



Old problems and old solutions: an analysis of Rio de Janeiro's public safety policy and its impact on urban violence¹

Ludmila Mendonça Lopes Ribeiro²

Carolina Moulin Aguiar³

Introduction

The aim of this paper is to reconstitute the trajectory of public safety policies in general, and of military policing programs in particular, in the city of Rio de Janeiro from 1983 to 2011. It will be argued that public safety policies in general and policing programs in particular have not had their substance altered since the beginning of the 1980s. Hence, the programs implemented throughout this period for the reduction of crime and violence have been, in essence, of a very similar nature, which means that actions presented as innovative in this area are, in fact, a rereading of programs elaborated at the time of the democratic reopening. It will also be argued that the urban violence problems experienced in Rio de Janeiro are directly linked to the ineptitude of public safety policies and to the indiscriminate (and sometimes illegitimate) use of force by police authorities. Therefore, instead of providing a

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² Professor of the Department of Sociology and Anthropology (DSOA) e researcher at the Center of Criminality and Public Safety Studies (Centro de Estudos de Criminalidade e Segurança Pública - CRISP) both at the Federal University of Minas Gerais (Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais - UFMG).

³ Professor of the Institute of International Relations at PUC Rio and researcher of the project Humanitarian Action in Situations other than War (HASOW).

solution to the problem of urban violence, historically, the public safety policies under analysis have contributed to the perpetuation and incitement of the condition of insecurity in the city space.

In order to situate the discussion from an analytic point of view, the paper begins with a presentation of how crime and violence are measured at any given place. Then, the history of public safety policies and military policing programs implemented in the city of Rio de Janeiro is retold, with an emphasis on problematizing the effectiveness of these actions on the reduction of murder rates, which is the main indicator of the level of criminality of a society. Based on this exercise, it will be argued that the Pacifying Police Units (Unidades de Polícia Pacificadora - UPPs), considered “the” solution to the problem of crime in the city of Rio de Janeiro, in spite of their positive effects, do not seem to be the main cause of the decrease in murder rates. And, exactly because of that, the last section presents five other elements which have also contributed to the transformation of this scenario, and which have so far received little attention from the empirical research on the theme. It is hoped that the present paper will contribute to a better understanding of the scenario of urban violent in Rio de Janeiro, the central focus of a broader project of investigation of situations other than war, particularly in large cities of the Global South.

How to measure crime and violence?

Before presenting the history of public safety policies and policing programs implemented in the city of Rio de Janeiro, it is necessary to present the indicators traditionally used in the formulation, monitoring and evaluation of these policies.

The most common indicator used to measure the level of criminality of a country or community is the murder or intentional homicide⁴ rate per 100.000 inhabitants, as registered by the health system (by the doctors who issue death certificates) or by the criminal justice system (by the police reports computing violent death).

This information is considered the most valid and trustworthy for the purpose of measuring the level of criminality of a given society because problems traditionally associated with the reporting of crimes (such as the decision of whether or not to communicate the offense to the police) are readily replaced by the physical evidence of the crime (the dead body), as well as the need to issue a forensic examination report so that procedures such as the burial or cremation of the body may be performed.

Furthermore, as the death of a human being by another is considered, in most societies, the most serious and publicly visible type of violence, the probability

⁴ According to the International Classification of Diseases (ICD), intentional homicide happens when injuries are inflicted on a human being by another person with intent to kill and which results in death. In Brazil, intentional homicide is listed under article 121 of the Brazilian Penal Code.

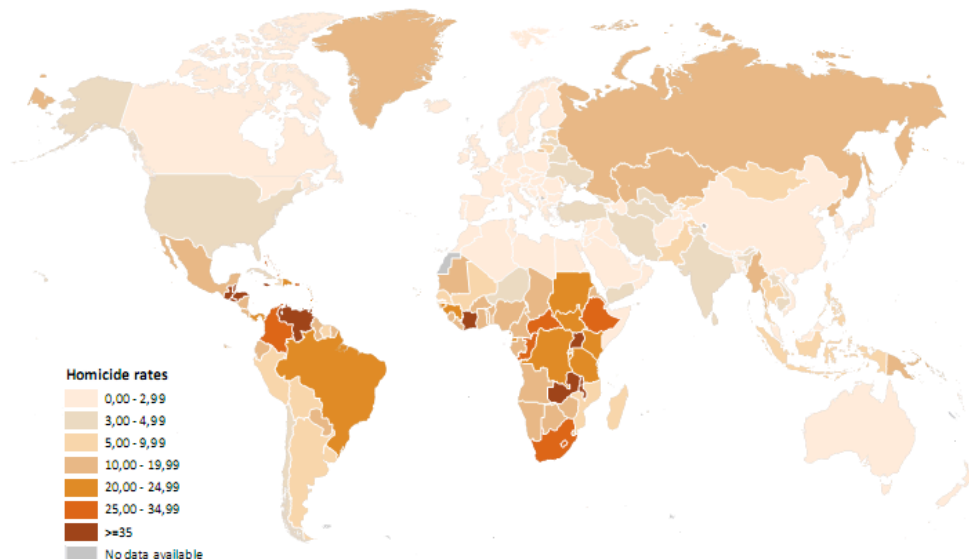
of underreporting tends to be lower than in the cases of other crimes which do not cause as much commotion, such as property crime. In addition, interpretative questions, which might make the classification of a conduct as a crime different from country to country, are readily suspended, given the existence of a consensus about what kind of violent death can be classified as a criminal offense.

Finally, and perhaps more importantly in comparative terms, is the fact that, as a rule, intentionally-provoked deaths are considered not only crimes, but indicators of violence⁵ in most countries in the world and, thus, cultural questions that might impact on the comparison of different realities are readily suppressed (Buvinic and Morrison, 1999).

Therefore, considering the murder rate per 100.000 inhabitants, it is possible to compare the situation in several countries in the world in terms of crime and violence (Figure 01) and, moreover, classify them as having a low incidence of crime (up to 2,99 intentional homicides per 100.000 inhabitants), average incidence of crime (between 3 and 9.99 homicides per 100.000 inhabitants) and high incidence of crime (above 10 homicides per 100.000 inhabitants).

Figure 01

Net rate of intentional homicide per 100.000 inhabitants
Homicide rates by country (2010 or latest available year)



Note: The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

Source: UNODC Homicide Statistics.

5 Violence is understood to exist whenever “in any situation of interaction, one or various agents acts in such a manner as directly or indirectly, on a large scale or small, causes harm or damage to one or more individuals, in any of the various possible degrees, be it against their physical or moral integrity, possessions, or symbolic/cultural participations” (Waiselfisz, 2012: 12).

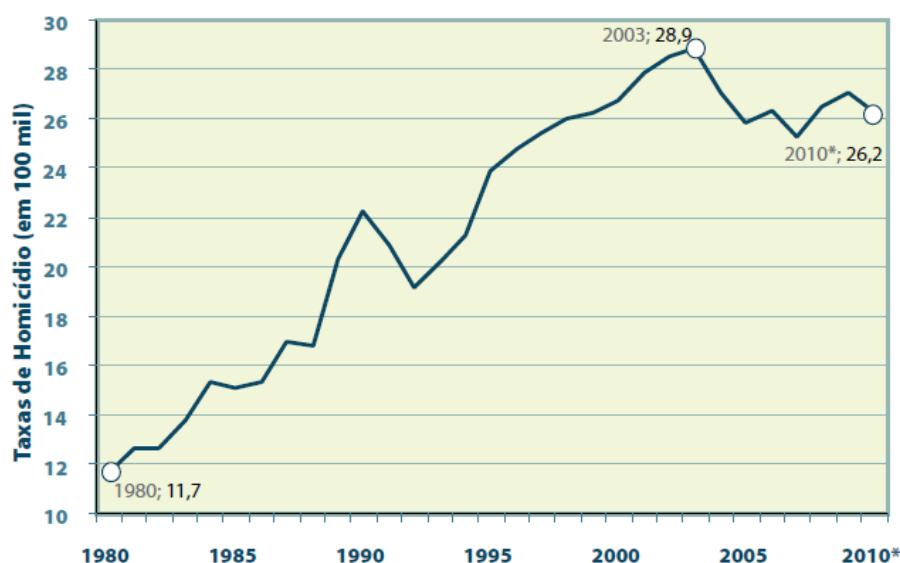
During the last 30 years, the country has experienced a sharp increase in crime rates, since homicide rates jumped from 11,7 cases per 100.000 inhabitants in 1980 to 26,2 cases per 100.000 inhabitants in 2010.

According to the 2011 *Global Study on Homicide*, by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), in 2010, Brazil was classified as a country with high crime rates, since the homicide rate in Brazil was 23 cases per 100.000 inhabitants. It is important to emphasize that the World Health Organization (WHO) considers any community with a rate above 10 intentional homicides per 100.000 inhabitants to be suffering from an epidemic, and because of that, it becomes necessary to address both the causes and the consequences of such phenomenon in order to contain its spread and avoid the spiral which might cause an increase in the rates.

Focusing on the Brazilian reality, it becomes noticeable that, during the last 30 years, the country has experienced a sharp increase in crime rates, since homicide rates jumped from 11,7 cases per 100.000 inhabitants in 1980 to 26,2 cases per 100.000 inhabitants in 2010, which configures an 259% increase and an average annual increase of 4,4% (figure 2).

Figure 02.

**Net rate of intentional homicide per 100.000 inhabitants
Brazil (1980-2010)**

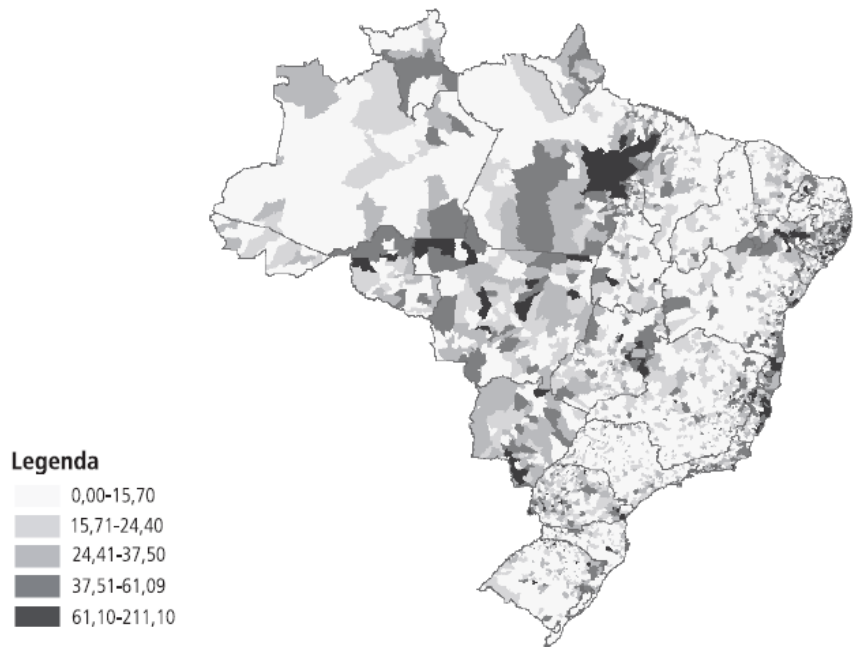


Source: Waiselfisz (2012: 19)

When the net rate of homicide is disaggregated spatially (Figure 03), it is noticeable that some Brazilian municipalities are in a more dramatic situation than others, with higher rates than the national average (which, in 2008, was 26,4 homicides per 100.000 inhabitants). In this case, the capital cities of nearly all Brazilian states stand out due to the high concentration of crimes of this nature.

