Respect, Dignity and Rights

Ethnographic registers about community policing in Rio de Janeiro

Marcus Cardoso

Abstract

Why did a community-policing unit enjoy initial positive reception among the residents of two favelas in the city of Rio de Janeiro? Based on an ethnographic study conducted from 2000 – 2007 I suggest that to respond to this question it is necessary to observe the meaning that the residents attribute to the presence and action of this police squad, and above all to the importance that certain local categories involving conceptions of rights and justice assume when they speak about the police. In this light, it is important to pay attention to the notion of dignity constructed and shared locally and the category respect, which they used repeatedly.

Keywords: demands for recognition, dignity, community policing, concepts of rights, favelas.

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Why did a community-policing unit enjoy an initial positive reception among residents of two favelas in the city of Rio de Janeiro? Based on an ethnographic study conducted from 2000-2007 I suggest that to respond to this question it is necessary to observe the meaning that these residents attribute to the presence and action of the police unit, above all to the importance that certain local categories involving concepts of rights and justice assume when thinking and speaking about the police. It is essential to remain attentive to the locally constructed and shared concept of dignity and the category *respect*, which is repeatedly used by people in the community. I seek to demonstrate that the good evaluation given to the policing for a certain period of time is due to the local perception that the police came to recognize the moral dignity of the residents of the two favelas.

In response to a series of confrontations between the police and residents of the favelas of the city of Rio de Janeiro, in the second half of the year 2000, the state government, through the Secretariat for Public Safety, created a community-policing unit within the Military Police [as the state police are known in Brazil, although they are not related to the national armed forces]. It was baptized the Special Areas Police Group (GPAE). In practice, the use of the expression. "special areas" was used as a neologism to designate favelas, given that the unit would act exclusively in these areas.

As a researcher I accompanied the action of the GPAE in the favelas of Cantagalo and of Pavão-Pavãozinho beginning in 2001 until 2007. I was interested in the perception of its residents about the police operations. One possible synthesis of this period can be described as follows: For approximately one year after its implantation, the performance of the community-policing unit was considered to be satisfactory and positive by a significant part of the residents with whom I had a relationship in the field, but it gradually

came to be the target of more systematic criticisms and declarations of discontent, which finally made it the subject of indifference among residents of the two favelas.[1]

The following analysis focuses on the first year of action of the community-policing unit and the question that guides this article is the following: Why did the GPAE initially have a positive response among the residents of the Cantagalo and Pavão-Pavãozinho favelas? To respond properly it is necessary to question the meaning that the interlocutors give to the presence and action of the GPAE, highlighting the importance that certain local notions of rights and justice have when thinking and speaking of the police.

An undertaking such as this requires careful attention to the accounts of my interlocutors. I believe that by proceeding in this way it is possible to find eventual similarities and recurrences in their narratives that can provide clues to the set of meanings that articulates their experiences. As the best anthropology teaches us, what interests me here are the reflections that the residents of the two favelas present about their relationship with the police and how the opinion that they have of it is articulated with their conceptions of justice and rights. This approach allows overcoming the risk of treating the statements of my interlocutors (about the police and about rights) abstractly, based on formulations and concepts that apply to all and any situation, and disregarding the particular contexts where they occur and the content that they express.

In recent years I have sought to contribute ethnographically to the discussion about citizenship in Brazil, based on an anthropological concept of the law, as was developed by Cardoso de Oliveira (2002, 2011a, 2011b, 2013). I have suggested that one of the keys to understanding the dilemmas that

1 My initial interest in the two favelas arose in 2001. The Instituto Superior de Estudos sobre a Religião (ISER) [Institute of Higher Studies about Religion] – which wanted to accompany the implementation of a project of the state Secretariat for Public Safety, began a study coordinated by Regina Novaes (IFCS/UFRJ) and Clara Mafra (PPCIS/UERJ) entitled "Violence, Sociability and Public Space", in which I took part. Since then, I became interested in the perception of the residents of the two favelas about the police. The narratives presented in this article were obtained between 2001 and 2007. In 2001, 2002 and 2004, the period that includes my undergraduate and master's studies, I was in the field and always interested in how the residents signify and experience the police presence in the two favelas, as well as the impact of this on the functioning of the state government's community police project. Later, in 2007, I returned to the field motivated by the memory of the residents about the project, and by the interpretations that they elaborated to explain its failure. During all these years, the focus of reflection was on the complaints about the police and demands for respect for rights. The narratives presented in the article were obtained in various ways, depending on the occasion and preference of the interlocutor. Some people allowed recording the encounters, while others preferred that the researcher only take written notes of the contents of the conversations and or interviews.

