JOURNAL ON EDUCATION IN EMERGENCIES

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"PEDAGOGY OF CONVERSION" IN THE URBAN MARGINS: PACIFICATION, EDUCATION, AND THE STRUGGLE FOR CONTROL IN A RIO DE JANEIRO FAVELA[1]

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ABSTRACT

In this article, I make an empirical contribution to the scholarship on education in urban settings that are affected by militarized policing and illicit drug markets. I offer insights into the role education played in the Pacifying Police Units (UPPs), a pacification project in Rio de Janeiro favelas. Rio State authorities began to install UPPs in 2008 in an effort to regain control over favelas dominated by drug-trafficking groups and marked by high levels of violence. In this paper, which is based on an ethnographic case study I conducted between 2008 and 2015, I discuss the UPPs' struggle to gain the allegiance of favela residents. I focus in particular on police involvement in public primary schools and nonformal education geared toward young children living in the favelas that were part of the UPP project. Looking at one primary question—How does pacification influence education and what does this mean for local perceptions of police?—I reveal how the UPPs brought on the further militarization of education in Rio's favelas and show how paradoxical police practices in the urban margins may actually perpetuate the violence they are intended to combat.

INTRODUCTION

Since the 1990s, Rio de Janeiro has been marked by a "reality of violence" (Perlman 2010) that disproportionately affects the city's *favelas*.[2] Violent territorial struggles between rivalling drug gangs and *milícias,* the armed groups that dominate the majority of these areas (Zaluar and Barcellos 2013), and a militarized police response conducted in the name of the war on drugs have taken their toll. Between 2001 and 2011, the Rio de Janeiro police alone committed 10,000 killings that were justified as self-defense (*autos de resistência*) (Misse et al. 2013), often to cover up arbitrary and summary executions (Farias 2014). These hazardous conditions have severely affected the already precarious education opportunities available in the city's favelas (Ribeiro and Katzman 2008; Penha and Figueiredo 2009; Carapic and Lopes Cardozo 2016).

In 2008, Rio State authorities started a process of pacification in Rio's favelas. Pacifying Police Units (*Unidades de Polícia Pacificadora,* or UPPs) were installed in a growing number of strategically selected favelas. A 24-hour police presence and closer relations with the residents were intended to guarantee the reestablishment of state control over these areas. While leaning heavily on the discourse of community and proximity policing, the UPP project also has been informed by current transnational experiences of counterinsurgency and irregular warfare (Müller 2018), and it could be seen as part of the "new war on the poor" (Gledhill 2015) being fought under the pretext of providing security and ending drug-related violence. Pacification, I will argue, is based on the combined use of (extralegal) force and a "pedagogy of conversion" (Das and Poole 2004b, 9) that is impacting the lives of favela residents and their education spaces, often in paradoxical ways.[3]

As part of the UPP project, state security forces organized an array of formal and nonformal educational activities and events, often geared toward children.[4] José Mariano Beltrame, Rio's public security secretary at the time and the person responsible for rolling out the pacification project, stated that, "when it comes

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2   There is no widely accepted definition of the term "favela." The Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics places favelas in the category of "subnormal agglomerates," irregular urban settlements on land owned by others (public or private), often characterized by a disordered and dense pattern and lacking essential public services (IBGE 2010). In reality, this sociospatial category is extremely varied, representing different land status, socioeconomic, spatial, and historical situations, and housing a heterogenous population (Gonçalves 2013).

3   I use the concept "pedagogy of conversion" (Das and Poole 2004b, 9) to refer to tutelary practices that are part of a civilizing mission to transform subjects deemed dangerous or immoral into "good citizens" (Oliveira 2014), in order to promote a certain social order.

4   Nonformal education takes place outside formal education institutions, but it is institutionalized, intentional, and planned by an education provider (as opposed to informal education); provides an addition or alternative to formal education; and may be of short duration and/or low intensity (ISCED 2011, 81).

to public security, we lost a generation."[5] This is why, as another UPP official explained, "Our focus is children. The youth of the favela *'não tem jeito'* [are hopeless]. They have already been co-opted by the drug trafficking. Those, we already lost. Now we have to invest in the new generation" (Leite and Machado da Silva 2013, 146, translation mine).

Nevertheless, while much has been written about the UPPs (see, e.g., Machado da Silva 2010; Cano 2012; Leite 2012; Carvalho 2013; Machado da Silva and Leite 2014; Menezes 2015), few have analyzed the roles education and children play in the context of pacification.[6] In a broad sense, there is a lack of scholarship on education in urban settings affected by militarized policing and illicit drug markets (see Rodríguez-Gómez and Bermeo 2020; Carapic and Lopes Cardozo 2016). As Carapic and Lopes Cardozo point out, giving attention to the role education plays in efforts to mitigate or prevent urban violence is key to understanding potential pathways for peacebuilding in cities, which is an increasingly salient topic for the field of education in emergencies.

By offering insights into the role education played in the UPP project in Rio de Janeiro, this article makes an empirical contribution to filling this gap in the literature. I specifically ask, How does pacification influence education and what does this mean for local perceptions of police? Based on ethnographic data collected during 30 months of field research in Rio de Janeiro between 2008 and 2015, I analyze the workings of pacification in children's environments, using Vila Cruzeiro, a favela in the city's North Zone, as a case study. My analysis shows that, although intended to gain the allegiance of the targeted population, the education strategies that are part of a broader set of ambiguous police practices that constitute pacification may actually reproduce the violence and distrust they are said to combat.

