a 'racial axis' (Quijano, 2008, p. 181), where certain bodies are considered threats, and thus become contested 'borders'. The killing of black persons by the police also unfolds the scattering of dead bodies across the favelas as a 'spatial practice', thus shaping the city drawing on racialisation (Alves, 2014, p. 329). The racial shaping of the city unfolding differential practises of law, socio-spatial negotiations of citizenship (Håndlykken-Luz, 2019) and a racialised regime of citizenship (Alves, 2014), is clearly visible in the South Zone of Rio de Janeiro with the white rich South Zone and asfalto alongside the favelas as black spaces where the police can kill with impunity.

Beyond the supposed normalisation of violence, the processes of 'borderising bodies' (Mbembe, 2019) can be unveiled while numerous people disappeared, and 'war' and massacres were dislocated for a certain period of ('peace') time in PPG. The spatialised necropolitical strategies were directed towards favelas and favelados across Rio de Janeiro, revealing militarisation and pacification as a polyhedral (Håndlykken-Luz, 2019) and 'changing-same' targeting favelas, black(ened) spaces and favelados as disposable bodies.

'Schizophrenia of territory and place'

The dynamics involved in the pacification of PPG can also be understood through the notion of 'schizophrenia of territory and place' (Santos, 2017, p. 42), where external, global, and private actors operate and new forms of living, struggling, and insurgency occur, thus decolonising territory 'in tension with the (post)colonial state' (Halvorsen, 2019; Porto-Gonçalves, 2012).

Milton Santos pointed to the 'schizophrenia of territory and place' in the context of globalisation (Santos, 2017, p. 42). The territory, he explains, is not a neutral or passive actor,

while the role of finance is crucial in restructuring space. This leads to a 'true schizophrenia' because these places both 'welcome and benefit the dominant vectors of rationality, but at the same time witness the emergence of new forms of living' (Santos, 2017, pp. 41–42). The UPP was also financed by private investors and promoted internationally as a platform for testing weapons and technologies of war and surveillance. Smart police apps, drones, and a smart city control centre were showcased to an international market. Rio hosted events to reveal weapons and military technology for an international audience. In the case of PPG, such a 'schizophrenia of territory and place' appears to 'play an active role in the formation of consciousness' (Santos, 2017, p. 42), while different actors adapt in various ways to the daily changes and 'normality' of living with urban militarisation, insecurity, and shootouts. Residents had to adapt to changes, regarding both the UPP and the power of traffickers. Although residents were living in a favela characterised by 'violent sociability' (Machado da Silva, 2004, pp. 78–79) and 'the law of traffickers', the period of the UPP occupation indicated some changes and resistance both to the police, traffickers, and 'new forms of living' emerged (Santos, 2019).

Decolonising territory

Residents' in the favelas have organised numerous protests and used social media in the struggle against police killings and racism. On 2 July 2017, favela residents organised a protest in front of the iconic Copacabana palace, located in the elite white neighbourhood of Copacabana, following numerous killings by the police. Thus, protesters were blackening the white privileged square (Alves, 2014, p. 333). Residents from PPG participated in the protest and gained more visibility than a few days before when they had a small protest on the streets of PPG with no media coverage. Favela residents from across the city contesting numerous killings the same week, while also an unborn baby was killed by bullets when the mother was shot.



Figure 10. Favela residents protest in front of Copacabana palace on 2 July 2017 (Wilton Junior, Estadão).



Figure 11. Favela residents demand peace, citizenship, and respect. Protest in front of Copacabana beach 2017 (Wilton Junior, Estadão).

Residents in PPG demanded peace after violence intensified in June 2017, raising white flags in PPG during a shootout. The photo below was widely shared on social media with the hashtag #PPGpedePaz (PPG demand for peace).



Figure 12. Favela residents in PPG raising white flags and demanding peace after increasing police violence and killings in June 2017. (Photo PPG Informative. Source Globo, 28.06.2017).

As we have seen, residents are living with pacification/militarisation as a changing-same, and, resident resistance and struggles to decolonise territories (Halvorsen, 2019, p. 794) also unfold beyond the physical borders. Territory (territorio) in this context also encompasses colonial or physical borders and dispositifs of state control and can best be understood through the notion of 'decolonising territory', which entangles both domination and struggles for rights, insurgent citizenship, and resistance 'reinvented from below' (Porto-Gonçalves, 2012; Halvorsen, 2019, p. 795).

As new forms of living, insurgent citizenship (Holston, 2008, p. 313), autoconstruction and social media interventions (Prouse, 2017), and new forms of resistance emerge simultaneously, there are investments in security interventions (i.e., the UPP) and urban upgrades (i.e., the PAC), which emerge as a 'schizophrenia of territory and place' (Santos, 2019, p. 42). The first phase of the UPP indicated decreased brutal power exerted by the traffickers and a feeling of increased security by some residents; however, they were living in a context of increased necropolitical violence where militarisation/pacification unfolded as a 'changing-same', borderising bodies by the work of death.