involve the theme is in the centrality of the notion of *respect*, shared among the residents of the two favelas. Despite differences about the possibilities for comparison or generalization that mark the theoretical history about the issue, it is new in anthropology that the set of norms designed to regulate the behavior of members of a society reflect concepts of the world where these members are inserted, as demonstrated by Malinowski (2003), Bohannan (1989), Nader (1997), Geertz (1997), Moore (2001), and others. Added to this is the fact that even within a society, the law and the concept of justice are subject to multiple significations (Cardoso de Oliveira 2011a). Even in cases where there is a single formal normative code, the way that it is lived and thought of varies (or can vary) according to the social group accompanied. Thus, to understand the demands for rights and the conflicts that emerge from the perception that they are not being respected – or in the opposite case, that they are being recognized – it is necessary to remain attentive to the universe of meanings of those involved. In other words, it is not possible properly to understand the demands and complaints that arise in combative relations without considering the social context where they are expressed and the set of meanings they trigger. The way that this study is presented is in keeping with this perspective.

The favelas

The first locations to receive the GPAE were the favelas of Pavão-Pavãozinho and Cantagalo,[2] located in the Zona Sul [Southern Zone] of the city, between the neighborhoods of Copacabana and Ipanema. These favelas are just a few minutes from the busy Avenidas Nossa Senhora de Copacabana and Vieira Souto, which run through the two most famous beachfront neighborhoods of Rio de Janeiro. Their residents coexist daily with the advantages and disadvantages related to the geographic location in which they are found. The fact that these avenues are close to the sea, surrounded by countless luxury hotels and circled by a population with strong purchasing power, makes them an important and lucrative point of sale for drugs that is frequented by tourists and residents of the nearby neighborhoods. It is not by chance that over the

2 Later, more units were installed in other favelas of the state (Souza da Silva 2006; Albernaz, Caruso and Patrício 2006).

years they have been the scene of various disputes among rival factions over the control of illicit drug sales in the region.[3]

The two favelas are neighbors and both occupy elevated hillsides. Cantagalo began to be settled in the early 1900s, with the construction of the first residences on the hillsides. Later, around 1920, with the increased population density, another part of the hillside was occupied, creating Pavão-Pavãozinho (Seth 1985). While the later originated from the migration of individuals from northeastern Brazil, the first was created from the movement of families from the interior of Rio de Janeiro and Minas Gerais states. On another occasion I have discussed the similarities and differences with which the residents of the two favelas build their identities; at times insisting on a distinction from their neighbors, at others ignoring certain specificities that characterize them (Cardoso 2010, 2013). For what interests me here, it is sufficient to say that when speaking of certain themes, such as the police and rights, it is possible to identify shared worldviews, opinions and forms of organizing their narratives.

The GPAE Community-Policing Unit

As a rule, initiatives baptized as community policing are those that operate to some degree from the premise of the "coproduction" of public safety. In reality, it is an expression that encompasses various programs characterized by the adoption of a policing modality that involves the joint participation of civil society and the police in the production of safety, with the parties cooperating to find effective strategies for confronting disturbances of public order and preventing crime (Skolnick & Bayley 2002; Rosenbaum 2002; Brodeur 2002). Those who defend its implementation believe that this type of engagement enhances the quality of the service provided by police institutions and decreases the sense of insecurity among the population (Mesquita Neto 2004; Nev 2009). Unlike a traditional policing model, based on the paradigm of "professional application of the law" (focused on attending emergency situations), community policing gives priority to attending non-emergency situations and a concern for resolving problems in their initial stages, so that they do not reach critical proportions (Moore 2002). To comply

3 For more about the disputes between the rival factions in the two favelas see Cardoso (2005).

with these objectives some practices must be adopted: these are postures and procedures that are capable of constructing a reciprocal trust between police agents and the population; integrated actions between different social actors; an emphasis on non-emergency services; and a decentralization of police activity (Nev 2009).