Figure 03

Net rate of homicide per 100.000 inhabitants
Brazilian municipalities (2008)



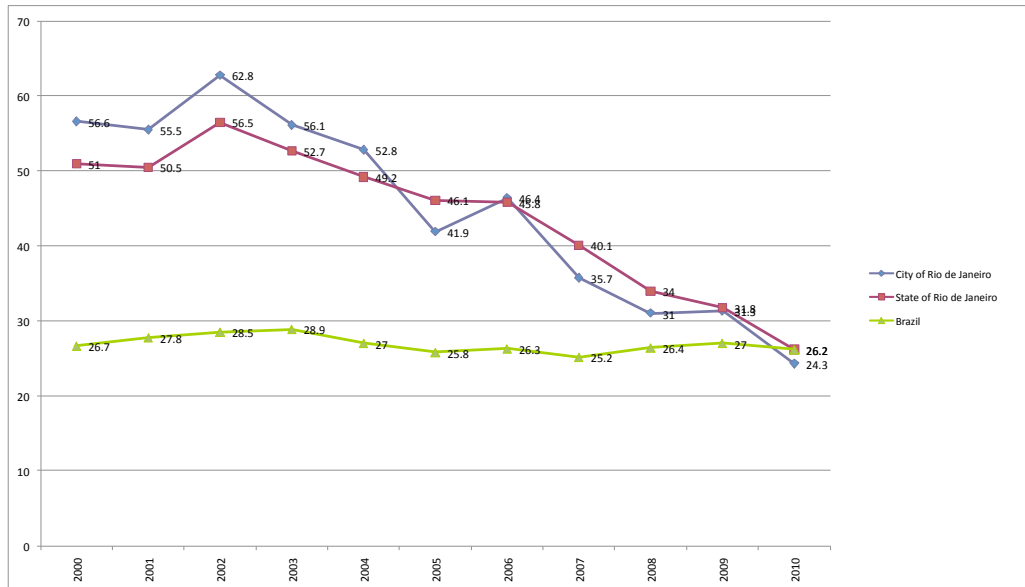
Fonte: Elaboração dos autores com base nos dados do Datasus.

Source: Carvalho et al (2011: 27)

When the intentional homicide rate of the city of Rio de Janeiro (which is the focus of this paper) is analyzed, considering the trends of the last decade, one can observe that 2010 was the first year in which the city's average murder rate was below the national average. In addition, although it is true that the national rate has also been decreasing, it is possible to observe that, since 2006, Rio de Janeiro has been experiencing a steeper reduction in murder rates when compared to the national average, and even when compared to the state average (Graph 01). Since the decrease has been substantial, particularly in recent years, it becomes paramount to understand which phenomena might have contributed to the shift in the upward trend of these rates, especially so that similar initiatives can be reproduced in other places.

Graph 01

Net rate of intentional homicide per 100.000 inhabitants
Brazil, state of Rio de Janeiro and city of Rio de Janeiro (2000-2010)



Source: Waiselfisz (2012)/ compiled by the author

Graph 01 makes it evident that the fall in intentional homicide rates was not experienced only in the city of Rio de Janeiro, but also in the state of Rio de Janeiro. This fact indicates that there are broader contextual factors leading to the reduction of rates, to the detriment of those taking place only in the capital city. However, it is also important to highlight the fact that, since 2006, the murder rates in the city of Rio de Janeiro have been consistently lower than those of the state, as have been the average reduction rates.

Against this background, this paper aims to present, from a socio-historical perspective, the trajectory of public safety policies in general, and policing programs in particular, implemented in the city of Rio de Janeiro since the democratic reopening (in the 1980s) until today, trying to trace the possible explanations for the fall in criminality rates experienced in recent years.

The analysis will focus on the policing programs implemented by the Military Police of the state of Rio de Janeiro (Polícia Militar do Estado do Rio de Janeiro - PMERJ) because, according to the arrangement for the provision and administration of public safety policies institutionalized by article 144 of the Federal Constitution, the Military Police is the *primary* organization responsible for crime prevention. Therefore, the policies implemented by the Military Police are supposed to be able to, in the last instance, promote a shift in the trajectory of crime in the city.

In addition, taking into account the prominent role played by the Pacifying Police Units (UPPs) in recent years, and given that the UPPs are a program of crime prevention in slums executed by the Military Police, it seems important to problematize not only the capacity of this initiative to bring down murder rates in recent years in the city of Rio de Janeiro, as well as the connection between this and other similar initiatives previously implemented by the Military Police over time.

The history of public safety policies implemented in the city of Rio de Janeiro

In order to reconstruct the trajectory of public safety policies and policing programs implemented by PMERJ in the city of Rio de Janeiro, the starting point will be the election of Leonel Brizola to the government of the state of Rio de Janeiro in 1982 and his inauguration in 1983. This date was chosen because, only after democratization, the problems of crime and public safety began to be treated as objects of public policies (as already were the areas of education, health and social care) being finally included in the constitutional order.

The main principle guiding Brizola's strategic plan for the city (Law no. 705, from 21/12/1983), and which would influence the public policies implemented in the period 1983-1987, was the integration with the community, with full human rights guarantees. From a public safety point of view, this idea was translated into three main goals:

1. to generate knowledge about the causes of crime and violence;
2. to transform the police into a service provider agency, based the community policing model, which at that time was considered the main solution to the problem of criminality⁶;
3. to integrate crime prevention policies with other social policies, so that the social causes of delinquency were in fact objects of intervention. In this context, it was understood that public safety policies and the "innovative" policing programs would be implemented in the city of Rio de Janeiro in an experimental fashion, and, depending on the results achieved, such programs would be transferred to other municipalities in the state.

In order to guarantee greater autonomy for the management of these policies, the State Secretariat of Public Safety (Secretaria de Segurança Pública) was abolished and the Military Police, the Civil Police and the Civil Defense were raised to level of Secretariats of State. In terms of their functions, the Military Police would be responsible for developing crime prevention initiatives, providing a service guided by the community policing model; the Civil Police would be responsible for carrying out enforcement activities, to be based on the development of criminal investigations

⁶ See Skogan (2008).

with broad scientific support; and the Civil Defense would be responsible for the development of initiatives aiming to raise the level of citizenship, devising an array of programs to improve the quality of life of the population (Hollanda, 2005: 89).

Hence, the Military Police began to be understood as an institution responsible for providing public services to the community, and its main goals began to be:

1. to define its operations in terms of content, structural position and conditions for the deployment of police officers, avoiding the proliferation of parallel structures;
2. to enter the social fabric through the building of effective and healthy closer ties with the community, thereby generating favorable attitudes;
3. to provide incentives for research at all levels, avoiding reaching conclusions and taking decisions without the support of empirical research;
4. to define action strategies together with community representatives. Police action should be structured according to these pillars in order to:

“promote, adapting the Military police structure to public safety demands, the behavioral adjustment of the organization to a new conception of public order, in which community collaboration and integration become the new important principles, which implies a new police officer and a new police”

(Police and Crime Plan of PMERJ, 1984-1987: 11-12).

In order to achieve that, projects aiming at the social prevention of crimes were implemented, combining the provision of social policies with the development of community policing actions. Initiatives such as the creation of the Integrated Center of Community Policing (Centro Integrado de Policiamento Comunitário - CIPOC) fit this category. In this initiative, police officers of the 18^o Military Police Department and community representatives established the priorities for the maintenance of public safety, building together a way to manage the problem.

“The CIPOC is the headquarter of a military police organization that brings together all the forms of preventive policing, which are mainly focused on the interests of the community and are based on the relationship with its authentic representatives. It aims above all to create conditions of respect and mutual support for the wellbeing of the area under its responsibility. (...) Its goals are to safeguard police presence in certain deprived areas, in which the presence of normal policing, the Operational Unit, is made difficult due to any reason; to stimulate actions in the area in which the Center is established, providing it with optimal working conditions; integrate the Military Police with the community, in particular with the most deprived ones; articulate

and update community resources in existence using them to provide services to the community; promote and provide incentives for the development of preventive work with the younger population; cooperate with the program responsible for providing occupation and employment opportunities, aiming to improve the quality of life of the deprived community; minimize existing social problems in the target area through a joint effort of the Military Police and social experts (psychologists, educators and social workers); prevent and reduce social tensions, leading the deprived community to a greater engagement with its social development; to provide community members with access to proper documentation; bring together efforts of the Military Police and the Social Group in the relentless quest for the community's social wellbeing coupled with the maintenance of public order" (Police and Crime Plan of PMERJ, 1984-1987: 11-12, emphasis added).

In 1986, one of the most visible public safety initiatives was implemented in the city of Rio de Janeiro, the Neighborhood Policing.

CIPOC's goal was to provide a police service to a "community" with specific characteristics, related not only to material poverty, but especially to social poverty, understood as the lack of awareness of citizen's rights and duties. More than safeguarding the prevention of crime and the safety of residents, this program's proposal was to transform community members into effective citizens, from enabling a "civic birth" (through the provision of birth certificates and the issuing of Work and Social Security cards) to guaranteeing a dignified life (through access to services provided by health, education and social work agencies deployed in the community). In the last instance, this program was about permanently placing police officers in the area as a way to allow the access of other services, thereby integrating the "specific community" with the rest of the city of Rio de Janeiro.

Another important project developed in this period was the Neighborhood Watch ("Vigilantes de Bairro"), a group composed of students, housewives, businessmen, social workers and pensioners who volunteered to work together with the police in the organization of vaccination campaigns and cultural events, and who also participated in the internal activities of the police battalion through the provision of, for example, telephone and customer services, along with other similar activities. The Diary Policing ("Policimento de Agenda") program answered to community calls, forcing police officers to contact a specific person in the place to be policed and sign in a diary the time of his passing that particular policing post (Cerqueira, 2001: 176).

In 1986, one of the most visible public safety initiatives was implemented in the city of Rio de Janeiro, the Neighborhood Policing ("Policimento de Bairro"). It was initially implemented in the neighborhoods of Estácio, Rio Comprido, Santa Tereza, Glória, Flamengo, Catete, Vila Operária, 25 de Agosto, Vila São Luiz, Itatiaia, Inhaúma, Irajá, Vila da Penha e Brás de Pina and had the purpose of intensifying visible policing

in the hours of greater demand by the community, promoting closer ties between neighborhood associations and the local police unit and jointly identifying the most serious local problems.

Finally, with the aim of trying out new forms of policing in the most deprived areas of the city, the Special Operations Company (Companhia de Operações Especiais - NUCOE) was created to perform the following activities:

1. perform tactical exercises in order to instruct specialized troops;
2. eradicate criminality;
3. support the local population, allowing for close contact with police officers;
4. identify problems in the relationship between the deprived population with visible policing;
5. earn the trust of local residents during actions to prevent and suppress acts of crime through proper and effective methods (Cerqueira, 2001: 190).

