RATIONALLY IRRATIONAL: APPLYING THE RATIONAL ACTOR MODEL TO RIO DE JANEIRO'S POLICE-GANG CONFLICT

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Abstract

Both gangs and police in Rio de Janeiro seemingly operate irrationally in an extended conflict, as it is highly unlikely that the state will make drug dealing legal, and it is also unlikely that gangs would be able to destroy the police through armed force. This article attempts to determine why favela gangs and police became and are still engaged in a conflict with what some see as an inevitable outcome, using the rational actor model to determine the motivations and strategies of each side. This article finds that because gangs understand their importance to Rio's society and depend on the income they receive through drug dealing, they know that the conflict will not result in the gang's total destruction and are willing to challenge the government's authority. On the other hand, although Rio de Janeiro has the power to completely destroy gangs in the state's favelas, it does not seek to do so; the government only seeks to decrease violence within favelas that fit within the wealthy citizens' imaginary of what the city of Rio de Janeiro is.

Introduction

In 2014, 582 people in the state of Rio de Janeiro were killed by the military police ("Em 2015, 571 pessoas foram mortas em operações policiais em São Paulo" 2015). Rio's long-lasting and far-reaching conflict emerged as violent drug-dealing gangs in the 1980s began to claim territorial zones within favelas, posing a risk to those who entered and lived in the favela and resulting in police retaliation against gangs (Morro dos Prazeres 2015). In recent years, the conflict has become more formally institutionalized through the Pacifying Police Units (UPP) Pacification program, in which the police developed

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targeted combat strategies to reclaim favelas from the gangs. Upon further consideration, it seems irrational that both gangs and police would engage in this conflict, as there is no realistic scenario in which favela gangs will defeat the state. Nor will the state legalize drug dealing. Furthermore, the state likely has enough resources to destroy favela gangs entirely, which would bring an immediate end to the conflict; however, it chooses not to do so. Therefore, this article attempts to determine why favela gangs and police became and are still engaged in a conflict that could have already ended if the state had mobilized all of its resources.

I find that because gangs understand their importance to Rio's civil society and depend on the income they receive through drug dealing, they realize that they cannot be totally destroyed and are willing to challenge the government's authority. On the other hand, although Rio de Janeiro has the power to completely destroy gangs in the state's favelas, it does not seek to. The government only seeks to decrease violence within favelas that are a part of the wealthy citizens' imaginary of the city. Furthermore, the destruction of gangs would actually be detrimental to the state, as it would lose a great number of citizenship services that are currently provided by gangs to those who live in favelas. Therefore, although this conflict will likely never be won by favela gangs, it is more preferable for both sides to fight than to not.

This topic is important to study because two actors will always rationally enter into a conflict given the information they have and their expected outcomes; therefore, in this seemingly irrational conflict, we must analyze how each side arrived at the conclusion to participate rather than concede. Perhaps after understanding the social and psychological factors at play in this conflict, we will be able to better understand how to take steps toward its resolution. Furthermore, analysis of this conflict could be telling of similar gang and police conflict around the world, particularly in the rest of Brazil and in Latin America. Arriving at peace in these situations can be made easier by total understanding of the causes of the conflict.

Literature Review

Throughout my research of the existing literature, I identified two schools of thought. The first claims that historical and systematic factors are the most important to explain the phenomenon of the gang-police conflict in Rio de Janeiro. The second claims that modern societal factors are stronger determinants of this conflict. I take a combination of their assumptions to suggest that the long-term historical/institutional assumptions create the modern societal conditions for gang-police conflict.

The first group of scholars I identified in my research was those who identify the historical and systematic factors that have contributed to favela gang formation and success. James Holston (2008) goes into depth about how citizenship is constructed in Brazil in several different sectors, including agriculture, immigration, and the favela. He points out that vulnerable Brazilians are often forced to assert their citizenship rights, as these rights are not always protected by the state. Gang members lead this fight for citizenship, both in the communist ideals they espouse (like in the case of Comando Vermelho) and the discourse of defending civil rights within the favela that they mobilize. Brodwyn Fischer (2008) also explains how economic poverty has become synonymous with a poverty of rights in Brazil, since the movement of modern citizenship in the mid-twentieth century excluded poor Brazilians, limiting their rights such that their citizenship was similar to that of illegal immigrants. Furthermore, Fernando Fernandes claims that favela gang members "suffer a triple stigma" due to their ethnicity, age and gender, and residence (2013, 220). He says that violence could potentially be reduced if the state stopped stigmatizing this population and instead adopted a more inclusive strategy to empower these youth.