The Special Areas Police Group (GPAE) was created in the year 2000 as a specialized unit for the patrol and occupation of the favelas of Rio de Janeiro. Inspired by the philosophical and operational principles of community policing, the GPAE would assume as its priority function guaranteeing the safety of the residents of these areas. It is interesting to note that the choice of the favelas as a stage of action of the GPAE was not made by chance. As is known, these locations were historically represented as spaces of poverty, degradation, marginality and violence (Perlman 1977; Valladares 2005). This stigma was reiterated in the 1980s, when organized drugs dealers began to act systematically, taking these neighborhoods as the base of their operations (Zaluar 1985). This phenomenon led to an increase in the sense of fear and insecurity among the Fluminense population [as residents of these neighborhoods of Rio de Janeiro are known], influencing the public safety policies in the 1980s and 1990s. As indicated by Zaluar (2000) and Soares (1996), the reaction to fear was materialized through the demand for "more police", by making explicit the desire for the police to adopt more repressive procedures. This was combined with advances against discourse and policies that emphasized human rights and citizenship.[4] In this scenario, the universe of people who could (and can) have their rights ignored has a specific color and location; they are, mostly young black male residents of favelas (Zaluar 2010; Leite 2012). This appears to confirm the perception that the most common target of civil rights violations are those people who have already had their economic and social rights denied. It also appears to confirm that our police act in a selective manner, guided by an hierarchical classification of society (Kant de Lima 1995, 2001; Miranda & Pita 2010, among others). Projects for community policing in Rio de Janeiro, as was the case of GPAE, at least discursively, promise to modify this reality, giving priority to guaranteeing the civil and social rights of those who reside in favelas.

4 The outbreak against the discourses that defend the respect for human rights and an increased demand for greater repression was not restricted to the state of Rio de Janeiro. Similar reactions also took place in São Paulo, as demonstrated by Caldeira (2000) and Holston (2008).

The announcement of the creation of the GPA is closely related to a series of disturbances marked by the confrontation between favela residents and the police in a period of approximately thirty days. The first of these involved precisely the residents of Cantagalo and Pavão-Pavãozinho. The demonstrations began in mid May 2000, when the normally busy daily life of Copacabana was interrupted by an extraordinary event involving the residents of the two favelas. Protesting against a supposed execution of five men in Cantagalo by the military police, streets were blocked, buses and private cars were stoned and some stores were looted. It was a riot.[5] As can be imagined, the version presented by the Military Police about the development of the events does not coincide with the version presented by the residents. At the time, the police involved in the event alleged that they were caught by surprise, and received gunfire from a group of men belonging to *the movement 6* when they conducted a patrol around Cantagalo. The police say that they defended themselves, and as a result of the shoot-out five of their opponents were killed. On the other side, without denying that the victims belonged to the *movement*, the demonstrators questioned the allegation of legitimate defense, reaffirming their conviction that they had witnessed an execution.[7] Soon after these events, the state government announced the creation of the community-policing unit.

Conceiving the GPAE as a type of community police meant establishing that its agents would act in way that would place in practice procedures that would favor crime-prevention strategies, encouraging the participation of residents in making decisions about the best way to act (coproduction of security). To do so, the community police unit operated 24 hours-a-day in the favelas and provided ostensive police services, inhibiting the occurrence of situations that would place lives at risk (Blanco 2003). To fulfill this proposal, in its daily actions, the police unit sought to limit the power of drug

5 This is how the media in general and the demonstrators usually refer to events of this nature, characterized by being collective demonstrations that call for demands that culminate with the depredation of public and private property and by the confrontation with police, making explicit the dissatisfaction of a certain collectivity.

6 As will become clear in the article, " "pessoa de bem" [good person] and "movimento" [the movement] are local categories that are broadly used, and that are usually used when comparing people and options within the favelas. They involve notions of dignity and morality. While "movement" refers to local organized crime, "good people" can refer to all those who do not adhere to crime

7 The same scene was repeated in the favelas of Jacarezinho, Cidade de Deus, Praia da Rosa, Morro do Engenho, Pilares and Bateau Mouche, where the residents alleged that they were protesting against excessive violence and executions committed by the police.

traffickers and avoid creating situations that would provoke armed conflicts that would expose residents to risk of death. At the same time, they exercised a rigid internal control to discourage violent and or criminal procedures by their agents. In the words of their commander, the functions of the GPAE would be highlighted by procedures that promote:

> Crime prevention, with an emphasis on situations of personal and social risk, which afflict children and adolescents; reduction of fear, through continual efforts (regular and interactive) undertaken by the action of ostensive policing in neutralizing the armed territorial command exteriorized by the dynamics of drug trafficking; the qualified repression of trafficking and of the use of drugs, in the hypotheses of flagrant crime or in compliance with a judicial order; prevention and repression of eventual irregular conduct practiced by the police, in the hypotheses of disciplinary transgression and crime (Blanco 2003: 108-109).