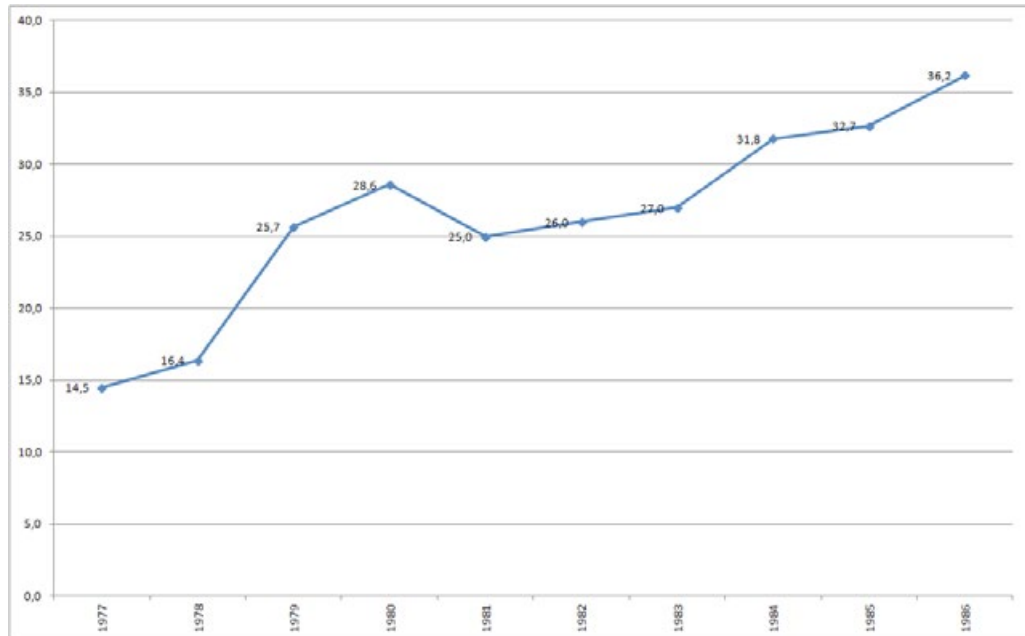
The goals of this period's public safety policies were to imprint in the internal public (particularly in the military police officers) a mentality of a public servant, as well as emphasize the notion of a citizen as a bearer of rights and duties to the external public. The idea was that, as these images were consolidated, the rapprochement between the police and the community would intensify. The strategies to reach this target were:

“to discourage the distorted idea that it is the police’s job to hide failures and manipulate public opinion; to spread the idea that to act in way aiming at improving the corporation’s standing among public opinion is a duty of all military police officers; to enter the social fabric through the building of effective and healthy closer ties with the community, thereby generating favorable attitudes; provide incentives for research at all levels, avoiding reaching conclusions and taking decisions without the support of empirical research; to define action strategies together with community representatives” (Police and Crime Plan of PMERJ, 1984-1987).

Although the initiatives can be considered innovative for a locality that was coming out of a military dictatorship, they did not achieve the expected direct nor indirect results. On the one hand, criminality rates, measured by the number of intentional homicides per 100.000 inhabitants continued to grow (Graph 02).

Graph 02

Intentional homicide rate per 100.000 inhabitants
City of Rio de Janeiro (1977-1986)



Source: NECVU/IFCS/UFRJ [<http://www.necvu.ifcs.ufrj.br>], based on Civil Police data (reports)/ compiled by the author.

On the other hand, the innovative initiatives devised to improve the quality of life of the residents of deprived areas through an increase of services provided by the police were not fully implemented anywhere. In this sense, it is important to point out that program managers identified, in their activities reports, as the causes of such inefficiency, the characteristics of the space of the slums. Their different reality would make the idea of community integration and service provision by the police, along with respect for human rights, difficult. In fact, according to official documents from this period, the association between the terms “criminality” and “slums”, and the usage of these terms as if they were synonymous, seems to be a construct of PMERJ’s and Brizola’s government’s own evaluation of the 1984-1987 period, as can be seen in the following quote:

“The greatest obstacle in achieving community integration has been police operations carried in deprived areas, particularly in slums. In the city of Rio, where nearly 1/3 of the population lives in slums, the military police has not been able to develop a good work in terms of articulation with the community, even though it has tried with the NUCOE. Everything that is said about criminality, whether right or wrong, makes reference to those who live in slums. Any initiative in the sphere of crime prevention must begin in the slums, because that is the place in which dangerous criminals usually hide. We have tried to make an

articulated job guiding our efforts in these areas with the NUCOE and with the support of operating units. This is a really difficult and complex task. These are areas generally unassisted by public authorities, in which drug traffickers usually maintain super-organized networks of terror and, at the same time, of support to the local population, keeping them subjugated and, sometimes, forbidding them to support police work. On the other hand, corrupt police officers, who sometimes also use unnecessary and illegal force, make any attempt of earning the trust of local populations harder. This is a challenge that must not be abandoned” (Col. Cerqueira’s Report of Activities, 1983-1987: 88-89 - emphasis added).

With the promise to end criminality in the city of Rio de Janeiro in the first 100 days of his government, Moreira Franco reverted to a policy in which respect for human rights and lawful police action were left on the background.

The effects of the association of these two terms, which made the slums the birthplace and breeding ground of criminality and violence afflicting the city of Rio de Janeiro, as presented in the evaluation reports of the first Brizola government, began to be felt already in the early days of the government of Moreira Franco (1987-1991). Brizola’s ban on police officers “going in” the slums was pointed as one of the unquestionable causes of the rise in criminality in the city of Rio de Janeiro. If the slums sheltered the most “dangerous criminals”, the argument went, then these areas should be treated, in terms of public safety policies in general and visible policing in particular, in the most severe way. In this sense, the ban on police officers entering the slums at night and the need for a court warrant to enter resident’s homes were considered the main causes of the rise in crime rates in the previous period. Thus, one of the first actions undertaken by the new governor, in March 1987, was to give order for the “invasion” of slums and for the search and arrest of criminals residing in them.

It meant that, instead of a respect for human rights discourse that did not differentiate between members of the society, the emphasis of Moreira Franco’s government was on repressive actions based on traditional policing models, in which police officers work in isolation from the community and without any input from the population. The proposal was for areas with high incidence of crime to be patrolled 24 hours a day, with police officers armed with war equipments and isolated from “dangerous criminals” inside their patrol cars. And based on intelligence received from privileged informers, targeted interventions would be carried out in these areas in order to incapacitate the criminals who “keep the local population subjugated and forbid them to support police work”.

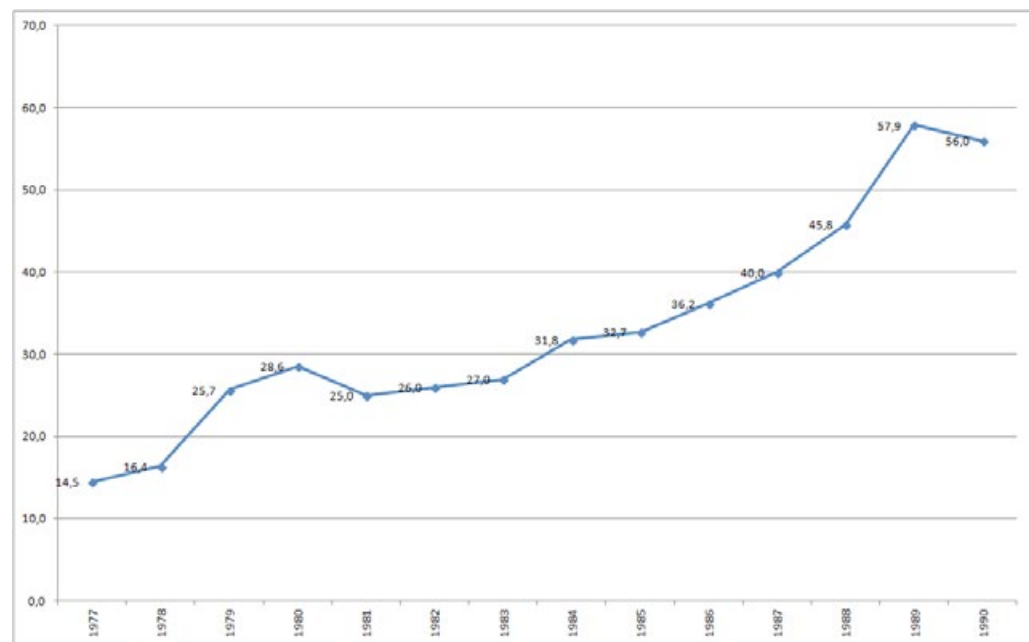
With the promise to end criminality in the city of Rio de Janeiro in the first 100 days of his government, Moreira Franco reverted to a policy in which respect for human rights and lawful police action were left on the background. However, in the wealthier areas of the city, police service provision was guided by other principles, in particular by

the articulation with the community developed in the previous period. For example, the programs of Neighborhood Policing (Policiamento de Bairro) in the area covered by the 13^o Battalion (in downtown Rio) and of Diary Policing (Policiamento de Agenda) in the wealthy South of the city were maintained and the Integrated Center of Special Operations (Centro Integrado de Operações Especiais - CIOE) was created to provide services in the slums.

However, when criminal rates for the period are analyzed, it becomes clear that, instead of declining, intentional homicide rates actually went up (Graph 03), suffering a small decrease only in the last year of Moreira Franco's administration.

Graph 03

**Intentional homicide rate per 100.000 inhabitants
City of Rio de Janeiro (1977-1990)**



Source: NECVU/IFCS/UFRJ [<http://www.necvu.ifcs.ufrj.br>], based on Civil Police data (reports)/ compiled by the author.

In 1990, Leonel Brizola was once again elected as the governor of the state of Rio de Janeiro, for the period of 1991 to 1994. In his second mandate, he once again adopted a discourse of building closer ties with the population in order to jointly devise solutions for the problem of crime. In this context, the idea of community policing was again made the central tenet underpinning the official discourse of the institution.

Social problems, including those of public safety, go beyond the technical capacity of police institutions and will only be effectively solved if taken together with the community. Thus, community policing,

as a new way to think about the protection of the public and the provision of relief, is based on the belief that social problems will have more effective solutions if the population is engaged in their identification, analysis and discussion” (Management Report [Relatório de Gestão] 1991-1994:116, emphasis added).

However, one of the first initiatives created by the new government was the creation of the Special Police Operations Battalion (Batalhão de Operações Policiais Especiais - BOPE)⁷ via the decree n° 16.374, from 01/03/1991. Still in 1991, a Complaints Center was created aiming to reduce police criminal behavior through the handling of anonymous complaints of police violence. Public prosecutors, public defenders, Military Police officials and police chiefs were in charge of checking the veracity of the information received.

Among the programs devised with the aim of promoting, on one hand, closer ties with the community, and, on the other hand, the prevention of crime and violence particularly in slums, the following deserve a special mention: the Special Grouping of Neighborhood Policing (Grupamento Especial de Policiamento de Bairro - GEPB, 1991), which aimed, through the establishment of a dialogue with area residents, to create specific forms of policing according to the physical and social characteristics of the community. The School Battalion of Community Policing (Batalhão Escola de Polícia Comunitária - BEPC), which would be the Military Police Battalion working with community policing, having the Ilha do Governador neighborhood as an experimental laboratory for initiatives of this kind.