I begin with a background section on the UPP political context and the role education plays in Rio's favelas. I then provide a conceptual framework centered around pacification, followed by a description of my field site and methodology. I present the research findings in three parts. The first section discusses how drug trafficking and policing have influenced the education endeavor in Vila Cruzeiro. The second examines policing practices with an educational purpose oriented toward children. Finally, I describe how Vila Cruzeiro residents navigated these pacification efforts and highlight the factors that complicated the proximity of police and residents.

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5   Field notes, October 21, 2013, OsteRio event.
6   Some notable exceptions include CECIP (2010), Leite and Machado da Silva (2013), and Ribeiro (2013).

PACIFICATION AND EDUCATION IN RIO'S FAVELAS

Late in the first decade of the 2000s, in light of Brazil's booming economy and upcoming mega-events, including the 2014 World Cup and the 2016 Summer Olympic Games, efforts to position Rio de Janeiro as a global city gave urgency to the need to address the high levels of ostensive violence related to the war on drugs. The UPPs, which started as an ad hoc solution to problems in specific favelas, soon developed into a broader pacification project. While the continuation of violent crackdowns in other parts of the city and neighboring municipalities suggested the continuation of a war on drugs approach, pacification, with its rhetoric of community policing, became Rio's latest showpiece.[7]

Political support for pacification, secured through a political alliance established in 2007 between the Worker's Party (*Partido dos Trabalhadores*) at the federal level and the Brazilian Democratic Movement Party (*Partido do Movimento Democrático Brasileiro*) at the state level and strengthened by the latter's win in Rio's 2009 municipal elections, materialized in the form of personnel and financial resources. This effort was essential to the implementation and expansion of the UPPs and, according to then secretary Beltrame, distinguished it from earlier community-policing initiatives (Menezes 2015, 68; see Misse 2014 for a comparison of the UPPs and earlier projects). The term "community policing," which usually refers to policing strategies involving close collaboration between the police and neighborhood residents (Ungar and Arias 2012, 1), initially was used to describe the UPPs. It served as a powerful discursive resource in winning the support of political and economic forces, and popular opinion. However, when it soon became clear that the UPPs could not live up to the most basic criteria of community policing, the action was retermed "proximity policing," although the two terms have been used interchangeably.[8] Proximity policing is an approach based on foot patrols, the aim being to make police more visible and open to forming new state-society relationships (Willis and Prado 2014, 237).

When the tide started to turn in 2014 as a consequence of disappointing results, the UPPs came under ever more pressure economically, politically, and operationally. UPP founding father Beltrame resigned after the 2016 Summer Olympic Games, leaving the project adrift. In 2018, Rio suffered a large-scale federal security

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7   While pacification is officially a state-level project, it has primarily targeted the municipality of Rio de Janeiro. Only one UPP was installed in another Rio de Janeiro municipality, in 2014, in Complexo da Manguerinha, Baixada Fluminense.

8   See Ungar and Arias (2012) for an assessment of community-oriented policing in Latin America. For a more elaborate discussion of the discursive shift from community policing to proximity policing, see Saborio (2014), Franco (2014), and Menezes (2015).

intervention that put the Brazilian military in charge of the city's policing, which resulted in a serious increase in homicide rates (Grillo 2019, 66). Although the UPPs formally still exist and Wilson Witzel, Rio State's governor since 2019, has alluded to continuing the project, he has in fact taken a heavy-handed approach to security issues. However, at the time of my research, pacification was still an important conjuncture for educational interventions by military police.[9]

For a long time, education has been thought of as a way to achieve social mobility and a better future for and by those living in Rio de Janeiro's favelas (SAGMACS 1960; Paiva 1992; Perlman 2010; Bartlett 2010). While education provides an opportunity to challenge and push the boundaries that construct these places as marginal, the education project at the same time reflects and is disadvantaged by these boundaries (Ribeiro et al. 2010; Ribeiro and Katzman 2008; Christovão and Santos 2010; Paiva and Burgos 2009), which causes disappointment among favela residents (Perlman 2010; Paiva 1992).

Additional problems exist in favelas with high levels of violence which contribute to discrepancies in the quality of the schools and education available across Rio de Janeiro (Gay 2005, 112). In Vila Cruzeiro and similar settings, violence and drug trafficking in the vicinity of the schools affect daily school activities, as well as the individual trajectories of staff and faculty members and of students. They limit education opportunities by interfering with the students and the school routines (Ribeiro 2013, 35-36). This interference can be direct, with the interruption of classes and school shutdowns during violent confrontations between police and drug traffickers, or indirect, through increasing stigmatization and the existence of norms and values that conflict with the education endeavor (Paiva 1992; Perlman 2010). In these areas, education spaces also have become increasingly subject to military interventions by both military police and the armed forces, a process that can be better understood through an examination of the concept of pacification.