The Residents and the GPAE

Ruth,[8] a resident of Pavão-Pavãozinho, had mixed feelings about the presence of the Community Police Post in front of her house. After living many years in the favela with her children, she had witnessed many arbitrary actions, excessive use of force and attacks committed by military and civil police. It was thus difficult to suddenly believe that everything would change. Experience indicated that she should not trust the police. And now the police were there, right in front of her house, 24 hours-a-day. Despite the lack of trust, she admitted that things began to get better in the favela. But why did they improve? Because the police presence limited the *movement*. Her experience had taught her that the drug dealers are also dangerous. Like the police, they kill, assault, humiliate and disrespect the *pessoas de bem.*[9] In sum: she did not trust the police, but was satisfied with the consequences of their presence in Pavão-Pavãozinho. The unmentioned detail is that the

8 The names of the residents used in this article were changed.

9 As mentioned in note 6, " "pessoas de bem" [good people] and "movimento" [the movement] are local categories that are broadly used, and that are usually used when comparing people and options within the favelas. They involve notions of dignity and morality. While "movement" refers to local organized crime, "good people" can refer to all those who do not adhere to crime.

Community Police Post located in front of her house, occupied an important point in the dynamics and organization of the *movement*. It is precisely where drugs had previously been packaged and where some deals were closed. Ruth said that she had lost count of how many times she saw scenes of violence.

> I do not like this police post here in front of my house because you do not know what will happen tomorrow. I walk by and don't say anything and don't look at the police that are here...**But with them here (the police) it is better than before.** Before I had to see everything, all the bad things that you can imagine I saw, So many beatings that I can't say how many, lots, really...Where the police are now. These kids would beat people, hit them in the face, make them get on their knees and plead (...) (Ruth, Pavão-Pavãozinho. GRIFO MEU).

At the time, Ruth was 45 years old and lived with her two children; Helen, 16, and Cleicy, 22. The youth emphasized the situation described by their mother, telling how the space in front of their house was used by the *movement*.

> All the time! At night here there was lots of screaming. I would arrive from school and go up quickly, not stop to speak to anyone. I wouldn't let up my guard here in front because at any time there were shootings or bad stuff. People crying, people asking, but the kids here had no mercy. If you owed money you had to pay somehow...if they found you had a way to get money, they beat you into submission. Now, if you didn't pay and weren't going to pay, they beat you, they did lots of bad things, and then they would kill you (Helen, Pavão-Pavãozinho).

Less than a year had gone by since her ex-husband left home to live with another women in the favela of Rocinha. The fact that there were three women without a man was another reason for Ruth to be worried. She said that one day her daughters could easily be victims of abuse or harassment from those who belonged to the *movement*, precisely because there was no male figure to protect them. Meanwhile, for Cleicy and Helen the absence of a male figure did not represent a problem. The problem was in the fact that the *movement* did not respect anyone.

> You know that I do not like these people here. I never liked them. I don't walk around, I don't speak, I don't want to know. But they are very aggressive. Very.

> They harass, call out, say they want to talk... I don't let Ricardo (her boyfriend) come up here. He wants to walk me home, but I tell him to stay in the car and go away, because its pushing your luck (Cleicy, Pavão-Pavãozinho).

Seu Augusto, a retired widower and a resident of Pavão-Pavãozinho has an opinion similar to that of Ruth. He also did not trust the police, but was satisfied with the consequences of their presence and with the way that they were working in the favela.

> The police is the police. You have to distrust them because they have vices and these things that do not change overnight. But, to answer your question, I think that it has improved here. It is not as great as they say on TV, but it is true that it is better. The shooting stopped... and there is this thing that they do not come up shooting (...) (Augusto, Pavão-Pavãozinho).

Débora, in turn was more explicit upon emphasizing how the arrival of the police unit generated a positive impact in daily life. Born and raised in Cantagalo, she met Carlos and married him. She is 29, and never lived anywhere else. She believed the arrival of the GPAE inhibited the action of the *movement*, reducing the episodes of abuse and violence.