The second school of thought I identified were those who identified the specific modern societal conditions that have allowed for gang success. John Hagedorn (1999) identifies why some gangs become institutionalized, and points to coordination within prisons, the easy trade of cocaine, and racial identification as key factors to the institutionalization of Rio gangs. Hagedorn claims that this is a global phenomenon within gangs that is the result of the polarization of wealth and inequality. Furthermore, M. J. Wolff (2015) claims that the social and political conditions in Rio de Janeiro have created a specifically vulnerable climate with weak governability that leads favela residents to align with drug gangs rather than the state. Wolff points out that a lack of a governmental presence in the Rio favelas, as well as extremely violent police tactics, make favela residents more sympathetic to local gangs than to the auspices of the state, which in turn makes gangs more powerful. Enrique Arias and Corinne Rodrigues also explain that gangs respond to governmental neglect by offering a "myth of personal security" (2006, 1) within the favela through governing and preventing crime within it. Enrique Arias (2006) also points out that, due to corruption within the government, favela gangs have significant ties to political and legal institutions that provide them protection and perpetuate their existence.

These two schools of thought help us to understand that historical/ institutional and societal factors that allow gangs to operate are in constant

interaction with each other. This article is written with the understanding that favela gangs are both victims of a system that has historically oppressed their communities, as well as manipulative of this environment to achieve their goals. As such, gangs find power in the disempowerment that affects their communities. These scholars provide a context for me to understand how gangs operate; the purpose of this article, then, is to analyze why both gangs and the state have continued to engage in a conflict and why they choose to do so in the specific way that they do.

Theoretical Framework

Building off of the contributions of these authors, I use the rational actor model (RAM) to understand the motivations behind each side's engagement in this conflict. Graham T. Allison's rational actor model does not seek to identify the outcome of a conflict, but the process, explaining why some states become involved in conflicts that seem irrational (Levy and Thompson 2011, 163). This theory focuses on goals, strategies, estimation of consequences and uncertainty to understand how and why an actor becomes involved in conflict (Allison and Zelikow 1999, 18). RAM assumes that no actor is irrational, but makes the best choices it can with the information available. To perform this kind of analysis, it is necessary to determine the motivations and strategies of the Rio de Janeiro government and favela gangs.

Mary Kaldor's (1999) theory of New Wars is also crucial to my analysis, as favela gangs are non-traditional actors of war and fulfill the new methods of combat which Kaldor describes. Kaldor differentiates between "old" and "new" wars, claiming that modern wars are not based off of the same logics and strategies that they previously were. Kaldor explains that new wars are heavily based on "labels [...] relat[ing] to an idealized nostalgic representation of the past," and that they result from economic decline and political corruption (1999, 5-7). Furthermore, new wars are fought differently than old wars, in that they primarily involve civilians rather than soldiers, who do not follow established rules of engagement or use uniforms (1999, 8).

Therefore, Kaldor's theory asserts that new wars are a product of identity politics that can result from economic or political oppression. In analyzing the conflict between the Rio government and favela gangs, we must understand it not as a traditional war, but a new one that does not abide by official rules and is sparked by inequality. The poverty and lack of access to rights that have existed in favelas since their conception has led to the identity-based gangs the state must now fight to preserve a monopoly of violence.

Methodology

Throughout my research, I used sources from databases in order to determine the motivations and strategies of both actors in this conflict, attempting to incorporate primary sources when they were available. I primarily used Brazilian sources, in order to access the most culturally-immersed documents and firsthand reflections on the conflict. My strategy, therefore, was to review existing scholarly literature and popular media to examine the motivating factors and strategies behind the Rio police and gang conflict. Through examining government and gang perspectives, I attempt to identify the variables which the RAM model distinguishes as essential to any rational decision-making action: the goals and objectives of both actors, the possible decisions available, the consequences of those decisions and the ultimate choice (Allison and Zelikow 1999, 18). In this case, I examine the choices made to determine the goals and objectives of each actor.