CONCEPTUALIZING PACIFICATION: VIOLENCE AND A "PEDAGOGY OF CONVERSION" IN THE URBAN MARGINS

I examine the effects of Rio's UPP education project through the lens of pacification, which has been used as both a practitioner's term and an analytical concept. Agier and Lamotte (2016, 8) argue that moving from a political notion of pacification

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9   Because I only collected data until 2015, this article does not elaborate on the implications of political shifts at the municipal and state level since then, or on the changes the country has suffered since the impeachment of President Dilma Rousseff in 2016.

to a conceptional definition enables us to understand and compare the control of territories and populations ethnographically, and to examine the roles of different actors therein. It also places policing efforts like the UPPs within a broader global context of (post)colonial rule, the use of coercive means to establish order, and the political economy of capitalism (Müller 2018, 223-24), thereby allowing for a critical examination of security interventions in situations of emergency, and of emergency situations. Through my conceptualizing of pacification, which highlights the pedagogy of conversion, I put into perspective the role of formal and nonformal education strategies in the pacification process.

Although the term "pacification" has a long history that originates in times of colonial warfare (Neocleous 2011), it has only more recently been reappropriated as a theoretical concept. Scholars dedicated to developing a critical pacification theory (Neocleous, Rigakos, and Wall 2013; Neocleous 2014; Wall, Saberi, and Jackson 2016a; Rigakos 2016; Kienscherf 2016) draw attention to both the destructive and the productive qualities of pacification and highlight the role security entrepreneurs play in the fabrication of capitalist relations (Neocleous et al. 2013, 4) through a "war for accumulation" that "involves the production of . . . conditions for capitalist accumulation" (Wall, Saberi, and Jackson 2016b, 8). Building on this framework, others (Das and Poole 2004a; Oliveira 2014; Agier and Lamotte 2016) have propagated an anthropology of pacification that is dedicated to the ethnographic study of pacification processes, including how they affect targeted populations and the orders they produce in the urban margins.

For the purpose of this paper and drawing from several authors (Oliveira 2014; Das and Poole 2004b; Müller 2018; Neocleous et al. 2013), I define pacification as both a destructive and a productive control device for managing specific territories and populations through selectively applied force, and a "pedagogy of conversion" (Das and Poole 2004b, 9) for the construction of a certain social order. The creation of a (potentially) dangerous other or a "radical otherness" it simultaneously seeks to destroy is an essential aspect of pacification (Agier and Lamotte 2016). Such processes of othering lead to and are reinforced by the construction of margins, which are sites seen as "natural containers for people considered insufficiently socialized into the law . . . where the state is constantly refounding its modes of order and lawmaking" (Das and Poole 2004b, 8-9). In the margins of the state, the destruction of opposition or an enemy insurgency through military force goes hand-in-hand with the reconstruction of social order through a broad and far-reaching state intervention (Neocleous et al. 2013, 1-2), often in the form of

police actions, that revolves around promises of social and economic integration and is aimed at clearing the social environment of contamination by the enemy (Agier and Lamotte 2016, 23) through a pedagogy of conversion.

While demonstrating the ambiguous nature of pacification, I focus primarily on state pedagogical practices. The pedagogy of conversion, for example, constitutes tutelary practices that are part of a civilizing mission to transform subjects deemed dangerous or immoral into "good citizens" (Oliveira 2014). Education is an important tool in this process, as it is a space in which various sets of values and norms encounter each other and are constructed and contested. At the core of a tutelary regime, however, is the assignment of a group in power to speak and act on behalf of the other (Oliveira 2014, 144-46). It annuls any action or public expression of the subordinate, and plans are developed without the active participation of those concerned. Without a prescribed mode of action, the entitled agent has the liberty to choose how to act, as long as he guarantees the operationalization of the tutelary condition. Modes of action in the name of pacification are, thus, situational and dynamic, depending on a combination of different factors and characteristics that decide how one should be treated, who is worth saving, and whose life matters (Sanjurjo and Feltran 2015). These categorizations often reflect, are mediated by, and reinforce sets of assumptions and societal divisions along the lines of race, class, gender, and age (Neocleous 2011, 202-3; Kienscherf 2016).

Still, while marginal populations "are pathologized through various kinds of power/knowledge practices, they do not submit to these conditions passively" (Das and Poole 2004b, 19). In contrast to what dominant representations of marginalized populations suggest, empirical evidence shows their plurality and connectedness though intensive relations with social domains, such as family, work, religion, law, and social protection, and an effective relationship with the state (Perlman 1976; Goldstein 2003; Feltran 2011; Cabanes et al. 2011; Cunha and Feltran 2013). Hence, while looking at how forms of control as security practices reach into the everyday life of citizens (Neocleous 2011, 192) and at the human consequences of the securitization of social issues (Gledhill 2015), how people perceive, respond to, and influence these practices should also be addressed. Showing the empirical plurality in these areas counters the construction of bipolarities that the state's presence in the urban margins has promoted (Feltran 2013, 11).

In the Brazilian context, Oliveira (2014) argues that pacification has been a central aspect of nation-building—through a mechanism of differentiation—for five centuries, from colonial history to republican Brazil. Historically, this combination of violent and tutelary practices was directed at controlling and "civilizing" indigenous populations. More recently, the term "pacification" and its logic were appropriated to urban areas and directed at specific segments of the urban population deemed dangerous (Oliveira 2014; Leite 2015), a development that can be linked to Brazil's recent cycle of economic development (Feltran 2011, 2013). The war on drugs has been important in this process because it justifies the pacification of certain social groups and specific zones seen as dangerous and ungovernable (Neocleous 2011, 202-3). The UPP project is exemplary in this regard: it is legitimized through and reinforces the idea of favelas as marginal spaces of poverty and criminality, where the destruction of enemies and favela culture should be accompanied by the construction of a new social order. Favela pacification can therefore be understood as a form of state-making in the urban margins. Looking beyond distrust and the absence of the state through an ethnographic examination of the influence of pacification on education reveals how the contradictory, selective, and intermittent nature of law enforcement instigates and sustains violence and insecurity among marginal urban populations (Auyero, de Lada, and Berti 2014, 18).