However, the fact that none of these actions were resulting in a reduction of criminality rates, coupled with clear messages being sent by “heavily-armed drug dealers”, as reported by a Sunday-evening television program which showed images of heavily-armed drug dealers in the slums of Rocinha and Santa Marta, and considering the

7 “The Management Report says the following about BOPE: “Reserve tactical unit available to the Chief Commander to handle crisis situations which are beyond the operational capacity of conventional units. The performance of operational teams which spare no effort, risk their lives and demonstrate great professional value in the fulfillment of missions determined by their superiors, expresses the dignified example of this elite unit”. “Fundamentally, most of the operations carried out by BOPE are of a repressive nature, given the technical, tactical and psychological preparedness of its members, and in almost all of these operations dangerous delinquents are arrested and materials (such as weapons and drugs) are seized, which demonstrate the efficacy and efficiency of this unit when considering the aim of this corporation. When it comes to its relationship with civil society and the community, it is worth noting that BOPE has reached a high degree of professionalism in its treatment of diverse segments of society, earning the respect, the trust and the credibility among the population to the point that special operations teams are applauded when they arrive in places where crimes have been committed and of being requested to operate in certain areas by the population via letters or the media” (Management Report [Relatório de Gestão] 1991-1994, p. 106).

approaching ECO-92⁸, the Brazilian Army was tasked with performing visible policing functions and occupied the city of Rio de Janeiro. The aim of the Army occupation was to guarantee the security of the international event, but this initiative of the Federal government, which interfered in the sovereignty of the state government, would have other consequences. During the occupation by the Armed Forces, the general feeling of peace and tranquility among the population was widely portrayed in the national media, enhancing the image of PMERJ as inefficient and corrupt. At that time, it was widely discussed - above all in the press and usually in ill-founded ways - the possibility of the Army to continue to perform the functions of the Military Police in the city of Rio de Janeiro, an idea that was expressed even more frequently after the slaughters of Candelária and Vigário Geral (which took place in 1993) and which made evident the participation of the Military Police in extrajudicial killings.

During the occupation by the Armed Forces, the general feeling of peace and tranquility among the population was widely portrayed in the national media.

In 1993, in response to organized and large scale looting taking place at the city's beaches, which were terrorizing city residents and tourists alike, the Operation Preventive Tactic Siege (Operação Cerco Tático Preventivo) was implemented. It consisted of conducting police raids in buses heading for beaches in the South of the city, where most of the looting was taking place. The aim was to seize drugs and weapons and, consequently, to arrest those suspected of being connected to such crimes. The Special Motorized Beach Patrol (Patrulhamento Motorizado Especial de Praia) and the Summer-93 Operation (Operação Verão-93) were also implemented.

In an attempt to pacify the drug wars raging in the slums, the Program of Prevention and Repression of the Trafficking of Narcotics (Prevenção e Repressão ao Tráfico de Entorpecentes) was implemented through the Operations Peace in the Slums (Paz no Morro) and Asphyxia (Asfixia). The Practical School Application Grouping (Grupamento de Aplicação Prático Escolar - GAPE) was also created, composed of Police officers who took part in Peace in the Slums operations in the communities of Mangueira, Borel, Providência, Andaraí and Pavão-Pavãozinho. The aim of this initiative was to promote permanent police occupation of such areas, in order to prevent armed conflicts between the "dangerous criminals" residing in them, thus guaranteeing the safety of those living in the slums and in the areas around them. In parallel, the Special Police Operations Battalion (BOPE) and the Shock Police Battalion (Batalhão de Polícia de Choque - BPChq⁹) received weapons with higher offensive power in order to make the actions of these battalions viable in the special

8 International Conference which gathered together heads of State or government, NGO environmentalists and other political figures in order to discuss environmental problems and to propose solutions for the preservation of the environment through sustainable development.

9 Special and tactical reserve unit available to the Chief Commander, "reaction force, replacement of the tactical application forces of operational units". It develops its "operational actions to restore order in several critical areas. Examples of its deployment in the period 1991-1994 are: 1) policing transported by urban buses and 2) Peace in the Slums operations.

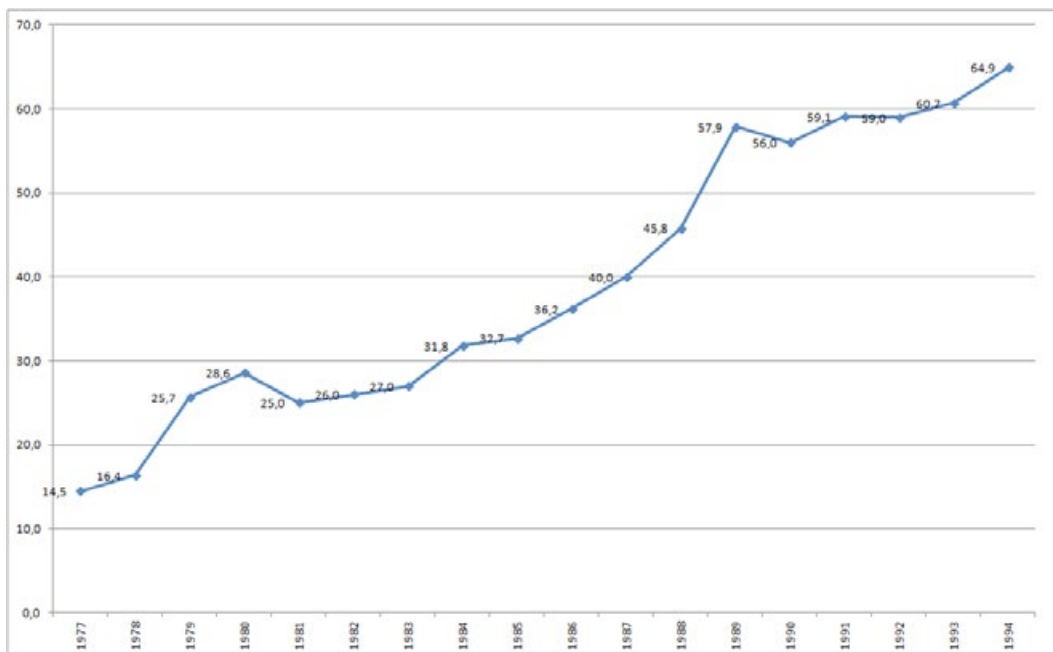
areas of criminality that the slums had become:

“Another contending issue was the type of weapons the military police officers should carry in order to confront organized crime. The BOPE and BPChq were provided with weapons with adequate firepower to the activities of the Military Police (...) As organized crime began to use more modern weapons with a bigger firepower, there was a certain concern by a part of the Corporation that, in order to resist the hysterical climate, internal and external, instead of immediately acquiring heavy weaponry, without the much needed technical analysis, which could result in a higher risk for the population, it was chosen (sic) to acquire protective equipment, such as bullet-proof vests and metal detectors, as can be seen in the following table (...) Experience has shown that, the Military Police, in order to fulfill its constitutional mission, will need a higher volume of material recourses than has been destined to it in the last years” (Management Report [Relatório de Gestão] 1991-1994: 93, emphasis added).

In spite of all the initiatives undertaken in the period of 1991 to 1994, crime rates did not go down. On the contrary, intentional homicide rates increased to unreasonable levels, reaching levels superior to 50 cases per 100.000 inhabitants, which is considered, as a rule, the rate beyond which a place is classified as being in a state of civil war.

Graph 04

Intentional homicide rate per 100.000 inhabitants
City of Rio de Janeiro (1977-1994)



Source: NECVU/IFCS/UFRJ [<http://www.necvu.ifcs.ufrj.br>], based on Civil Police data (reports)/ compiled by the author.

In addition, images associated with the “urban war” taking place in Rio de Janeiro, which were routinely broadcasted by the media, contributed to the rise in the feeling of insecurity, and, as a result, in an increase in support for authoritarian and even extrajudicial actions, as long as they were shown to be effective in controlling crime. Hence, adopting a repressive policy discourse, in which “a good criminal is a dead criminal”, Marcelo Allencar was elected governor of Rio de Janeiro for the period 1995-1998.

It is possible to say that the public safety policies implemented in the city of Rio de Janeiro in the period between 1995 and 1998 were based on the idea that the violation of the criminals’ right to life should be part of the police agenda.

One of his first initiatives was to reactivate the State Secretariat of Public Safety (Secretaria de Segurança Pública), which had been abolished in 1983 by former governor Leonel Brizola. The command of PMERJ was transferred to an Army General, thus transforming the repressive working model of this entity in a policing tactic. This updating of dictatorship practices was made especially visible with the reenactment of Note nº 52 of 05/08/1982, which established a sort of financial reward for special merit to those police offices who stood out in the repression and confrontation of crime.

During Marcelo Allencar’s government, through the decree no. 21.753/95, this reward became known as “wild west bonus” (gratificação faroeste) because, as was the case of the previous police regiment, it established the possibility of police officers receiving a permanent raise in wages corresponding to 50 to 150% of their salaries for courage during service. Such bravery would be measured, particularly, by the number of criminals killed during incursions in slums, the havens for “dangerous criminals” as they had been presented since the first management report of the democratic period.

The consequences of this initiative were felt immediately. The rate of people killed during clashes with the police raised from 3,2 deaths/month in 1995 to 20,55 death/months in 1996, which represents an increase of 542%. The internal support (from the police) and the external support (from the middle classes living in the areas surrounding the slums) was such that the period ended with the development of the Free Slum Program (Programa Favela Livre), in which “criminals” were forcefully removed from urban communities.

Therefore, it is possible to say that the public safety policies implemented in the city of Rio de Janeiro in the period between 1995 and 1998 were based on the idea that the violation of the criminals’ right to life should be part of the police agenda, and the criminal was thought of as Giorgio Agamben’s *Homo Sacer*, without rights as a citizen. As a general rule, these initiatives represented a back-tracking of the democracy consolidation process in the city space in general and in the slums in particular, since the government agency which should guarantee the right to life became responsible for its annihilation. In this context, the quote which seems to provide a better summary of Marcello Alencar’s policies is the concluding paragraph

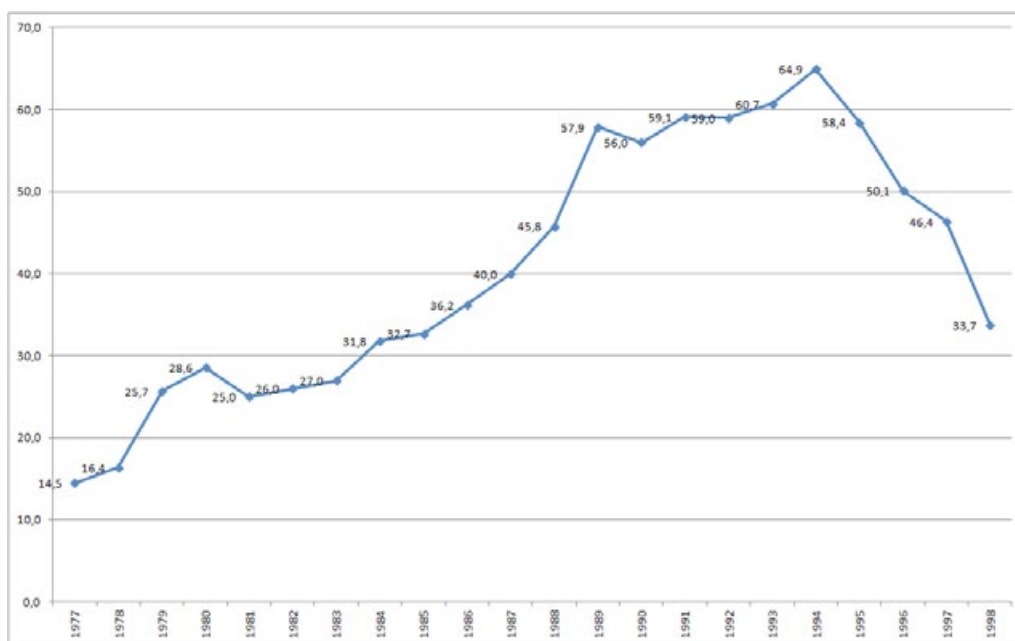
of this period's Management Report, according to which the public safety policy implemented was:

“characterized by professional action and the relentless fight against criminality. The Military Police has rigorously fulfilled its constitutional role, acting according to what was established in the state’s government public safety policy, aiming to prevent illicit acts and to readily repress the niches of criminal power, and, thereby, enhancing peace and public tranquility”(Management Report [Relatório de Gestão] 1995-1998: 114, emphasis added).