> **Of course I prefer them here**. You don't know what it's like to live in a place that at any moment you can get shot. That you see someone being beat to death or when you open the door of your house or are going down to work there is a body on the ground. Nothing, nothing at all guarantees that its not me there in the ditch. This thing that they say the resident of the favela likes drug dealers is a lie. We live in fear. So, of course I prefer how it is now (Débora, Cantagalo. EMPHASIS MINE).

For Débora the change mentioned is not limited to the inhibition of abusive practices committed by the members of the local criminal group. She also understands that there was a change in how the police related with the other residents.

> **What is important is that there are no more shoot outs**... before, what would happen was that they would come here as they wanted, shooting, without knowing who was in their path, and later when someone died they would say it was a criminal... what's worse is that they didn't care, if you were in the way it was your problem (Débora, Cantagalo. EMPHASIS MINE).

She added:

> I did go to the first meetings with the police. And what I liked was that the commander said (...) that the **concern was for us, for our safety,** that their concern is for us. That their work was to **protect the residents of the favela.** That's what they do down below every day. But here, in the favela, this is new (Idem. EMPHASIS MINE).

GPAE and its procedures

Until now, I have presented some local narratives about the GPAE. To complete the presentation, I will now present some procedures adopted by the police that, according to my interlocutors were responsible for containing the *movement* and for the indications that what was underway was a change in how the police act in the favelas and related with the residents.

Territorial control

As indicated earlier, the group was created to decrease the sensation of fear and the situations of personal risk of the favela residents. To do so, they would adopt measures that impeded the *movement* from controlling the physical spaces and the circulation of people within these areas through intimidation exercised by the exhibition and use of firearms. At first they would install a police post that contained an uninterrupted presence of police who, in turn, would conduct preventive patrols at various times of the day. In Pavão-Pavãozinho and Cantagalo, two of the four community police posts were installed at the locatons of the former *bocas-de-fumo* [literally smoke-mouths. "Smoke" is slang for marijuana. This is how drug-dealing points are known]. The establishment of these locations had a strong symbolic content. The police group would take from the dealers their power to appropriate certain public spaces to conduct drug sales. In this way they indicated that from then on the *movement* could no longer act in the favelas as they were accustomed to.

As indicated in their guidelines, the repression of drug sales occupied a secondary space within their concerns. This was clear in the following statement, which I mentioned previously: *"qualified repression of traffic and use of drugs in the hypothesis of a flagrant violation"*. In practice, this meant that the

movement could continue to sell drugs as long as it was done discretely and without threatening the safety of other favela residents.

> They came and took control. So who is in control now is the police there and everyone had to adjust so there was no confusion. The way it is now there is no way for the kids to dominate like they did...they are still there, but at least there are no more killings or other things (Augusto, Pavão-Pavãozinho)

Limiting gun possession

Unlike the position in relation to drug sales, the use and or display of weapons by the *movement* was one of the central concerns of the police unit. The accusation or finding of the presence of weapons would lead to repressive measures that would impact the sales of drugs and the arrest of those who were caught carrying them. From then on the dealers had to conduct their operations, and relate with the other residents, without the explicit use of firearms, which had a positive repercussion, as perceived in the statement by Conceição.

> Simply the fact that these kids are no longer walking around armed, for me it is much better. The weapon is scary, you know. It leaves you insecure, afraid. Without this they are only boys. They are not rotten...but with a gun in their hand it is very dangerous because we cannot do much (Conceição, Pavão-Pavãozinho).

The end of the incursions

Since the proposal of the GPAE was to act in a preventive and permanent manner by maintaining a 24 hour-a-day presence in the locations served, the so-called *batidas* [hits] – which are police operations to seize drugs, arms and issue court-ordered arrest warrants – were synonymous with shoot-outs and arbitrary police action. They generated apprehension and fear, placing the lives of residents in greater risk.[10] With the permanent presence of the police group there were no more shootouts.