One of the challenges I faced in my research was the difficulty to find official, published views on this subject from both the government and gangs. As this conflict is a very controversial subject among Brazilian citizens, the government must be cautious about releasing any official views on the topic, and is therefore unlikely to reveal the factors analyzed in RAM in an official publication. Likewise, as gangs do not usually publish official statements or hold conferences on their official views, it was necessary for me to look to informal sources of information in my application of the RAM model. Limiting myself to using official sources would prevent my complete understanding of a conflict in which non-traditional, unofficial actors (such as gangs) are involved. This conflict is heavily based in social relations and involves civil society – it occurs in residential areas in favelas, not on a battlefield. The nature of this conflict, as such, requires analysis of informal sources rather than official press releases.

Therefore, I analyze cultural artifacts such as websites and music, which are essential to understanding the way that each side of this conflict presents itself to mainstream society. To these ends, I applied critical discourse analysis to popular opinions contained within news articles and interviews that may be revealing of attitudes of each side of the conflict. Teun A. van Dijk (1993) explains that critical discourse analysis within international relations is important to understanding the messages conveyed in interaction (such as speeches, cultural events or interviews). This involves analyzing the specific word choices or messages that actors use to represent themselves. For example, the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) section of the UPP

website may not be the most official source of information from the organization, but it does reveal the image and information that the organization seeks to present to the public. In using such a source, I access the popular image and understanding of the organization, which allows me to analyze how the organization positions itself within society.

Clearly, it would have been impossible for me to cover all of the popular sources available in Brazilian society on this subject; the police and gang conflict has almost become a part of Rio culture and is present in many cultural representations. However, Allison and Zelikow determine that, within RAM, we should conceive of each actor as a unified whole that acts as one (1999, 24). Therefore, I attempted to synthesize a comprehensive representation of what I found in the literature and presented it as the best representation of reality I could offer.

As such, this article is not an attempt to compare the official statements of the government and gangs of Rio de Janeiro, but to offer a societal and cultural analysis of the social factors within this conflict that have allowed it to endure for so long. To this analysis, I also bring my personal understanding of this conflict from my year living in Rio de Janeiro. My data derive from both my own experiences in favela and non-favela spaces, as well as the experiences of the Brazilian citizens that I met. Given the tension and violence between these two worlds that occurs every day, this topic is loaded with emotional weight regardless of whom you talk to; however, I try to remain unbiased and present my most impartial understanding of this conflict.

My sample includes all favelas within the city of Rio de Janeiro (although I will not explicitly analyze all of them), as well as the Baixada Fluminense. It was not necessary that I collected data from every favela within Rio de Janeiro to achieve the objective of my research, as the main differentiation that was important to note was in the experience of Zona Sul favelas and those favelas not in Zona Sul. I could therefore consider these as two groups of variables to convey the realities of this conflict.

It is important that the reader understands the geography of Rio favelas in order to fully comprehend this article. The Zona Sul (South Zone) area of Rio de Janeiro is the city that foreigners and tourists envision when they imagine drinking a coconut on the smooth sands of the Ipanema beach; however, there are favelas sprinkled throughout this region, which leads to the sharp inequality within shared spaces both in the favela and on the asphalt for which Rio de Janeiro is characteristically known. The favelas in Zona Sul are wealthier and have better services than other favelas outside of this area, largely because of their proximity to business and their geographi-

cal inclusion within the wealthiest Zone in the city. Individuals who live in these favelas often have better living circumstances and civil protections than in other favelas, as violence in Zona Sul favelas not only threatens those within the favela, but threatens to spill over into wealthy Brazilian society. Therefore, while Zona Sul favelas are poor, favelas in other Zones (primarily in the North and West) are poorer and have less access to services (Zaluar 2012, 13); we must not understand "favela" in Rio de Janeiro as an "ideal type," but as a plural term with several different meanings (Pretecille and Valladares 2000, 481-2).