However, the most perverse effect of this policy, apart from the large number of deaths caused by an agency that should preserve life, was the support it received from segments of society (Carneiro, 2010). In the end, in the period of 1995-1998, murder rates were significantly reduced (Graph 05), coming close to the level they were when Brizola first took office in 1983.

Graph 05

**Intentional homicide rates per 100.000 inhabitants
City of Rio de Janeiro (1977-1998)**



Source: NECVU/IFCS/UFRJ [<http://www.necvu.ifcs.ufrj.br>], based on Civil Police data (reports)/ compiled by the author.

Faced with the inevitability of these numbers, the following ideas were disseminated and consolidated within the Military Police and among large segments of Rio de Janeiro’s society: that the slums were a breeding ground for “dangerous criminals”; that this situation could only be contained if the logic of “a good criminal is a

Mobilization for Peace combined constant police presence in the slums, being respectful of the law and human rights, with social intervention, particularly aiming to address popular demands for health services, education and social work, in addition to government investment in infrastructure.

dead criminal” was employed; and that the best cure for crime was authoritarian repression. After all, the numbers seemed to show, in an irrevocable way, that the policy of respect for human rights, community integration and the equal treatment of slum’s residents only resulted in an increase in criminality rates, represented by the number of intentional homicides. Another proof was the fact that the repressive measures adopted, inspired by the practices of the dictatorship’s final days, resulted in a decrease of criminality.

With the promise of containing criminality and guaranteeing public safety, Anthony Garotinho took office as governor of the state of Rio de Janeiro for the period of 1999-2002. In terms of public safety policies, his government tried to combine repressive policies with the establishment of closer ties with the community. The first policy implemented in this regard was the Mobilization for Peace (Mutirão pela Paz), which combined constant police presence in the slums, being respectful of the law and human rights, with social intervention, particularly aiming to address popular demands for health services, education and social work, in addition to government investment in infrastructure. In this same context, the New Life Program (Programa Vida Nova) was established, aiming at the expansion of citizenship for the community of Pereirão, via the association of public safety policies and social actions. Public safety was to be guaranteed by the establishment of a BOPE headquarter in the community and social actions by projects of cooperation between BOPE and social entities that began to operate in the place (Soares, 1999).

Still in 1999, the Community Policing Program (Programa de Policiamento Comunitário) in the neighborhoods of Copacabana, Leme and Laranjeiras was implemented. The Special Mobile Tactical Grouping (Grupamento Especial Tático Móvel - GETAM) was also created for motorized patrolling. It consisted of “mini-BOPEs” of well trained police officers equipped with adequate weapons and communication devices, working in small and agile teams, which moved around in new eye-catching medium-sized vehicles (Soares, 1999).

With the aim of working on specialized strategies of prevention and repression, the General Plan of the “All for Peace” Permanent Program (Plano Geral do Programa Permanente Todos pela Paz) was developed, police booths were installed and the practical operational internship program was implemented. The latter consisted in having trainee police officers on foot patrol in the areas which received community policing programs accompanied by more experienced police officers. However, the most visible initiative of the period was the implementation of the Special Areas Policing Group (Grupamento de Policiamento em Áreas Especiais - GPAE) in the year 2000, based on the experience accumulated by the program Mobilization for Peace (Mutirão pela Paz).

The GPAE attempted to fight urban violence “based on the philosophy and strategy

of community policing” (Carballo Blanco, 2002: 48). In order to do so, an analysis of violent criminality in the city of Rio de Janeiro was undertaken, and the existence of “special areas” was diagnosed:

“It is understood by special areas the geographical space with dense human occupation, where there are high levels of violence and criminality, combined with a pronounced lack of essential public services’ provision and where one can also find the existence of inadequate conditions for human and community development, which thereby enables the formation of a fertile ground for the proliferation of disorderly and criminal activities, given the small presence, or even the total lack of actions by the State, particularly in terms of infrastructure and services” (Carballo Blanco, 2002: 29).

This policing project was thus elaborated having as basis the identification of problematic areas which needed policing: the slums. These were the spaces in the city that, for being breeding grounds of “dangerous criminals” should also count with the implementation of policies of repression qualified as “special”:

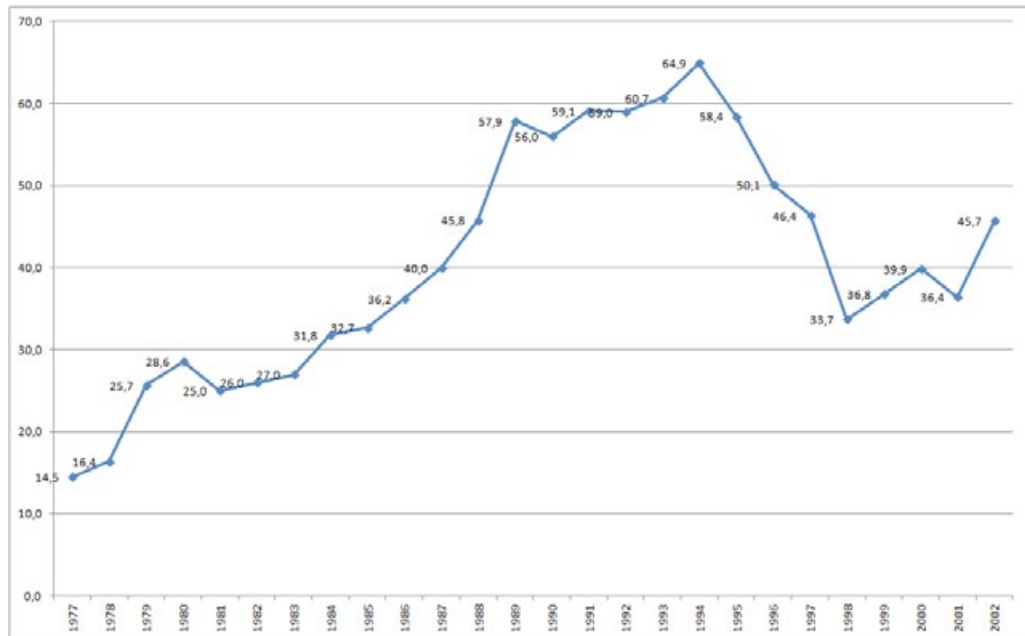
“The proposal to be developed by the Special Areas Policing Group (Grupamento de Policiamento em Áreas Especiais - GPAE) will include ways and modalities of visible policing service and preservation of regular public order, combining preventive actions, articulated with the community, with occasional measures of qualified repression” (Carballo Blanco, 2002: 27).

It is noticeable in this moment a new appropriation of the term “community”, which now becomes synonymous with slum, and thus, with the place in which “dangerous criminals” are born, reproduce and are killed. Thus, community policing becomes the category employed to label the method of policing to be implemented in the slums. Community policing, understood in this new way, aimed to expel from the slums those criminals who, in the previous administration, were being annihilated by the same police organization.

In spite of the success of GPAE in the reduction of murder rates in the years 2000 and 2001, when the government of Garotinho is taken as a whole, one notices that murder rates (Graph 06) once again went up, reaching the same levels observed in the beginning of Marcello Alencar’s government. Thus, the message inferred from the numbers was that policies of “respect for human rights” did not lead in time to sustainable falls in crime rates, and therefore should be replaced with eminently repressive initiatives.

Graph 06

Intentional homicide rate per 100.000 inhabitants
City of Rio de Janeiro (1977-2002)



Source: NECVU/IFCS/UFRJ [<http://www.necvu.ifcs.ufrj.br>], based on Civil Police data (reports)/ compiled by the author.

This scenario raised questions about the effectiveness of policies of expelling criminals from their communities, when compared to their permanent incapacitation, as had been done in the previous period. It seemed, to the most conservative segments of society, that the rise in crime had been caused by the greater respect for the human rights of criminals who, in the view of this part of society, should instead be eliminated like Agamben's *homo sacer*. However, in spite of the existence of a large part of society demanding for a heavy-handed public safety policy, the electoral speeches made in that period put a greater emphasis on the need to protect human rights. This was the result of the constant pressure exerted by national and international human rights groups on the state government to change its crime prevention policy (Carneiro, 2010).

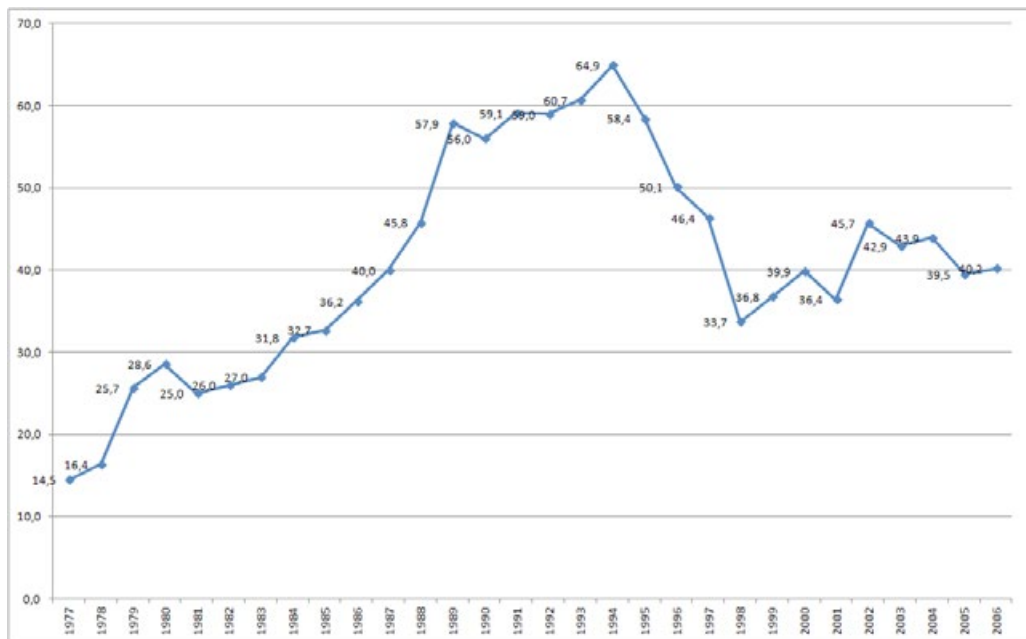
In 2002, Rosinha Garotinho, the wife of Anthony Garotinho, was elected governor of the state of Rio de Janeiro for the period of 2003-2006. In the beginning of the term, the State Secretariat of Public Safety tried to maintain the community policing programs (as synonyms of policing in slums) with the launch of community cafés in areas without GPAE, the implementation of Special Areas Policing Command (Comando de Policiamento em Áreas Especiais - CPAEs), tasked with managing the five existing GPAEs and carrying out research in order to create other GPAEs, and the dissemination of the Program on the Improvement of Citizen Police Practice (Curso de Aprimoramento da Prática Policial Cidadã - CAPPCC), which aimed to make police officers more humane.