CHALLENGES OF ETHNOGRAPHIC RESEARCH IN SITUATIONS OF URBAN VIOLENCE

Research Site

Vila Cruzeiro, the primary research site of this study, is a favela in Rio's industrial North Zone that is central to the city's war on drugs and pacification efforts. Long a stronghold of Comando Vermelho, one of Rio's major drug factions, the favela was invaded by state security forces in November 2010 and occupied by the Pacification Force (*Força de Pacificação*), which consists predominantly of elements of the Brazilian military. A UPP, consisting of specially trained pacification police, replaced the Pacification Force in August 2012. The drug traffickers who remained in the favela initially scaled back their activities and started operating in more covert ways, but over time the local drug traffic gradually regained its strength. This article situates the role of education within this context of a struggle for order and control.

Research Methodology

Research Design and Data Collection

In this article, I present a qualitative ethnographic case study of the mechanisms of pacification and their influence on education in Rio's favelas, with a particular focus on the perspectives of adults living and working in Vila Cruzeiro at the time of my research. I offer an in-depth analysis of how these residents were affected by pacification through education. The often difficult conditions I encountered in the field called for a flexible and integrative methodology (Kovats-Bernat 2002, 210), thus I used a combination of techniques and relied heavily on informal methods of data collection. I paid particular attention throughout to ensuring the safety and confidentiality of the research participants, and my own safety.[10] I was introduced to Vila Cruzeiro and members of its residents' association by a locally operating nongovernmental organization, which also informed the local drug traffickers about my intentions. I worked through existing networks and trusted individuals to select the research participants. I draw from data I collected during approximately 30 months of field research between 2008 and 2015. Although the data used in this paper span a seven-year period, I did not originally design a longitudinal study. This study is the combined product of my master's research project conducted in Vila Cruzeiro (Koenders 2008) before the existence of the UPPs and my doctoral project on pacification, which I began in 2011. Between 2013 and 2014 specifically I studied the effects of pacification efforts on education.

The participants in this study are adults, parents, school officials, grassroots leaders, and others between the ages of 20 and 65 who lived and/or worked in Vila Cruzeiro at the time of the research and who, to my knowledge, were not directly involved in the illicit drug trade. I also included a few members of the military forces and the military police in this study. The part of my research related directly to formal education was focused on one school in particular, whose principal I met at a local meeting. Because women are overrepresented in children's environments in Vila Cruzeiro as primary caretakers and school officials, the majority of my research participants were female. This is also a result of my choice to use snowball sampling and, as a woman, it was more viable to get informal access to women (see Baird 2019 for a reflection on gendered access).

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10   To ensure anonymity, I choose not to disclose the names of my research participants or specify the names of the specific organizations and institutions included in this research. For further reading about ethnographic research in (potentially) dangerous settings, I suggest Goldstein (2014), Felbab-Brown (2014), Baird (2019), and NORRAG (2019).

I used a variety of data-collection techniques, most importantly informal conversations, participant observation, interviews, and document analysis. Participant observation and informal conversations proved invaluable in this precarious context, as people tended to be more open in informal settings. I participated in people's daily routines, took part in community meetings and events, and frequented education domains where the police organized nonformal and formal educational activities, such as daycare facilities, social projects, and schools. All the while I observed and recorded interactions between members of the military and police forces and residents, and the continuities and changes in education brought about by pacification. I conducted approximately 40 open, in-depth interviews, which varied in length from 30 minutes to 3 hours.[11] The interviews covered an array of topics geared toward the selected participants: the living and/or working conditions in Vila Cruzeiro; people's perceptions of changes and continuities relative to pacification; and the effects these had on their lives in general and on education in particular. In addition to the primary data, I analyzed various media and documents, including newspaper articles, Facebook posts, student essays, and, importantly, a booklet published by the Rio State Department of Security that was distributed at schools in UPP favelas. I examined the booklet in order to understand more fully how the police were employing educational material in their pacification efforts.

Data Analysis and Limitations

I wrote field notes and memoranda during the course of the research, including my observations and impressions, informal conversations, and my reflections on particular observations, encounters, and interviews. I recorded interviews only with participants' informed consent and when no added security risk or effect on participants' openness and truthfulness was to be expected. For the unrecorded interviews, I composed a precise recollection of the interview based on my notes. I entered all the data into computer files and coded and analyzed these using NVivo, a qualitative analysis software. Using an array of qualitative research methods facilitated triangulation of the data and contributed to a more accurate understanding of the direct and collateral effects pacification efforts had on education.

Nevertheless, matters of safety, feasibility, and ethics limited this study in several ways. Vila Cruzeiro residents were always hesitant and sometimes reluctant to discuss topics related to violence and the armed actors operating locally, as they feared

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11   I used topic lists to guide these interviews, aiming for an in-depth exploration of these topics while giving participants the opportunity to raise issues they deemed important, which in turn helped me to refine the topic lists I worked with.

being punished for breaking the drug traffickers' "law of silence" (Koenders 2008). This explains my reliance on informal methods and the limited number of formal interviews I was able to conduct, despite the long period of fieldwork. Although I consider this environment of silence and distrust important information in itself, it might have given me a distorted representation of participants' perspectives. I minimized this bias through triangulation and by building rapport and trust with the participants through my engagement in local activities.