Analysis

Government RAM

The primary motivating factor behind the government's involvement in this conflict is to protect the state monopoly on the legitimate use of force, as the government must represent authority and control to fulfill the role of the state. Mary Kaldor explains that, "as war became the exclusive province of the state, so the growing destructiveness of war against other states was paralleled by a process of growing security at home" (1999, 5). Organized crime within favelas that engendered violence between gangs and residents thus threatened the legitimacy of the state by decreasing this domestic security. Therefore, the Rio government engages in this conflict because the alternative (not engaging in it) would contradict its very purpose as a legitimate government.

The UPP, or Pacification Police, was thus established in 2008 as the government's initiative to engage in this conflict through targeting and occupying specific favelas. The UPP states as its mission:

> The objective of the Pacification Police is the taking back of territories before dominated by ostensibly armed criminal groups and establish the Democratic State of Law. Give back to the local population public peace and tranquility, necessary to the exercise and integral development of citizenship. Contribute to break the logic of "war" existent in the state of Rio de Janeiro (UPP, "Perguntas Frequentes").

This organization therefore defines itself as primarily concerned with controlling violence, and determines the presence of public peace as the most important factor to citizenship. In claiming that the state must "take back" the favela in order to "give back" citizenship, the UPP implies that gangs have taken away the right to citizenship within the favela. According to my analy-

sis, however, this rhetoric seems mistaken; favela gangs have actually provided a great number of citizenship services that the state has been neglectful of in the past. We can see here that, whether true or false, the state perceives itself as the legitimate actor within the favela and seeks to portray itself as such to the Brazilian public.

The UPP has adopted an infamously violent strategy in its attempt to realize peace within the favela. The UPP sets up its pacification in four phases:

> Tactical Intervention, developed preferentially through groups of
> special operations (BOPE and BPChoque) that realize tactical actions
> for the effective recuperation of territorial control; Stabilization,
> which contemplates the tactical actions and enclosure to prepare the
> terrain for implementation; Implementation of the UPP, in which
> specifically designated policemen trained for this function occupy the
> locale; Evaluation and Monitoring (UPP, "Perguntas Frequentes")

The government's strategy in this conflict is thus to mobilize highly-trained and well-equipped police to engage in conflict with favela gangs, subsequently occupying the favela and maintaining a presence to confront day-to-day violence. These special operations groups, such as the Batalhão de Operações Policiais Especiais (BOPE), frequently utilize war-like rhetoric. The front page of BOPE's website features a high-action video of stealthy police operations alongside slogans like "Force and Honor!" "Go and Win!" and "Mission given, mission complete!" (BOPE, "BOPE"). Through this battle-like rhetoric, the BOPE police unit refers to favela gangs as an other (from mainstream Brazilian society) that must be destroyed in order to defend "force and honor." Thus, part of the police's strategy is to ostracize favela gangs in order to establish the state presence as the legitimate one.

It is also important to note the incoherence between the purposes of the coordinating police unites. While the UPP explicitly states that its purpose is not to stop drug trafficking and criminality, though doing so may sometimes be necessary to achieve its objectives (UPP, "Perguntas Frequentes"), the BOPE boasts about the drug dealers it has taken down and large quantities of cocaine it has sacked without explicitly explaining how these actions further the UPP's objectives (BOPE, "News"). The official motivation and strategy of the different coordinating units within the governmental side of this conflict therefore appear to be out of sync. The vague language of the UPP here implies that it will do whatever is necessary to reclaim the favela, which it may sometimes perceive as taking down the largest drug dealers

(through organizations like BOPE), even though it states that destroying favela gangs is not its goal.

Along these lines, the UPP has been known to utilize fear tactics to take back the monopoly of violence within the favela. Residents have faced high levels of insecurity in their neighborhoods as an increasing amount of innocent residents have been killed by crossfire or arbitrarily deemed suspicious by the police (Vigna 2015). Some of those who live within pacified favelas claim that the violence that used to be controlled by favela gangs who would guard their territories has now become out of control, as gunfights can break out between police and gangs anywhere at any given time (Coutinho 2015). Thus, although the UPP states in its mission that it wants to reestablish public peace and break the logic of war in Rio's society, it has actually contributed to the logic of violence and war within the favela through using fear tactics and occupations that affect not only gangs, but favela residents, as well. In fact, the UPP police units' response to favela gangs has largely evoked a logic of war that might not have been necessary to ending gang activity in favelas.