10 For more about the fear of shootouts in the favelas it is worth mentioning the articles by Cavalcante, 2008, *Tiroteios, legibilidade e espaço urbano.*

Listening

The GPAE brought a promise of a new form of interaction with the residents based on the adoption of procedures that indicated an interest in security and respect for people. From the perspective of the GPAE, the willingness to listen meant two things: considering the opinion of residents in making decisions about better strategies of action to decrease the problems and taking measures in response to any denunciations of arbitrary violence or criminal actions by the police. The incentive to participate in the decision making was guided by one of the main theoretical premises of community policing, which was mentioned above and can be synthesized as the principle of "coproduction of security."

What I perceived during the field work was that for my interlocutors, the procedures adopted by the command of the police group in the face of charges of improper acts committed by the police were seen as more significant gestures than the realization of meetings at which residents could present their opinions for the best strategy to be adopted by the police group. That is, the act of listening practiced by the officials of the police group that resulted in the punishment of police officers accused of acting arbitrarily and of committing irregularities or crimes was the element signified as positive, because it demonstrated that their statements were taken seriously.[11] With these procedures, the command of the Community Police Unit sought to demonstrate that the willingness to listen, the incentives to collaborate with the residents in an attempt to change the course, was not just for show. The charges were investigated, and if there were indications of proof, those responsible would be punished.

Meeting Residents Demands

As seen until here, the momentary improvement in the daily life of the two favelas was attributed to the action of the GPAE. But improvement in relation to what? What were the police practices that generated dissatisfaction among the residents and what does this tell us about the parameters that, at the times of the study, supported the local perspective about the police and their agents?

11 According to the commander of the community police unit, in one year, a significant portion of the police officers operating in the favelas had to be renewed as a result of proof of charges against them made by residents (Blanco 2003).

In general, the most common complaints against the police were the following: abusive practices with excessive and illegal use of force, executions, existence of corrupt accords that allowed the *movement* to control the occupation of spaces and sociability in the favelas, in addition to operations that placed the lives of residents at risk.

The existence of a supposedly corrupt agreement represented a problem because it allowed the *movement* to maintain coercive control over other residents without being concerned with possible police intervention. Researchers such as Das (2004) and Shapiro Anjaria (2011), each in his own way, would demonstrate that the approximation between criminals and agents of the state, more than representing a deviation, often composed a deeply consolidated alliance that took place in common spaces of negotiation between crime bosses and government actors. According to the residents of the two favelas presented here, corruption was a recurring practice among the police, appearing to confirm the argument of the researchers mentioned. A police presence was not associated to a guarantee of physical integrity or security, nor was it associated with repression of drug dealing or the search for individuals who committed crimes. It was seen as part of an agreement that would allow local control leaving the *good people* at the mercy of the *moviment*.[12]

The way that the police operations were conducted within the favelas was another source of complaints. As Zaluar (2010) has demonstrated, since the 1980s, with the consolidation of the groups that controlled drug sales, the Rio de Janeiro favelas became the scene of confrontations that involved the attempt to take control of points for selling drugs controlled by rivals, as well as confrontations between these groups and the police. For this reason, to live in these areas came to be an experience that would involve a significant amount of fear and tension. To make matters worse, the posture adopted by the police helped to strengthen these feelings. It is not by chance that the police operations and their consequences are one of the strongest sources of fear among residents and certainly, one of the main complaints against the police.

There was also the affirmation that the police behaved differently in the favelas and on the "asphalt."

12 Thus, cases of abuses, death threats and humiliations committed by dealers had shared responsibility with the police. In sum, the police were absent when they should have been protecting them.

> (...) But when it is on Atlântica or in Vieira Souto, there it is different. They don't shoot because they can't place a doctor or a lady at risk. They only shoot when there is no option, right?! Then the police negotiate, call a lawyer, promise that they won't kill. Just to not put life at risk. Why does it have to be different with the residents of the hillsides? Aren't we human as well? Most of the people here work, wake up early, pay their bills and **want to be respected**. I also want for the police to not put my life at risk (Débora, Cantagalo. EMPHASIS MINE).

Another problem was the abusive violence committed by police. The practices classified in this way can be divided into two types: the abuses of authority with the use of excessive violence and the deaths, above all those in which there is suspicion of execution. As they understand, in the favelas, any person, without distinction, can become a target of police violence; either man or woman, child or adult, whether they are in the *movement* or not. And it was exactly this discriminatory character of police violence that generated greater discomfort.

> (...) for the police there are just bandits here. In reality they know this is not true, that there are many working people who do nothing wrong, who are not involved with crime. But they do not care, they pretend they are all criminals. There is no one who lives on the hillsides who appears in the news saying that they were involved. So it's everyone (Ruth, Pavão-Pavãozinho).