In spite of the successful implementation of five GPAEs, and the creation of a specific command center to manage this program, murder rates suffered a substantial increase when compared to the previous period. In addition, in other areas of the city, lootings and criminal offences committed at any time of the day became frequent, which contributed to the spread in the feeling of insecurity.

Faced with the exponential increase in murder rates in the first half of its term in office, which exposed its own inability to manage public safety, the state government made an agreement with the federal government modeled on what had happened during the ECO-92. As a result, part of the capital's policing began to be performed by the Armed Forces and the presence of weapons of war became part and parcel of the scenery of the "Marvelous City". During the period in which this strategy was implemented, murder rates went down, returning to the levels they were in the year 2000, the second year of Anthony Garotinho's government (Graph 07).

Graph 07

Intentional homicide rate per 100.000 inhabitants
City of Rio de Janeiro (1977-2006)



Source: NECVU/IFCS/UFRJ [<http://www.necvu.ifcs.ufrj.br>], based on Civil Police data (reports)/ compiled by the author.

The reduction of murder rates in the years of 2005 and 2006 was understood as the result of the effective presence of the armed forces in the streets of Rio de Janeiro, thus reinforcing the idea that the logic of war (which structures the system of beliefs, values and attitudes of the Army) is more suited to the management of the city's public safety problems.

In 2006, Sérgio Cabral was elected governor of the state of Rio de Janeiro for the

In all the operations, a logic of confrontation was established based on mega-operations, which were justified and conceived as “pacifying actions” undertaken to eradicate drug traffickers’ armed forces.

period 2007-2010, beginning an administration that, in terms of public safety policies, was predicated on the scientific prevention of crimes. His public safety policies would be based on the construction of diagnoses which would guide interventions, particularly by the Military Police, and the evaluation of these initiatives’ effectiveness. It was hoped that a change of course in the conception of public safety policies would take place, ending the need for the Army’s assistance in the management of the problems of crime and violence in the city.

However, going against expectations that new actions undertaken would be based on a discourse of respect for human rights, what was seen in the first years of Cabral’s government was exactly the opposite. Military Police incursions in Vila Cruzeiro, which resulted in the death of dozens of people in a few days, showed how the “qualified repression” discourse, understood as authorization for extrajudicial killings, had been imprinted in police officers’ minds.

In all the operations, a logic of confrontation was established based on mega-operations, which were justified and conceived as “pacifying actions” undertaken to eradicate drug traffickers’ armed forces. The lethality of police action was portrayed as a bitter “medicine” for “dangerous criminals” and the peak was reached when government officials began to portray police action as a social insecticide, which aimed to contain the infestation of criminals by eliminating them.

As highlighted by one of PMERJ’s organic intellectuals, at the time of these mega-operations (2007 and 2008), the Secretary of Public Safety frequently visited BOPE’s headquarter at the slum of Pereirão, the one which had its origins in the Mobilization for Peace program. According to the interviewee, seeing the friendly relationship between BOPE and the community, and the absence of crimes in the area since the implementation of the headquarter, the Secretary thought: “would we be able to do this (establish a good relationship between the police and the community) in other places? Is it possible, given the situation of crime in the slum of Santa Marta, to repeat this successful experience, and, by doing so, to put an end to the crime network affecting the community in Botafogo?”

In this context, facing the serious and recurrent problem of fights between “dangerous criminals” in the slum of Santa Marta, BOPE was deployed in order to promote peace in the community, through an operation called “peace imposition”, in which the unit enters the area and remains there until the arrival of “regular” police officers. The aim of the operation was to reclaim a fortified area that was being used as the drug dealers’ headquarters. According to the organic intellectual interviewed, the use of BOPE was considered a drastic measure, which was taken because the local police had been unsuccessfully trying to get close to the area for months, causing a great number of deaths along the way and which was leading as a result to the rejection of its presence by the community of Santa Marta.

By the year 2010, the UPPs were being considered the “most effective” weapons available to the State Secretariat of Public Safety in the fight against crime in the city of Rio de Janeiro.

The proposal was that BOPE would expel the “dangerous criminals” from this space, and afterwards, in order to guarantee that they would not return, the Military Police would occupy the community for an undetermined length of time. BOPE’s intervention, which was followed by the constant presence of police officers in the area, began to generate a series of positive externalities, which contributed to the continuity of the program. As was the case of the first GPAE experience, murder rates went down, the population was feeling safer with the constant presence of the police, and, because of that, more open to approach the police organization.

In the following year (2009), due to problems similar to those that had motivated the intervention in Santa Marta, the slums of Batan, Cidade de Deus and Chapéu Mangueira were occupied, firstly by BOPE, and then, once the situation had been stabilized, by other troops of the Military Police for an undetermined period of time. In these three cases, the aim had been to pacify the “war” raging in the areas, and, because of that, the name Pacifying Police Units (Unidades de Polícia Pacificadora - UPPs) began to be used to designate these permanent operations. The aims of these initiatives also began to be explained more clearly in the press as a reconquest of territory occupied by the “armed forces of drug traffickers”, but little or no mention was made about what would be done after the “recapturing” of these areas by PMERJ. Reservations of this kind only began to be part of the political discourse in the second half of 2009, when the category of “community policing” became part of the concept and aims of UPPs.

However, at this point, as had happened with the GPAEs, the category of “community policing” was employed in order to designate the model of policing being implemented in slums. However, unlike what had been observed in the final years of GPAEs, this time popular demand for permanent police occupation was high, since, for the residents of these areas, this had become the only way to revert their condition of subjugation to the power of “dangerous criminals”. After all, due to the police presence and the fear of being arrested, these criminals usually left the area and did not return.

By the year 2010, the UPPs were being considered the “most effective” weapons available to the State Secretariat of Public Safety in the fight against crime in the city of Rio de Janeiro (UPP Repórter; O Globo 16/08/2009; Veja Rio 31/03/2010), being responsible for safeguarding the right to live according to democratic principles to the residents of the 13 “communities” in which UPPs were implemented:

- Dona Marta (18/12/2008);
- Batan (16/02/2009);
- Cidade de Deus (18/02/2009);
- Chapéu Mangueira/Babilônia (10/06/2009);

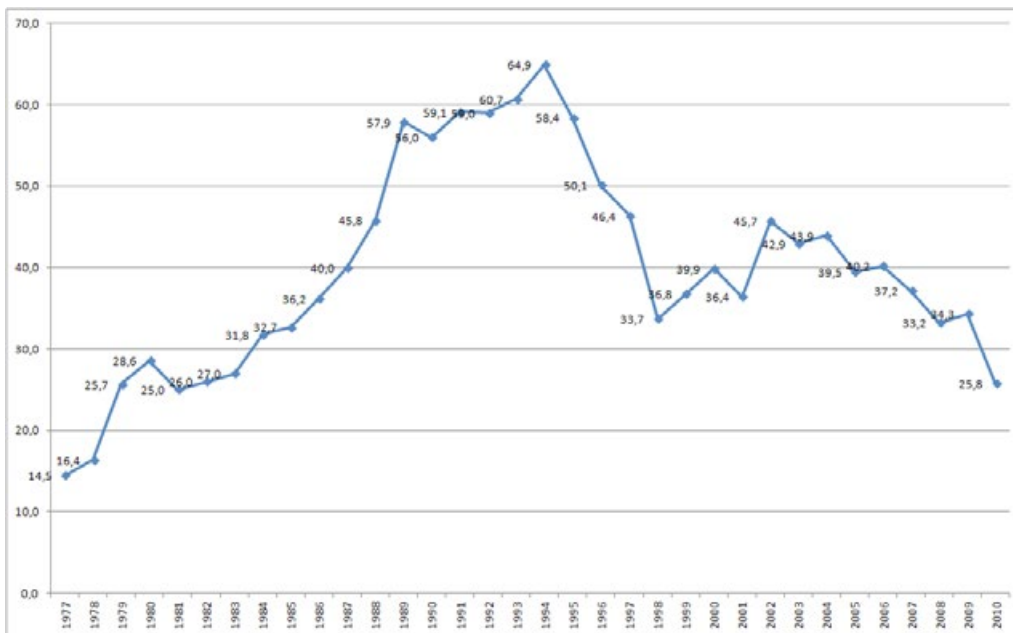
- Pavão-Pavãozinho/Cantagalo (23/12/2009);
- Tabajaras e Cabritos (14/01/2010);
- Providência (26/04/2010);
- Borel (07/07/2010);
- Formiga (01/07/2010);
- Andaraí (28/07/2010);
- Salgueiro (17/09/2010);
- Turano (30/09/2010) and
- Macacos (30/01/2010).

As a way to guarantee the legitimacy of the program, the fall in murder rates in the period after the implementation of UPPs (2008/2010) began to be associated with this policy. The policy received ample support from these areas' residents, who again pointed out as one of the immediate effects of the program the increase in the feeling of security, due to the absence of "dangerous criminals" in these areas.

However, when the murder rates of the first Sérgio Cabral government (2007/2010) are analyzed together with the numbers of the previous period, it is possible to question whether the reduction in murder rates was indeed a result of the UPPs only, or if it might have been related to another type of intervention, since the downward trend in murder rates started when the Army was still occupying the city (2005/2006). On the other hand, as can be seen in Graph 08, it is in the year 2010 that, for the first time, the murder rates in the city of Rio de Janeiro reach a level as low as those of the period before the democratic opening, when public safety experiments, and policing in slums, or community policing, became a constant feature.

Graph 08

**Intentional homicide rate per 100.000 inhabitants
City of Rio de Janeiro (1977-2010)**



Source: NECVU/IFCS/UFRJ [<http://www.necvu.ifcs.ufrj.br>], based on Civil Police data (reports)/ compiled by the author.

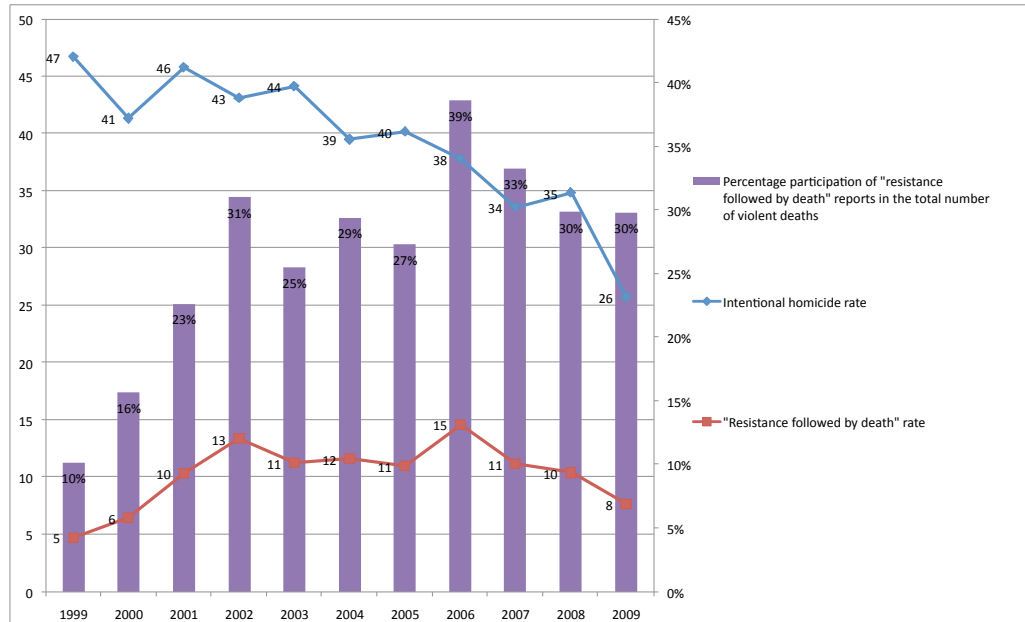
In spite of the fact that criminality, measured by murder rates, had begun to decline before the implementation of UPPs, it is noteworthy that, after the adoption of this policy, the decline in murder rates became greater than in the previous period. Among the possible explanations for this shift are the changes introduced in the training of military police officers, and, as a result, the reduction of the number of deaths caused by them. These changes were important because, since the introduction of the “wild west bonus”, the PMERJ had become responsible for, on average, a quarter of the total of intentional violent deaths registered in the city of Rio de Janeiro.