Although the UPP police forces practice a strategy of violence and coercion, the UPP Social program is a government initiative to improve state-society relations within the favela. While social programs that address the inequalities that led to gang formation in the first place are necessary to achieving the UPP's goals, this program fails to address the core of these issues. UPP Social does not attempt to eliminate the root causes of poverty in favelas, but focuses on surface-level solutions for social tension, such as creating public forums for citizen-government dialogue and recreation centers for children (Henriques and Ramos n.d.). Borges dos Santos notes that UPP Social is characterized by a "lack of political power and fragile institutionalization," emphasizing initiatives of participation "without guaranteeing the inclusivity of the public sphere and effectiveness of the capacity of the insertion of [favela] societal interests in the public agenda" (n.d., 11). The government has thus promoted programs to make the favela a better place to live without comprehensively mobilizing public policies against the inequality and poverty that led to violence in the favela in the first place. The government's strategy in the conflict against favela gangs is quite contradictory, as it simultaneously mobilizes both coercion and surface-level social programs, neither of which seems to address the root causes of gang violence in the favela.

In turn, the government attempts to persuade outsiders of its legitimacy in this conflict by advertising its social initiatives while leaving out its

actual violent involvement in the conflict against gangs. The UPP website solely shows images of its UPP Social programs, even though the police unit is not actually affiliated with the social programs, and the objective of the UPP and its visible presence around the city is to take back the state monopoly on violence (UPP, "Photos"). In this way, the government presents itself as primarily providing social services rather than engaging in a violent conflict. This rhetoric contrasts that used by favela gangs in associating the favela social programs with the UPP (and thus the conflict), conveying the message that the government brings real social growth to the favela, as well as increasing governmental legitimacy in providing services to the areas it has historically excluded from city planning. Therefore, the government attempts to legitimize its actions (both past actions in neglecting the favela and present in violently attacking favela gangs) by creating social programs for the favela and emphasizing these within its advertisements and official materials as its best work; however, these programs are not the true motivation for the government to engage in the conflict, and the government still mobilizes public policy that socially oppresses the favela.

Such contradictions in the government's strategy are evident in public policies that deliberately limit the inclusion of certain individuals from public spheres within Rio. For example, the "Operation Summer," directed by the Military Police (under which the UPP operates) has mobilized a campaign to create "the most democratic public leisure that exists in the world" ("PM vai montar 17 pontos de bloqueio a onibus nos acessos às praias" 2011) by securing the beaches of Zona Sul, the city's most touristic area. Part of the Operation includes mobilizing 1,000 policemen to set up 17 stations within the city that check for children under 11 years and 11 months, bringing any unaccompanied minors to shelters. The Rio government set up these checkpoints along the beach and in some of Rio's poorest favelas, such as the Baixada Fluminense. This policy thus aims to block "dangerous" youth residents of specifically targeted geographic locations from public spaces in an attempt to protect these spaces from violence. Therefore, although the government has created social programs for the favela through UPP Social, it has specifically targeted the favela and excluded certain residents from using public space in order to ensure the security of wealthier Brazilians and tourists, deeming these the priority populations it must protect.

The UPP also prioritizes wealthy Brazilians in deciding where to set up its occupations. The UPP has only been established in 38 of Rio's 763 favelas (UPP, "UPP"). Most of the beginning projects took place in the wealthy Zona Sul area, where adjacent neighborhoods like Botafogo and Copacabana

house wealthy or middle-class families who complain about insecurity spilling over from their favela neighbors. Pardo and Inzunza (2014) report in an interview:

> "The UPPs do not reach [even] 10 percent of the favelas, even though the propaganda makes it seem like they do. In reality, their location illustrates the idea the Rio de Janeiro government has in mind for the city," said Representative Marcelo Freixo, a former mayoral candidate, who says the authorities are focused on improving security in the southern region and points connecting to places like the airport and the port.