This point reveals an important aspect of the local set of meanings. It involves a value distinction between those who adhere to the *movement* and those who do not, and how this distinction bases expectations by differentiated treatment. The construction of an identity that operates based on opposition (which is not static and absolute) between the categories of worker and bandit, addressed in a pioneer manner by Zaluar, remain deeply rooted among the residents of Cantagalo and Pavão-Pavãozinho. Even if the use of abusive violence or assassinations committed by police were reproachable in any situation, regardless of the adhesion or not of an individual to organized crime, the negative repercussion, the sense of being offended was more intense when the victims did not belong to the *movement*. These kinds of situations unequivocally demonstrate the incapacity and or refusal of the police to recognize the distinction between *good people* and those involved with crime.

> Me and my daughters work hard. We pay all our bills, electricity, cable [TV]. The difference, now, with the people of the street is that we live on the hill and the police do not respect our home or our life. We pay just like everyone, but we are still treated like animals. Like an animal no, like people of the worst type, because everyone treats animals well (Ruth, Pavão-Pavãozinho).

Beyond the procedures: respect, dignity and rights

The narratives presented until here appear to indicate a level of demand for moral recognition (Honneth 1996; Taylor 1994; Cardoso de Oliveira 2002). As understood, both the criticisms of the police as well as the positive narratives about the GPAE were presented with a reference to a certain notion of dignity constructed and shared locally. In this context, the category *respect*, recurringly triggered among my interlocutors to define situations where it is understood that dignity had been recognized or disregarded, occupied a central place in the local discourse. The residents signified their experiences with the police and with drug dealers through this category. Considering this, I believe that without proper attention to this category, and the web of meaning in which it is inserted, it appears to me improbable that we can clearly understand the reasons for a good evaluation of the community-policing unit. For this reason I am assuming that the heart of the question is not the impact caused by the procedures adopted by the GPAE, whether they modify local daily life or not, but how the residents of Cantagalo and Pavão-Pavãozinho signify these procedures.

The complaints about the police posture in the favelas were constructed based upon an understanding that the agents do not represent the residents, as is evident, for example, in the statements by Débora and Ruth. The gestures of disrespect are materialized by the lack of care and omissions, and by arbitrary excessive and illegal use of force, lethal or not. All of these practices, some with greater intensity than others, provoke a sense of ignominy responsible for the negative image of the police. It is interesting to note the reflections about this issue by Simião (2013) in relation to East Timor, where he uses the correlation established by Cardoso de Oliveira (2002) between "indignation" and "insult" to affirm that in relation to a certain group that shares the same symbolic elements, a gesture of moral insult against an individual can generate a collective sense of indignation. In the case addressed

here, the supposed police corruption represented a problem because it left the residents at the mercy of the *movement*, and is perceived as a lack of care for their safety. The way that the police operations were conducted in the favela, often provoking shootings, were also seen as a lack of care that placed lives at risk. Whether by omission, whether by negligence, the lack of care was experienced as a demonstration of disrespect, as was physical aggression committed by the agents themselves. Episodes of this type were experienced as ignominious acts, deliberately perpetrated to humiliate a person. The tone adopted towards episodes of this type were that of collective indignation generated by the incapacity or lack of interest of the police in recognizing the moral condition of the *good people*, workers, those who meet their obligations, who are not directly involved with drug trafficking.

As I affirm, the perception about the police was directly related to the understanding that they had of the procedures adopted by its agents. If they were respectful or not, if they recognized or not the moral condition of the people. In the specific case of the complaints, when they felt they were disrespected, the structure of the narrative was composed of three parts: there was an indication of the complaint itself; the expression of a demand and the desire for the situation to be changed. Even if they were not necessarily expressed in this order, both the statements of Ruth and Débora are a good example of this. The two complained about how the agents conducted operations in the favelas, and about the treatment of the residents, identifying these practices as disrespectful and affirming that they would like to be treated differently. To make their dissatisfaction clear, they made comparisons to the procedures that they supposed were adopted by the same agents when they work on the "asphalt."