Building the strong interpersonal relationships essential to ethnographic research involves walking a moral tightrope (Baird 2019). I avoided direct contact with people actively involved in the drug trade because involvement with them would have limited my access to other residents. I organized interviews with members of the military and police forces outside Vila Cruzeiro and did not attend meetings organized by the local UPP. Had I openly associated with the police, I could have been taken for a snitch or an undercover cop, which would have put me at personal risk. Also, given the ethical implications and the risk of prejudicing already vulnerable groups such as children and youth, directly including children was beyond the scope of this research (see, e.g., Christensen 2004; Schelbe et al. 2014; NORRAG 2019). So, while acknowledging the importance of children's voices, this study only glimpses young people's perspectives through "proxies," most importantly their parents and teachers. Thus, this study does not paint a full picture of the wide variety of experiences, perceptions, and responses found in the context of pacification. I encourage other researchers to develop comprehensive projects on education in settings of urban violence that address these gaps and build on this and other relevant studies. With the limitations of my research in mind, I now turn to the empirical findings on pacification and education in Vila Cruzeiro.

PACIFICATION AND EDUCATION IN VILA CRUZEIRO

Vila Cruzeiro's population has access to a number of schools, but only one, which provides education up to the sixth grade, is located in the heart of the favela. Two other primary schools are situated next to each other—one for the lower grades, the other for the higher grades—just outside a main entrance to Vila Cruzeiro. Another school in the vicinity also offers higher primary education. There also are two Integrated Centers for Public Education (*Centros Integrados de Educação Pública,* or CIEPs) nearby.[12] Frequent violent confrontations between

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12   CIEPs originated with an initiative by Rio State governor Leonel Brizola, in office from 1983-1987 and from 1991-1994, who proposed comprehensive full-time education, but most units are now administered at the municipal level and provide only part-time education.

drug traffickers and the police had a direct impact on the lives of students and teachers at schools in the area and often caused them to shut down, sometimes for a few hours, sometimes for a few days, and occasionally for months, which seriously disrupted school routines and undermined the children's learning.[13] When Vila Cruzeiro schools had to close their doors for security reasons, a nearby CIEP would sometimes serve as an operational base. This disruption affected the mobility of teachers and students, who often were not able to go to or home from school, or to do so only at great personal risk. Teaching and learning under such trying circumstances reduced the schools' ability to attract and keep students, teachers, and other staff (Ribeiro 2013, 28; Leeds 2007, 25-26).

While the prevalence of violence and insecurity further prejudiced the already fragile education endeavor in Rio's favelas, it added to its importance at the same time. Schools are widely seen as safe spaces in both physical and social terms, even though many parents prefer to keep their children at home during a police operation or shootout, and there are concerns about aggression and bad influences in schools (Koenders 2008). Education is associated with the "righteous life" or the right track, as opposed to the "iniquitous life" associated with street life and defiant behavior (Hecht 1998). Because of this respect for education among most Vila Cruzeiro residents, drug traffickers gained legitimacy by providing "protection" to local schools. One school official expressed in an interview the common sentiment that, "at the time [the] *bandidos* [were in charge] we never had things stolen, we never had spray-painted walls, because that wasn't allowed." Any person who disrespected a school was in serious trouble, and thieves were forced to return any goods they had stolen. This manner of protection contrasted with the perceived disrespect shown by state security forces, as in this incident described by the same school official, which happened before the start of pacification:[14]

> One thing that stuck in school history and that shocked the community [is that] the one time the school was invaded, it was invaded by the police. With the *caveirão* they knocked down the gate, knocked down the door, and went to the roof to watch the bandidos.[15]

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13   Based on personal observations, social media analysis, newspaper articles, and interviews with parents and school officials.

14   Interview with a school official, October 10, 2013

15   A caveirão is an armored vehicle used by the military police, primarily during police invasions of favelas. I conducted the interviews in Portuguese; all translations are mine.

The occupation by state security forces initially reduced the number of armed confrontations and, thus, the mistrust teachers and students felt toward local schools. Also, children of drug traffickers, who previously would sometimes flee the favela during large-scale police operations, no longer had to move with their parents to other neighborhoods. Dropout rates declined, and in the years after the occupation the number of students in the school I studied climbed from 750 to 850. Moreover, the occupation facilitated the formation of a stable group of well-trained and motivated teachers.[16] However, shootouts between police and drug traffickers continued to take place and increased in frequency over time, which directly affected school life. Schools once again were closed and classes suspended numerous times, and teachers could organize only limited activities.[17]

Investment in infrastructure, education, and additional services such as garbage collection, judicial assistance, and regularization of electricity supply, however limited, accompanied the pacification process. Schools of Tomorrow (*Escolas do Amanhã*), a federal government program, was implemented almost in parallel to the UPPs in the most vulnerable areas of the city. Vila Cruzeiro's schools benefitted from this program, which provided extra investment and attention. Nonetheless, one school principal noted that "there are not enough teachers, so the priority is to resolve that. And construction projects. From 2009 onwards, we have received more attention, but we need more."[18] Although reform of the education system should have facilitated these improvements, many public schools—including those in and near Vila Cruzeiro—were in session only part of the day, and children attended school either in the morning or the afternoon.