The specific establishment of UPP presence in certain favelas, which are not necessarily the most violent or criminal favelas, reflects the government's strategy to protect the spaces most important to its perceived image of what Rio is. In this way, the government's strategy displaces the problem of violence within the favela to areas which it does not necessarily prioritize as part of its imagined identity, which are less visible to wealthy Brazilians and tourists. We can see this strategy in action through the massive fence the government put up to block the favela Mare on Avenida Brasil (the highway that leads from the international airport into the city), which served to displace the violent "crackland" area away from the road further into the favela (Pardo and Inzunza 2014). The dissolution of crime that occurred within this area as a result of drug dealing and gang activity was not a priority for the state of Rio de Janeiro, but rather, the displacement of this violence away from areas that are frequented by wealthy citizens and tourists.

It is important to note, therefore, that the government's strategy in the conflict has been marked by specific, targeted involvements. The UPP only promises to promote the end of violence, not the social foundations needed to establish a flourishing social environment within the favela; and it only promises to provide this to the favelas that it includes within its plan. Within RAM, the Rio government is motivated to resolve violence in areas it deems important to the city's external image, not to address the root causes of violence in favelas, which explains why the government and UPP act in the way that they do.

Favela Gang RAM

One of the primary reasons that favela gangs became involved in the conflict is economic motivations. The business of drug dealing is an important motivating factor that leads individuals to join favela gangs, as they

can achieve a higher degree of economic security and avoid the unemployment that often comes with the stigmatization of being a young man from a favela (Zaluar 2012, 9). A favela drug dealer said in an interview with Pardo and Inzunza, "You get into this business by necessity; there's no other way," (2014). There are very few job opportunities for individuals from the favela due to cultural fear of favelados (a usually derogatory term for favela residents), so many men join gangs due to a lack of any other good options for income. Just the cocaine business of one dealer (Nem of Rocinha) supported the employment of 1,000 people (Glenny 2015).

The status that comes along with being involved in a gang is also a motivating factor for boys from the favela to join a gang; they become part of the wealthiest and most respected among their peers when young men join gangs (Aranha 2012). Favela gangs could not survive without the income they earn from drug dealing, and must therefore fight back against the police in order to ensure their survival as a unit. The alternative to this decision (not engaging in the conflict) would mean surrendering to the police, which may mean giving up drug dealing, gang membership and their livelihoods; as such, favela gangs primarily engage in this conflict in order to preserve their means of income and status.

This motivating factor is also a critical part of gang strategy in this conflict; money gained from drug trafficking means that gangs are able to finance a conflict in the first place. One of the most important ways that gang members obtain arms is through purchasing them from corrupt police officers, who are often low-paid and sell their arms to make extra cash (Monken 2012). Additionally, approximately 47 percent of weapons used by gang members are trafficked from the United States and bought from Paraguayan traffickers (Bargent 2015). According to Zaluar (2012), the ability to protect oneself and to be disposed to use the arm one carries at all times is entrenched in gang understandings and logics, which has meant that this conflict has been extremely violent. The favela gang thus uses the money it gains through illegal drug trafficking to buy illegally-trafficked guns, and mobilizes the strategy of being disposed to use these weapons to fight against police at all times.

Furthermore, the gang embodies an internal culture of risk which makes individuals within it more susceptible to engaging in violence. The majority of people who join gangs are in the demographic of young men (15-19) of color with low socioeconomic status (Fernandes 2013). Furthermore, Brazil has one of the highest homicide rates in the world (at 25.2/100,000 inhabitants), and 89.8 percent of those homicides are men (United Nations

Office on Drugs and Crime 2013). The average number of youth homicides (ages 14-19) in Rio reaches 289/100,000 inhabitants, 70 percent of these related to "drug trafficking and other related conflicts" (Zaluar 2012, 15). The life expectancy for most of the young men who join gangs is low, and they recognize this as they join; these individuals often see their life paths as a trade-off between being wealthy and being guaranteed a long life. The "nothing-to-lose" mentality that comes from poverty and short life expectancy means that these young men will be more likely to engage in conflict and risky behavior (Aranha 2012). Additionally, Zaluar (2012, 20) finds in her study that the favela harbors a culture of hyper-masculinity, in which carrying a firearm is seen as a sign of manliness and those who join a gang succeed in providing themselves protection in the local conflict; if one doesn't join the gang, he risks being attacked by both sides within this conflict. The "enlistment" strategy of favela gangs, therefore, appears to be one which capitalizes on the vulnerability of young men in poverty.