However, since the implementation of UPPs, in order to ensure a greater acceptance of police practices by the population, all PMERJ’s police officers began to be retrained in the doctrines of human rights and community policing, which put emphasis on preventative and less lethal interventions, instead of the “urban war” ideology present in the Army textbooks previously used in the training of military police officers. As a result, it seems that police officers began to act in a more respectful manner in general, committing less violations of the right to life, and, in doing so, the number of “resistance followed by death” reports (autos de resistência) (which is the term used to classified murders committed by police officers in confrontation with suspects) went down, as did the percentage of this type of death in the total number of violent deaths.

Graph 09

Intentional homicide rate and “resistance followed by death” rate by 100.000 inhabitants vis-à-vis the percentage represented by “resistance followed by death” reports in the total number of violent deaths

City of Rio de Janeiro (2000 to 2010)



Source: Public Safety Institute (Instituto de Segurança Pública (ISP/RJ)) / compiled by the author

However, in spite of the steep reduction in the number of violent deaths registered in the city of Rio de Janeiro after the implementation of UPPs, and, in particular, the decrease in the number of “resistance followed by death” reports, it does not seem reasonable to establish the occupation of the slums as the main cause of the fall in crime rates. Therefore, it is important to speculate about which other factors might have contributed to the fall of the main indicator of crime and violence in the city of Rio de Janeiro, a task which will be performed in the next section.

In addition, as has been demonstrated through the historical reconstruction of policing programs developed and implemented in the remit of public safety policies in the city of Rio de Janeiro, the practice of permanent slum-occupation and the development of closer ties between police officers and residents of these areas are not essentially new. After all, before UPPs (2008), some of the slums in Rio de Janeiro had experienced very similar initiatives, as were the cases of CIPOC (1983), GAPE (1993) and GPAE (2000). All of these programs aimed to guarantee the safety of citizens living in the slums and in their surroundings by permanently occupying areas with a high incidence of intentional homicides and expelling “dangerous criminals” from them.

However, all of these programs failed to achieve the desired results given:

1. the impossibility of completely disbanding the criminals acting in the areas;
2. the involvement of some police officers working on these programs with illicit activities;
3. the absence of support for the continuity of the programs from the population residing in the slums, and more crucially, from the population living in surrounding areas. In a way, these three points continue to represent challenges to be overcome by the public officials in charge of UPPs in order to guarantee the continuity of the programs, at least until the 2016 Olympic Games, which will be hosted by the city of Rio de Janeiro.

Even though the UPPs were not, in essence, innovative experiences, and even less so, the main cause of the fall in crime rates (a trend that had already begun in 2006), these two categories (innovation and the fall of crime rates) composed the electoral speeches of Sérgio Cabral's campaign for reelection to the state government in 2010 and were in fact considered determining factors for his victory. Thus, taking into account the support given by the population in general to the program , between December 2008 and January 2012, 19 UPPs were implemented in several communities. However, during this period, only a few decrees were published establishing the norms which should govern the practice, which seems to indicate that "a process of formalization and systematization in order to consolidate a clear model is still pending" (Cano, 2012: 17).

Thus, it is possible that the problems that prevented the continuity of previous similar initiatives might also obstruct the continuity of UPPs. Because of that, it is important to understand which other factors have contributed to the fall in crime rates, so that other policies might be devised in order to guarantee the safety of the city, apart from the occupation of slums.

Beyond UPPs: scrutinizing other factors that might have contributed to the fall in crime rates in the city of Rio de Janeiro

The aim of this section is to verify the extent to which other pillars of public safety policy (with the exception of policing patterns), pointed as the determining factors for the fall in murder rates in the city of São Paulo (Peres et al, 2011) and New York City (Zimring, 2011), might also be considered in order to explain the fall in murder rates in the city of Rio de Janeiro.

The proposal here is to inquire about to which extent the fall in murder rates in the city of Rio de Janeiro might be the result of deeper changes than just the implementation of UPPs in the areas in which "dangerous criminals" used to act, thereby provoking lethal action by PMERJ.

In order to do that, the state of Rio de Janeiro will be taken as the space of analysis, given that information about the variables considered relevant by the literature are available only for this level and data concerning exclusively the city of Rio de Janeiro has not been found. Thus, the intentional homicide rates in the state of Rio de Janeiro, in the period between 2000 and 2010 will be contrasted with the following other variables also measured at the state level:

1. public safety budget;
2. budget destined to the hiring of new police officers;
3. police action to curb acts of incivility and minor crimes, as exemplified by the “zero-tolerance” policy adopted in New York City;
4. the rate of arrests/apprehensions by the police;
5. the number of firearms seized.

According to the 2011 Public Safety Yearbook, between 2009 and 2010, public safety spending in the state of Rio de Janeiro increased by 5,59%.

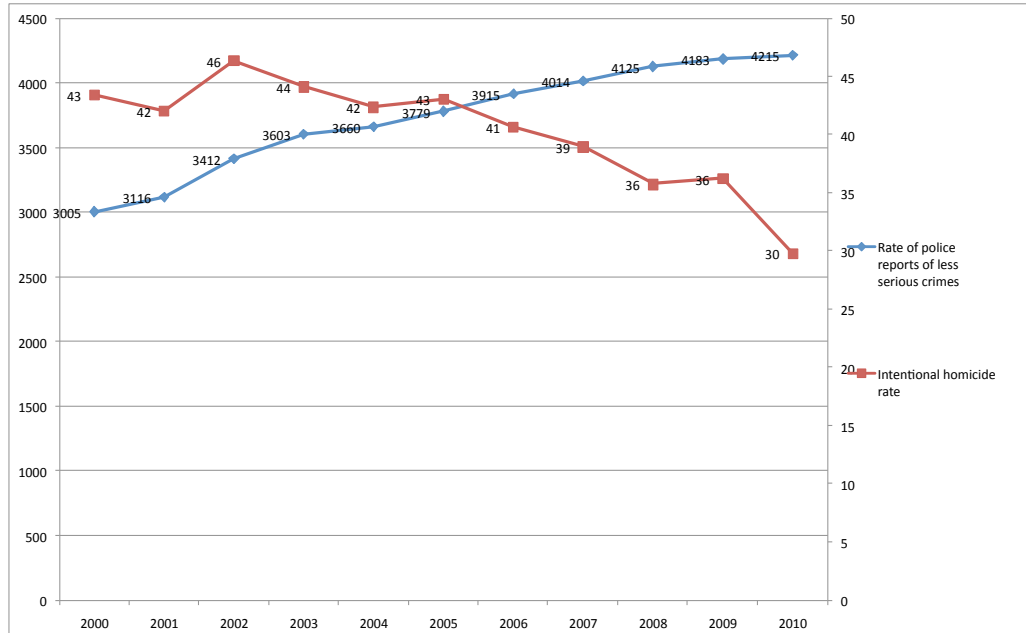
Public safety spending is important, from the point of view of the implementation of crime reduction policies, for being an indicator of the amount of money made available to the execution of actions, projects and programs in this area. According to the 2011 Public Safety Yearbook, between 2009 and 2010, public safety spending in the state of Rio de Janeiro increased by 5,59%, from a total spending of R\$ 3.710.870.803,04 in 2009 to R\$ 3.914.563.860,11 in 2010. In other words, during the period in which the greatest fall in murder rates was observed, the budget for activities in this area was growing. The police sector was the one which had the highest public spending increase. In 2009, R\$ 305.570.646,63 were spent in the sector and in 2010 the amount grew to 416.729.988,69, which represents a 36,31% increase in the spending destined primarily to the hiring of new police officers, and consequently, to the payment of police officers’ wages.

Since it was not possible to have access to the calculation reports, the question that remains unanswered is when this pattern of investment (of higher expenditure in public safety) was effectively initiated, which makes it unfeasible to compare the amount of resources destined to public safety and the murder rates in the last decade.

When it comes to increased police activity to curb acts of incivility and minor crimes, as exemplified by the “zero-tolerance” policy adopted in New York City, it was possible to observe that the rate of police reports related to less serious crimes per 100.000 inhabitants increased by 41% in the state of Rio de Janeiro (Graph 10). And precisely from the year in which the rate of police reports concerning less serious crimes began to increase, intentional homicide rates started to decrease.

Graph 10

Rate of police reports of less serious crimes and intentional homicide rate per 100.000 inhabitants
State of Rio de Janeiro (2000 to 2010)



Source: ISP/RJ / compiled by the author

According to the broken windows theory, murder can become a mechanism of interpersonal conflicts' resolution when individuals believe that there are no other ways of managing controversy and when there is the perception that formal or legal rules are not respected, therefore, breaking the law will not result in punishment. Thus, the idea of avoiding the existence of unrepaired broken windows is related to the importance of showing to the population the value of compliance with the rules and of the righteousness of the community for the maintenance of order. In this sense, interventions based on this theory emphasize the need to immediately repress not only crimes, but also any acts of incivility, in order to avoid escalation into more serious felonies (in a sort of upward spiral of violence). Hence, the police must report every type of crime, regardless of their severity, as a way to deter the engagement in criminal activities, whatever type they might be.