Pacification temporarily reduced the number of shootouts, which had a direct effect on the frequency of classes and the availability of teachers. The calmer environment around the schools facilitated the continuity of learning and teaching, while the pause in ostensive drug trafficking and the exposure to other role models and opportunities seemed to broaden students' views of the future.[19] These improvements in education brought about by pacification—although temporary, limited, and to some degree contradicted by the lived experiences of favela residents—were used in the state discourse and by major media outlets to legitimize and gain popular support for the project. The UPP website, for example, featured a story about the positive impact pacification had on students' grades

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16   Interview with a school official, October 10, 2013.

17   Field notes, October 2013.

18   Interview, October 2013.

19   Group interview, March 2013.

and performance in Vila Cruzeiro's schools (UPP-RJ 2013). Making children the center of attention was a strategy to win popular support for pacification and gain favela residents' allegiance.

Educational Policing in Children's Environments

Educational police practices geared toward children were an important tool the UPPs used to develop a bond with favela residents and a part of the broader pedagogy of conversion integral to their pacification efforts. The first commander of the UPPs, Robson Rodrigues da Silva, stated that pacification "is a medium- and long-term job. A job that involves the rapprochement and transformation of these children" (*O Globo* 2010). To this end, the UPP organized a wide variety of formal and nonformal educational activities for children, such as jiu-jitsu and soccer practice, theater classes, computer classes, and day trips. At a community network meeting in Vila Cruzeiro, a P-5, or social policeman, explained to everyone present that "one of our primary missions is to humanize the military police. With pacification we have a series of ways to [replace] the drug trafficking, to show the community that we are part of the same society, [and that they can live in a different way]."[20] Some police study participants explicitly acknowledged that, to achieve rapprochement, they had to deliver certain services because "that is what the drug dealers used to do."[21] In addition to the various educational activities, the UPP also threw Christmas parties, distributed toys, and participated in the celebration of Children's Day. Most of the UPP children's activities were for the community at large and were held in public places or near the base of the UPP.

Other activities focused specifically on the schools. Although the police did not have a daily presence in the school I studied or close relations with its teachers, the UPP did develop formal educational activities. The P-5s usually organized these activities, which included lectures, day trips, essay contests, and lectures about drugs and citizenship, in consultation with local schools.[22] Classes dealt with issues such as drugs and how the children can protect themselves from the dangers of the street, and often involved "a graduation with a diploma and everything."[23] One mother whose child was enrolled in a local primary school, explained that "[the police officers of the UPP] went into each classroom to talk

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20   The P-5 is generally responsible for public relations, including the organization and promotion of one-time public events and regular social activities. Field notes, April 4, 2013.

21   Field notes, 2013.

22   Interview, October 2013.

23   Addressing drugs was part of the Drug Abuse Resistance Education Program (*Programa Educacional de Resistência às Drogas*). Interview with a school official, October 10, 2013.

with [the students], to explain what was happening so that they wouldn't be scared of the UPP, [explaining] that they are here to help the students . . . to protect all of them."[24] Children had the chance to ask questions anonymously of the police involved in the program, who came to the schools every week for three months. They would ask things like, "Have you ever smoked pot?" or "Did you ever hit your wife?" As a school secretary commented, "I think they are trying to recover their image of the police, to create a new image other than the one they had."[25] The essay contests addressed themes such as how students viewed the role of the police. These programs were usually offered at schools in all UPP favelas, but it was up to each school principal to decide if they would be implemented.

"UPP—The Conquest of Peace"

The booklet "UPP—The Conquest of Peace," written and illustrated by Ziraldo (2012), creator of the classic children's book and character *O Menino Maluquinho* (*The Nutty Boy*), is an example of increased police involvement in schools. Developed by the Rio State Department of Security, it explains the concept of citizenship, shows the importance of rights and the obligations of each person in society, and addresses the relationship between favela residents and police. The booklet was distributed among children and schools in UPP favelas, including Vila Cruzeiro, where teachers discussed it in their classes. The students produced illustrations and texts about peace as a related project and each student took a copy of the booklet home.[26]

This booklet can be seen as an instrumental part of the pedagogy of conversion. It served as a resource in the discursive dispute between state security forces and drug gangs, which gained importance as physical confrontations between the two initially diminished. The booklet presents the UPP project as an effort to end to the codes, norms, and values passed on by the drug traffickers, and to introduce a culture of rights and obligations intended to turn excluded favela residents into civilized citizens. "Soon will end for once and for all the fear, insecurity, distrust, war, false friends and false heroes," it states, and on the next page it shows children walking by walls covered with graffiti depicting men with guns.

The booklet also made an appeal to the improvements in education and school attendance pacification could bring: "We can now go to school in PEACE," it says above a UPP sign at which a boy looks up happily (Figure 1). It continues, "Now
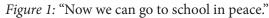
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24   Group interview, March 13, 2013.

25   Informal conversation with a school secretary, field notes, October 30, 2013.

26   Field notes, March 2014.

we can play, dance, jump, enjoy ourselves, like children who are really safe, . . . which . . . make father, and mother very happy." A two-page drawing shows a happy-looking father, mother, and grandmother with a policeman, who has his arm casually around an elderly woman's shoulders (Figure 2). This reveals the attempt to gain sympathy among adults through the implied improvement of children's living conditions.