Violence and mistreatment from the police also motivate favela residents to organize against the police and align with gangs (Rodrigues and Endelmond 2014), which means that those joining the gang likely agree with the political conflict the gang engages in. A community organizer of the favela Rocinha said:

> "Before, a child could walk alone in the street without fear. Today, that's impossible. We just don't understand how this situation is possible considering that, since the 'pacification' of the favela, there are now policemen everywhere" (Rodrigues and Endelmond 2014).

A communal mistrust of the police therefore aligns the favela as a whole against the police and likely leads to the recruitment of more gang members. This is characteristic of Kaldor's (1999) idea of new wars, in that the favela gang attracts new members by identifying with a common struggle of inequality and failure of the government.

This communal mistrust of the police is not only a shared experience within the favela, but one that has been popularized in the music genre of Brazilian funk, largely popular within favelas. The widely popular funk song "Rap da Felicidade (Eu Só Quero É Ser Feliz)" (translating to "Rap of Happiness (I Just Want to Be Happy)"), for example, conveys the sentiment which many people living within the favela share:

> Fun today, we can't even think about it
> Because even at our parties, they come to humiliate us
> There in the plaza where everything was so normal

> Now local violence has become fashionable.
>
> Innocent people who don't have anything to do with it
>
> Are today losing their right to live...
>
> They changed the presidency, a new hope,
>
> I suffered in the storm, now I want the calm.
>
> The people have force, they need to discover
>
> If they don't do anything, we'll do everything here (Cidinho e Doca 1994).

This rhetoric emphasizes the state's role in bringing insecurity to the favela. This song also shows how a political fight against the police and state has become part of the social culture of the favela in two identifiable ways. First, it refers to frustration from police monitoring of baile funks, or favela-organized parties which serve as the primary social event for young people within the favela, which shows how omni-present the police has become in monitoring all aspects of occupied favela life. Furthermore, this song contains a deliberate call for action at the end of this excerpt, in which people create their own protection without a need for the police or the state. The artist of this highly popular song (Cidinho e Doca) seems to urge favela residents to identify as from the favela before identifying as from Brazil in a more general sense, and to organize and fight for their own interests within the favela whether the government will help them or not. The inclusion of anti-government (and, thus, pro-gang) political values in spheres of favela youth pleasure works to incorporate the gang as defending a collective, imagined "us." It also makes the imagined experience of living in the favela synonymous with a struggle against the police.

In this struggle, favela gangs do not only provide material protection for their favela communities, but social protection, as well. Government neglect and police brutality are a part of favela gangs' motivation and organization, in that favela gangs often provide the social services that the state does not due to historical gang ideology. Glenny (2015) reports from an interview that Nem, the gang leader of Rocinha, provided an integral role as,

> in effect, mayor, police chief and director of the chamber of commerce for a community estimated at 100,000 residents... 'The food baskets and the support we gave to extracurricular school activities, such as the Thai boxing or capoeira classes, were all accounted for as part of our business expenses,' [Nem] explained. 'But the burials, prescription costs or if anyone who couldn't afford it needed gas,

these were all extra payments.'

Favela gangs thus fulfill governmental roles within the favela and flexibly respond to the needs of their communities. This is an inheritance of the communist nature of super-gangs like the Comando Vermelho (Red Command) of the 1980s, a group which formed alliances between common criminals and communists who were imprisoned at the same time by the military dictatorship. The political prisoners inspired criminals to politicize their work, creating a gang that had both criminal and political knowledge and strategies ("Red Command"). The communist nature of this powerful gang has meant that part of the inherited identity and motivation of today's gangs is taking care of their communities and providing services (Ramos 2013). Through gangs' support of their communities, more favela residents are sympathetic with gangs, and gangs also become legitimized within society by taking altruistic action; gang motivation to provide for their communities thus becomes part of their strategy in the conflict, as well.