Final remarks: 'The blood of children in Rio' - '#ACulpaÉDoWitzel'

On 20 September 2019, Ágatha Sales Felix became the fifth child killed by the military police in Rio that year (Fogo Cruzado, 2019). Protests erupted on the streets of Rio and #ACulpaÉDoWitzel ('It is Witzel's fault') was shared on social media, pointing to the politics

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of massacring poor and black favela residents as promoted by Governor Wilson Witzel (Olliveira & Simas, 2019).



Figure 13. Drawing shared on social media in September 2019 depicting Ágatha who was killed by police saying, 'Witzel, it's your fault!' and figuring Witzel with blood on his hands (Latuff 2019).

Witzel responded that 'it is not because we have a terrible incident that we should stop the state', and emphasised that his security politics had been a success (Castro, 2019). As Mbembe states, we should speak not of borders but 'of 'borderisation', that is, the process by which certain spaces are transformed into uncrossable places for certain classes of populations, who thereby undergo a process of racialisation; places where speed must be disabled and the lives of a multitude of people judged to be undesirable are meant to be immobilised if not shattered' (2019, p. 9). Recent statistics also show that police in Brazil and Rio increasingly employ facial recognition technology which results in blacks en masse (90.5%) being incarcerated and charged with crimes (Nunes, 2019), despite the questionable reliability of such technologies.

In 2019, it was reported that 1,810 people (five persons per day) were killed by police in Rio de Janeiro (ISP, 2020). Politics that legitimise police officers' ability to operate with a 'licence-to-kill' in certain territories (favelas) and towards certain groups of people

(particularly favelados and Afro-Brazilians) have drawn upon a 'racial axis' and illustrate Mbembe's (2019) notion of bodies as borders and borderising bodies. As Mbembe states,

Everything is put in place to transform the very nature of the border in the name of security. Borders are increasingly turned into mobile, portable, omnipresent and ubiquitous realities (...) with the goal of better selecting anew who is whom, who should be where and who shouldn't, in the name of security'. (Mbembe, 2019, p. 9)

Police officers operating with a 'licence-to-kill' and snipers shooting from war helicopters in 'pacified' favelas reveals the changing-same of militarisation and pacification through new forms where the body is increasingly becoming the border (Mbembe, 2019). New technologies are employed, such as drones, smart police apps, sensors, and cameras, to track movements and scan bodies. In a combination of both necropolitics, disciplinary power and biopolitics, these dispositifs are entangled and unfold through borderising of bodies being racialised, beyond physical borders.

In this article, I have examined residents' everyday experiences of urban militarisation living in a 'pacified' favela in Rio de Janeiro for nearly a decade. The narratives from the pacified favelas located in the privileged and majority white South Zone in Rio are particular also attributed to the huge investment in preparing for the mega-events through the deployment of the UPP and UPP social projects. Some researchers and residents described the pacification process as successful in the first years. However, while the number of police killings decreased during the first years of the UPP, the number of missing people increased, revealing how certain bodies were borderised by the work of death. In 2018 and 2019, the number of residents killed by police reached its highest reported figure of the past twenty years.

Despite the human rights training for police and the goal of incorporating the favelas into the formal city, I argue that the UPP programme, although initially considered successful, reveals a 'changing-same' of pacification/militarisation articulated through 'coloniality of power' (Quijano, 2008, p. 182). The changing-same of pacification/militarisation unfolds as a re-enactment of Rio's colonial order through coloniality of justice and space, drawing on racialisation, where increasingly 'the body is the border' (Mbembe, 2019). Territory (territorio) in this context includes both strategies of domination and resistance, and thus, the struggle for decolonising territory; beyond the colonial idea of territory (Halvorsen, 2019, p. 794).

Finally, I discussed the notion of a 'licence-to-kill', and recent changes in the security politics of Rio since 2019. Although these changes happened after the last phase of fieldwork conducted in 2018, they increasingly result in borderising bodies and affect children in the favelas. Further studies should be conducted on the implications for children and other groups living under everyday urban militarisation.

To conclude, pacification as borderising bodies mobilising race is central to understanding shifts in the dynamic of urban violence and pacification in Rio de Janeiro. These insights are also of relevance for understanding increased racialisation and borderising bodies in other cities, peripheries, and so-called ghettos both in the global south and global north where race is mobilised to enable socio-spatial control of certain residents.

Increased legitimisation of militarisation towards the urban poor, including snipers operating with 'licence-to-kill' in 'pacified' areas, draws upon a 'racial axis' (Quijano, 2008, p. 181) where certain bodies are seen as threats, hence bodies borderised by the work of death. The border is no longer merely a line, but the targeted masses of undesired, moving populations (Mbembe, 2019, p. 9). In the case of the UPP programme in Rio's favelas, both territories (favelas) and people (favelados) are thus targeted through the 'changing-same' of militarisation/pacification that draw on coloniality of power, increasingly mobilising race in the production of space and spatial governance through new forms of 'borderising bodies'.

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