Figure 1: "Now we can go to school in peace."

Source: Ziraldo (2012)

Figure 2: "Now we can play, dance, jump, enjoy ourselves, like children who are really safe, which make father, and mother very happy."

Source: Ziraldo (2012)

The booklet plays directly on the idea of the police as saviors: "Now we can count on real friends . . . They were the first to arrive." This is followed by an illustration showing two police officers with a man and a woman, with a caption: "Behind them will come education, health, further cleaning, more justice, more comfort and more security." This illustrates the militarized approach toward social reconstruction in these territories, as it is the military police who will pave the way for other public services that will add to the construction of a "better life." Another image, showing a policeman, carries the caption, "Now we will get a RIO

OF PEACE." "All together for a 'united city,'" the policeman exclaims, while the boy in the next picture states contentedly, "I am a citizen." The transformation is complete.

The UPP, the booklet suggests, will lead the favela population to a better life by destroying existing norms and practices and facilitating new forms of coexistence and social and economic integration. It demonstrates that the state, through pacification, "reasserts its being *as a state* by insisting on itself as *the* political mechanism for the fabrication of social order" (Neocleous 2011, 203) in its margins. This rationale neglects the lived reality in the favelas and assumes that favela residents are isolated from social life and politics. Therefore, it is important to look at the favela residents' morality, values, and conceptions (Feltran 2013) and the ways they perceive and respond to pacification.

Navigating Police Encounters in Education Domains

In this section, I address how people navigate police encounters in the context of pacification, and how this is informed by their perceptions and experiences relative to armed actors in general and educational police practices in particular. A military police officer, puzzled about the lack of local interest in nonformal education activities organized by the UPP, complained that "the UPP has a holiday program, but especially in Vila Cruzeiro, the children do not participate . . . There are soccer clinics, for example, . . . but when you go there you'll see only about 4, maybe 5 children."[27] He suggested that parents did not value these activities, but a closer look at people's motives reveals a much more complex reality. People's reluctance to join in such activities reflects the insecurity caused by the historically constructed lack of trust in and fear of police, their disbelief that the police have come to stay, the continuation of drug trafficking, contradictory police behavior, and the favela population's lack of participation and inclusion in the development and execution of the project.

Right after the occupation of Vila Cruzeiro in late 2010, pacification was a much-discussed subject among students, who highlighted the discrepancy between the way mainstream media reported on the subject and the way they experienced things. They also addressed the subject in the classroom, as one school official recalls:

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27   Field notes, January 2014.

> There was a teacher who brought the newspaper headlines . . .
> for them to discuss those and give their opinion, an insider's
> perspective . . . [it was all the opposite from the reports] in the
> newspapers . . . the police [were said to] save that space, and [the
> student] had the *bandidos* as their saviors . . . Until that moment
> that wasn't the police. So they contested the images the media
> passed on. You should have seen the drawings of that time; it
> was police killing, police beating.[28]

After a while, however, as a school official explained to me in October 2013, pacification as a topic of conversation among students subsided, which hints at the denial of the UPP presence and the lack of rapprochement.[29] It was especially the older kids and parents who were reluctant to interact with police, as she explained:

> Those in fifth and sixth grade, who still lived through that time
> [of the drug trafficking], are more afraid. Some of them did not
> want to attend the course given by a police officer.

Parents were also hesitant and afraid of this rapprochement. When a meeting was organized between caretakers and the police, only four mothers showed up. Parents had to authorize their children to participate in the police class, and there were mothers who did not sign:

> [A mother] came here [and said], "I won't allow it. I even think
> it's an important subject, but I don't want it." So they still fear
> that contact, I don't see them turning to the police to resolve
> things yet.[30]

The process of rapprochement was complex, messy, and often contradictory. The youngest kids were generally the most receptive, which explains why the police started with children in their endeavor to win loyalty from favela residents. According to a school official, "children are much easier . . . When a police officer comes here . . . there are children who shake hands, approaching [the police], [saying] 'I also want to become a policeman.' That's something that didn't happen before."[31] A hesitant approximation between police and the youngest kids seemed

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28   Interview, October 2013.
29   Interview with a school official, October 2013.
30   Interview, October 2013.
31   Interview, October 2013.

to take place, something that was also expressed by a few women, all mothers, one working as a volunteer at a local school:

> The children started by outright ignoring them . . . the police tried to play with them, but the children didn't accept it. Maybe because of the parents [they were] scared, but now, after a while . . . they are much closer . . . Before they didn't even play on the square of the UPP post. Now they . . . hang out there . . . They stay until . . . midnight . . . with their parents . . . [so these] lectures in school help.[32]

However, the historically constructed distrust of police has been passed on to the youngest children: "The little one [is] also terrified . . . [When she sees] the police, she starts shaking. I think it's because she hears others talking about them, sees things on TV, and she is afraid."[33] One participant claimed that the distrust was also fostered by continuing episodes of arbitrary police behavior:

> Many residents are afraid because when they started to come in here, in Vila Cruzeiro, they invaded the houses . . . looking for people. I thought [they did] this the wrong way . . . during the occupation this happened. Now they stopped with that . . . kind of, because there are still some places, some streets and alleys, where they still go in. But down here [the bottom part of the community] they stopped a bit. But it used to be very difficult . . . You are in your house, at ease, and then some police knock on your door. And if you don't open they will break down the door to get in.