Furthermore, favela gangs have a degree of uncertainty in just how far the UPP will go in this conflict. Different units within the government's initiative for the UPP and its associated parts have taken significantly varied approaches; the BOPE is extremely violent, the UPP police are less violent (but still use forceful tactics), and the UPP Social organize social programs to help the communities. The way that a gang responds, therefore, is specific to the unit that it is dealing with. A drug dealer, in an interview with Pardo and Inzunza (2014), explained, "'When the police come, we give them something. When the BOPE comes... we have to escape.'" Part of this reactive strategy is to hire fogueteiros, or lookouts who set off firecrackers or other signals to announce the arrival of the police (Pardo and Inzunza 2014). Gangs have to improvise their reaction to the arrival of the UPP based off of which specific unit it is dealing with, and even then gang members may not know how violent or demanding the individuals within the approaching police unit may be. The previous knowledge that gang members may have on certain individuals or divisions of the police is critical to gang response and strategy.

Therefore, it appears that the motivation and strategy of favela gangs in this conflict are inextricably linked, in that they adopt their strategy from their historical and current motivations and are always responsive to whatever circumstances they are facing. Gang members take care of their community because it is part of their credence, and gain more supporters and legitimacy in the process; they fight against the police's attempt to restrict the drug trade and are able to finance this fight through the money gained through trafficking; and are motivated to fight due to their frustration with

the police and state government, which also fuels community support and more recruits. We can understand the favela gangs' involvement in this conflict as mobilizing all of their available resources to defend their economic livelihoods, simultaneously using economic, cultural and social tools to gain weapons, popular support and members.

Conclusion

Through this analysis, we see the rational motivations and strategies behind the involvement of both the government and gangs in Rio's civil conflict. Although this conflict seems to have an obvious outcome (favela gangs will never realistically have enough power to overcome the power of the state), the motivating factors behind each actor provoke each side to act in the way it does. Favela gang members are primarily fighting to maintain their incomes, whereas the state government is fighting to create the city of its imaginary and influence favela residents and gangs into recognizing the state's authority. Though the state government has a much higher chance of winning this conflict because of its material power, the stakes are much greater for favela gangs, as their livelihoods are threatened by state occupation.

Furthermore, the state government is quite unclear in its intentions within the favela; although it says that it is not attempting to stop drug trafficking within the favela in engaging in this conflict, part of its explicit strategy is to demobilize the most powerful actors in drug trafficking before it occupies the area with a UPP unit. It seems that the government is mostly out to "make an example" out of the individuals who had demonstrated to the rest of the community that they were working above the powers of the state. As these are usually the individuals responsible for organizing the gang's social services to the community – such as the head drug-dealer of Rocinha, Nem – the government relays its message not only to gangs but to the general favela community in going after powerful gang figures.

The government's strategy implies that it is attempting to obtain control through inspiring fear, both in hunting individuals in the way I just described and through excessively violent tactics that are sometimes directed at residents. These coercive tactics are a powerful way of showing the entire favela community that the state has arrived to the favela and will be taking control. Again, it is important to emphasize that the state has only mobilized such programs in favelas that have the potential to affect the populations that the state prioritizes (which is wealthy and tourist).

However, the government simply fuels the fire of opposition from

favela gangs and residents through this strategy. As we can see in the cultural popularization of messages against police brutality in funk music, some favela residents feel that they were better off without the occupying presence of the state, which often makes them favor favela gangs. A decline in government support also opens up a wealth of resources to favela gangs; since gangs are fighting on their own turf, those who side with favela gangs are likely to provide resources like membership or use of space, among other potentially valuable capital. The government's strategy has therefore weakened its resources and popular support by treating favela residents with coercion instead of inclusion and integration.

If the government does not adjust its strategy, it may have to confront the consequences of a neglected, ostracized, angry favela population in the future, in an even more violent conflict. The current gang/police conflict has so far only served to push violence into poorer areas, which is contributing to the further development of two distinct Rio de Janeiros (wealthy and poor) within the city limits. According to Kaldor's theory of new wars, inequality leads to conflict, which means that the Rio government may face more conflict in the future if it continues to contribute to perpetuated inequality. Therefore, the Rio government should seek out meaningful alternative strategies and motivations in this conflict to truly secure sustainable progress away from societal violence. For instance, if the state government were to shift its motivations towards creating a more equitable climate within the favela and in Rio in general, we would see an enormous change in its strategy for taking back the monopoly of violence. As the conflict currently stands, the government is not working for sustainable progress and appears to believe that perpetual fighting and occupation are more strategic to its priorities than seeking out ways to eradicate the conditions that created violence within favelas in the first place.

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