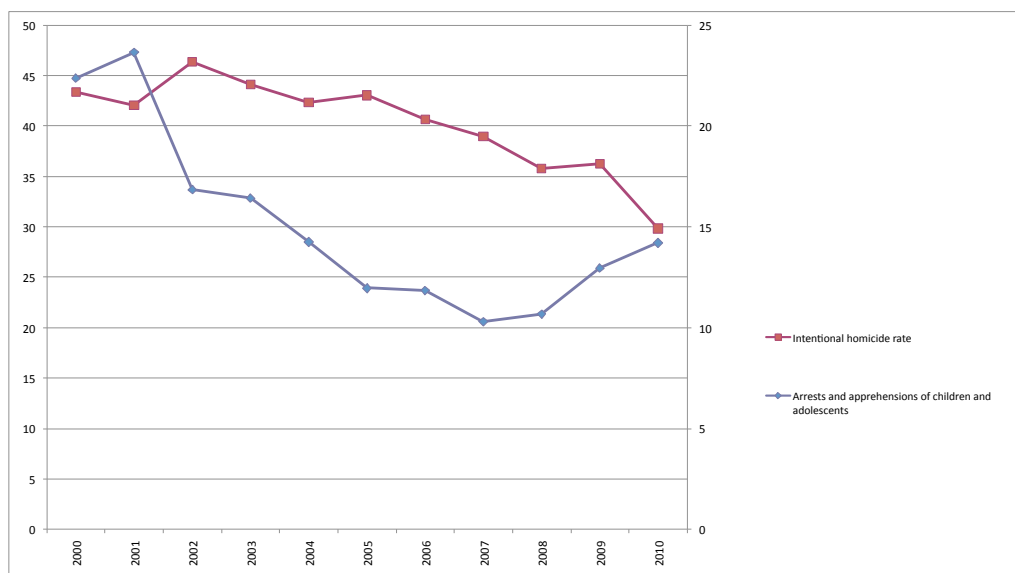
The data summarized in Graph 10 seem to indicate that, in a way, this idea began to take hold in the state of Rio de Janeiro. Increased police activity to curb less serious crimes seems to be related to the fall in intentional homicide rates, since, from the moment in which the police began to intervene more frequently, reporting more crimes, the murder rate per 100.000 inhabitants also began its downward trend. This seems to confirm the ability of the broken windows theory to predict positive effects, not only in New York City, but also in the state of Rio de Janeiro.

However, besides the reporting of all types of crimes, it is important that those who were apprehended in *flagrante delicto* be punished, and, consequently, incapacitated, for only in this way the individual will effectively realize that crime does not pay. From Beccaria (in the 17th century) to modern econometrics studies that have followed the initial analysis of Gary Becker (1970), there is plenty of evidence showing that the probability of charging, convicting and punishing criminal activities can deter the practice of criminal behavior.

Thus, a way of verifying the extent to which this deterrent effect has been occurring (or not) is to compare intentional homicide rates with the number of arrests made by the police, both of individuals above the legal age and of individuals under 18 years of age. However, when these two phenomena are compared, one can observe that the intentional homicide rates began to decline well before the number of arrests began to increase. Only after 2007, when murder rates were already in decline, the number of arrests began to increase, thereby reverting the previous tendency of decline visible in the period 2000-2006 (Graph 11).

Graph 11

Arrests and apprehensions of children and adolescents rate and intentional homicide rate per 100.000 inhabitants
State of Rio de Janeiro (2000 to 2010)



Source: ISP/RJ

Hence, it seems that, as is the case of the UPPs, the increase in the number of arrests by the police might have contributed to speeding up the decline in intentional homicide rates, but it can not be considered a cause of the decline.

Finally, one of the interventions traditionally considered a possible explanation for the fall in intentional homicide rates, both in São Paulo and in New York City, is

The law forbids civilians to carry firearms, except in cases in which there is a threat to life. In such a case, the individual must prove the need to carry a weapon and the permit is issued for a predetermined length of time.

the increase in the number of firearms apprehended as a result of disarmament campaigns.

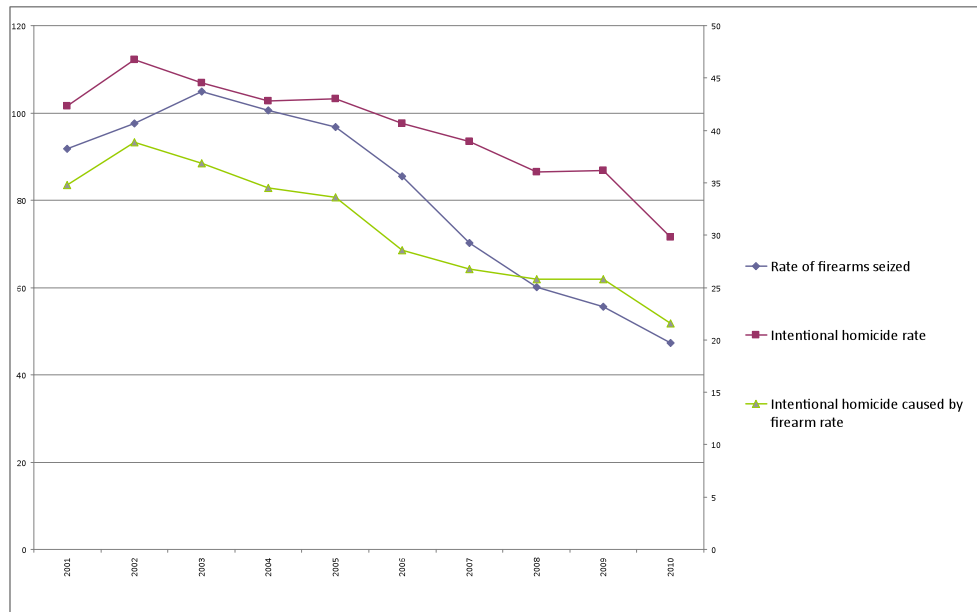
According to Hartung (2009), in Brazil, the state government public policies devised to repress the illegal possession of weapons and the approval of the Statute of Disarmament in 2003 have significantly raised the costs of bearing arms and provided incentives for the voluntary disposal of weapons. Along with the reduction of the availability of firearms, a decline in the number of violent deaths also occurred, given that 70% of the intentional homicides in Brazil are caused by firearms.

The Statute of Disarmament (Law 10.826, from 22/12/2003) is a federal law about the registration, possession and sale of firearms and ammunition. The law forbids civilians to carry firearms, except in cases in which there is a threat to life. In such a case, the individual must prove the need to carry a weapon and the permit is issued for a predetermined length of time. The only individuals allowed to bear arms for an indefinite period are those responsible for guaranteeing public safety, members of the Armed Forces, police officers, intelligence officers and private security guards (Hartung, 2009).

When the data about the rate of firearms seized in the state of Rio de Janeiro is compared with the data about intentional homicides, it is noticeable that the curves have had similar tendencies. In other words, when the rate of firearms' seizure is high, the intentional homicide rate is also high; when the rate of apprehensions is reduced, the rate of intentional homicides is also reduced. This pattern might indicate that the effects of the seizure of firearms only start to be felt in the following years, i.e., when a weapon is removed from circulation in year X, the death which has been prevented by this seizure is only noticed in the year X+1, which causes the curves of these two phenomena to acquire similar shapes (Graph 12).

Graph 12

Rate of firearms seized, intentional homicide rate and intentional homicide caused by firearm rate per 100.000 inhabitants
State of Rio de Janeiro (2001 to 2008)



Source: ISP/RJ / compiled by the authors

Thus, according to Hartung (2009), Graph 12 shows that the seizure of firearms and the incidence of intentional homicides are correlated, since, as the availability of guns diminishes, the intentional homicide rate declines. The correlation becomes even clearer when one notices that the number of intentional homicides caused by firearms follows almost the same trend of the curve representing the rate of firearms seized.

Therefore, when the five main variables traditionally used to explain the fall in murder rates in São Paulo and New York City are considered, it is possible to affirm that, in the case of the state of Rio de Janeiro, there is also some sort of relationship between the decline in murder rates and (1) larger spending in public safety in general, and in the hiring of new police officers in particular; (2) less tolerance of minor criminal offenses, which must be reported; (3) less availability of firearms. In addition, the larger number of individuals arrested by the police in recent years, as well as the implementation of UPPs, seems to have contributed to the fall in intentional homicide rates in the period of 2009/2010.

These results, albeit being fairly superficial and not taking into account other social dynamics that may also cause changes in the rates of intentional homicides (such as the aging of the population and policies of bar closures, to name just two), clearly demonstrate that the UPPs can not be considered the unquestionable cause of the reduction of criminality. However, as argued in the previous section, it is not possible

either to disregard the impact this policy seems to have had both on the speeding up of the decline of intentional homicide rates and on the diminution of lethality in police actions, which is itself one of the components of murder rates.

Final remarks

This paper proposed to reconstitute, from a socio-historical perspective, the trajectory of public safety policies in general, and policing programs in particular, implemented in the city of Rio de Janeiro from 1983 to 2011. This task was performed in order to identify the solutions that have generally been mobilized in the attempt to better manage the problems of crime and urban violence in the city. In addition, through an analysis of the intentional homicide rate per 100.000 inhabitants (which is the main indicator of crime and violence of a society), we sought to problematize the capacity of the actions, projects and programs mobilized by the State Secretariat of Public Safety in general, and the Military Police (PMERJ) in particular, to alter the upward trend of these rates or to maintain their downward trend. In the end, the main argument made in this paper was that the Pacifying Police Units (UPPs) can not be considered the main cause of the decline in intentional homicide rates in the city of Rio de Janeiro, even though the UPPs did seem to affect the speed of the decline.

In order to do that, documents produced by the state government and by PMERJ since the democratic reopening were analyzed. This date was chosen because that was when the concern with the adequate management of public safety and the containment of violence in the slums begin to occupy a special place in the agenda of state public policies. Through this analysis, it was possible to trace the progressive process of demonization of the slums as breeding grounds of “dangerous criminals” and, thus, as spaces which deserved not only special but privileged Military Police action in order to contain the “escalation of crime”.

The socio-historical analysis has also revealed that the practice of permanent police occupation of the slums, associated with the attempt to establish closer ties with these areas’ residents - which is based on a community policing perspective - seems to have been conceived as a “magic formula” for the solution of the problem. This “magic” solution seems to be implemented every time the war against crime - the traditional strategy adopted by an institution heir of the Armed Forces’ principles of action - has been exhausted. As a general rule, these two strategies - the permanent occupation of the slums for the expulsion of criminals and the execution of criminals in the slums - either have taken turns or have been concomitantly implemented, but, in the last instance, they seem to be the only strategies known to public safety managers. After 30 years, no other strategy, other than these two, has been implemented in the city of Rio de Janeiro.

On the other hand, when murder rates are analyzed vis-à-vis the policing programs

There was a general change in the working patterns of public safety policies, which began to count with a bigger budget, more available police officers to prevent crimes, fewer weapons available to commit crimes, and decreased tolerance to illicit acts.

implemented particularly in the slums, it is difficult to say which of the two strategies has produced better results. That is because the number of violent deaths has fallen both when the police presented a high level of lethality (as in 2007 and 2008) and when the police permanently occupied the slums without using lethal force (as in 2009 and 2010).

In addition, in order to demonstrate that murder rates dynamics are determined by more complex factors than just the patterns of policing in general, and in the slums in particular, traditional explanations for the reduction in violent deaths in the city of São Paulo and in New York City were introduced. After these factors were analyzed in the context of the state of Rio de Janeiro, it was observed that there was a general change in the working patterns of public safety policies, which began to count with a bigger budget, more available police officers to prevent crimes, fewer weapons available to commit crimes, and decreased tolerance to illicit acts.

Taken together, these phenomena unquestionably point to the need to carry out more substantive research on which other dynamics (social, economic, police) might explain the reversal of the upward trend in the intentional homicide rate in the state and city of Rio de Janeiro. Only after this is achieved, it will be possible to devise effective and lasting strategies that guarantee the safety and security of all the residents of these areas, something which begins with the assurance of the right to life to all its individuals.

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Coordinators

Robert Muggah
Paulo Esteves

Designer

Kenia de Aguiar Ribeiro

Address

Rua Marquês de São Vicente, 225,
Vila dos Diretórios, casa 20 Gávea,
Rio de Janeiro - RJ
Brazil

Contact

(55) 21 2245-1900
projetohasow@gmail.com
www.hasow.org

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