Another participant concurred: "The children become terrified . . . of the police. They also know this is wrong."

These episodes contrast with the image of the "social policeman" (Teixeira 2015) that the UPP has propagated and disclose the double moral within the police force. A UPP police officer said about his new commander, who previously worked for the Special Police Operations Battalion (*Batalhão de Operações Policiais Especiais*), "He doesn't have the right mindset. He only knows how to invade favelas." With this change of command, the rules also changed: "The guy who used to give jiu-

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32   Group interview, March 2013.
33   Interview, September 2013.

jitsu classes . . . that is no longer being seen as part of the job . . . so he has to do his normal hours and in addition he still has to give those trainings. That's impossible. Or imagine that there is an incident during a class, and you have to take part in the action."[34]

The paradoxical repertoires of police behavior foster further mistrust and reluctance among residents and complicate the rapprochement between the two: "In December, the UPP handed out toys to the children of the community, but a few week(s) later that same police beat up the father of one of those children."[35] This is what makes people skeptical of the police intentions and feeds distrust of them among favela residents. Moreover, some students who attended lectures given by UPP police at school were subsequently questioned and searched in the streets, as one mother described:

> The other day my [11-year-old] son was walking in the street wearing a necklace that I had bought for him from a street vendor. [A policeman] stopped my son, he was alone, asked if it was a golden [necklace], who had given it to him . . . my son was like "No, my mom bought it for me." So he came home and said, "Mom, the police stopped me, asking questions . . ." It scared him. It's these small things that terrify the children.[36]

These incidents illustrate the fact that different types of police behavior occur, depending on the context and on the particular characteristics of a police action target. The closer children get to adolescence, for example, the more likely it is they will be seen as suspects warranting repressive treatment.

CONCLUSION

In this article, I have discussed the role of education in pacification efforts directed at areas in the urban margins that are affected by drug-related and police violence. Going beyond a political notion of pacification, I approached pacification as a device for controlling marginal populations through selectively applied force and a pedagogy of conversion aimed at fabricating a new social order. Starting in 2008, Rio State authorities installed UPPs to regain control over favelas dominated by drug-trafficking groups. The UPPs, which provided a permanent

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34   Informal conversation, field notes, April 4, 2013.

35   Informal conversation, field notes, February 2013.

36   Interview, March 2013.

police presence, also pursued a closer relationship between the police and favela residents. Through an ethnographic case study of Vila Cruzeiro, I examined how pacification influenced education and how this affected local perceptions of police.

My findings reveal that the state relies on pacification efforts to gain legitimacy in areas where the level of distrust is high. In the state's pursuit of a pedagogy of conversion, education, as a space in which values and norms are constructed and contested, proved to be a particularly important sphere of police intervention. At the same time, my study indicates that these education strategies, even though aimed at mitigating violence and gaining the loyalty of the targeted population, may in fact reproduce the violence and distrust they are supposed to combat. While discursively community-based policing was meant to repair state-society relations, in practice these educational practices continued to exist alongside more violent and repressive forms of policing, both within UPP favelas and in the city at large. This lack of structural reform, the tutelary nature of educational practices in the context of pacification, and the top-down nature of the project frustrated police-resident relationships, which explains the difficulty the police had in gaining widespread support among residents.

While the collapse of pacification in recent years has given way to full-out heavy-handed policing under Rio's current governor, this does not mean the end of the militarization of education in Brazil. On the contrary, the education policy of the Bolsonaro government is incentivizing the construction of civic-military schools, which, even though they are created by state and municipal authorities, receive specific financial support from the ministry of education.[37] Although it is beyond the scope of this article to discuss the implications of this political conjuncture, my study does point at the counterproductive effects of police involvement in schools and signals the grave consequences such policy measures may have for education and security conditions.

Building on existing theories of pacification, this empirical study contributes to the development of an anthropology of pacification by deepening understanding of the role of formal and nonformal education strategies in policing of the urban margins. Pacification, I argue, can be understood as a civilizing mission through paradoxical police practices directed at destroying enemy elements and at transforming, through education, those deemed worthy. In this sense, education is a fundamental tool in coercive order-making by the state, through which the state reasserts itself as the primary mechanism for the construction of social

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37   See the Presidential Decree at http://escolacivicomilitar.mec.gov.br/, accessed on March 2, 2020. For an analysis of this civic-military school model, see Carneiro and Sant'Anna (2018).

order. Efforts to control segments of the population considered dangerous through educational police interventions can also been seen as an attempt to integrate these people economically as part of a larger project of capitalist accumulation. My research, however, shows that people in the urban margins are targeted and affected by such policies in varied ways and that many resist the patronizing, hierarchical, and authoritarian nature of pacification and in the process construct alternative urban orders.

By highlighting the role of the pedagogic state in the war on drugs, in particular the educational practices of military police in the context of pacification, I also demonstrate that linking the ethnographic study of the urban margins with the field of education in emergencies can be mutually beneficial. Future studies should look critically at how and to what end educational practices are undertaken in situations of urban violence, how they are applied—selectively negotiated by characteristics such as age, locality, gender, race, and class—and how such governance practices are lived, acted on, and resisted by different segments of the population. When it comes to designing and grasping the importance of adequate education and policing, Vila Cruzeiro's residents and others who live precariously have a lot to teach us.

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