The situation changed in relation to the GPAE. The experience is no longer signified as marked by disrespect. To interfere in the way that the drug dealers controlled the favelas was experienced as positive. As Augusto said, the police of the GPAE "*came and took control*" and with this the *movement* had to change how it acted in the favelas. Moreover, the police presence caused the episodes of violence, abuse and disrespect committed by the traffickers to become less frequent, as we can see from the statements of Ruth and her children. The repression to the exposure to guns was also seen as a demonstration of care for the security of those who do not belong to the *movement* as Conceição told me. The same was true in relation to

the shootings, the change in treatment issued by the police in their direct relation with the residents and the position of the command of the GPAE in terms of the finding of the deviation in the conduct of its agents. These procedures were signified as a demonstration of deference, of respect. I imagine that it became clear that the respectful treatment was seen as a right of the *good people*. I understand that this indicates there was a direct relation between the meaning attributed to the category respect and the local concepts of rights and justice. But what is this that they called *respect ?*

As we can see, the complaints against the police that we see here find support in constitutional norms. After all, corruption, police violence, executions and adoption of procedures that place lives in risk are practices that are subject to legal sanctions. But this is certainly not what is in question when they are speaking of situations experienced as respectful or disrespectful. This is clear when we observe the recurring use of categories such as *good people* and *workers* the qualifiers that allow explaining the dissatisfaction with the arbitrary and violent treatment. The adhesion to work ethics appeared as a factor that allows the subject to have his or her rights respected and distinguishes those who adhere to the *movement* from those who are *good people.*

The problem is precisely in the non-recognition of this distinction (which should imply differential treatment) by the police. To the contrary, the way that the agents proceed indicates that the understanding that is found is that the only difference to be considered is that which opposes the residents of the favelas and those from the asphalt, when what should operate is the recognition of the opposition between "*workers, good people*" on one hand, and the "*traffickers/bandits*", on the other. Statements like "*most people here work*", and that associate this condition to an expectation of being respected and of having their safety considered, approximate the residents of Pavão-Pavãozinho with those of Vieira Souto, reaffirming that those who work and do not adhere to crime should, regardless of their socio-economic condition, have their rights guaranteed.

The prerogative to have their rights respected does not extend to all residents of the favela. In the local perception there are people who should be treated so that their rights are protected – and abuses against them were considered an attack on their dignity – and there are those who because of their involvement with the *movement* were subject to becoming targets of abuse. Thus, it is clear that the demand for respectful treatment and dissatisfaction

with actions that they consider to be disrespectful have no relation to an inobservance of constitutional precepts that guarantee the universal scope of the rights of citizenship. The much discussed respect does not correspond to respect for norms, but for people; people, who depending on their choices, deserve to have their dignity recognized by proper treatment. This involves a concept derived from the expectation for recognition of that which Cardoso de Oliveira (2011b) called "moral substance of dignified people."

The reflections of Cardoso de Oliveira (2002, 2013) about recognition of Brazilian citizenship and dilemmas related to it are particularly helpful for understanding the centrality of the category *respect* as it appears in the narratives presented here. It suggests that although the notion of equality occupies a central space among the reflections about the effectuation of rights, constituting the principal measure for the evaluation of citizenship since the work of Marshall, the appreciation of its capillarity in the interior of a given society has not been capable of producing a satisfactory understanding of the contemporary demands for respect for rights (Cardoso de Oliveira 2011b). That is, the simple lack of consideration for the principle that all citizens are should be treated equally, and subject to the same rights and responsibilities, is not sufficient for understanding the demands and lack of satisfaction as presented in this article. According to Cardoso de Oliveira, to understand them, it is necessary to pay attention to how notions of equality, justice and dignity are articulated in the context of conflicting social relations (Cardoso de Oliveira 2011a). In a scenario such as this, the notion of dignity is essential even when it involves relations guided by hierarchical principles. Thus, what generates dissatisfaction or indignation is not the absence of sharing of a mutual perception of equality, but the perception that the moral condition is not recognized as being sufficient to have the subject become a target of a respectful treatment that considers his or her dignity.

The analysis of the statements presented here allows us to consider that these demands for recognition of dignity are materialized in the statements of my interlocutors by the expectation of respectful treatment. The police procedures indicated as problematic are those experienced as not recognizing the moral condition of the *good people* and *workers*. In turn, the way that the GPAE operated in the favelas caused the residents to believe that they were receiving decent treatment. In other words, the police group was able to have the residents feel respected.

Final Considerations

Caldeira and Holston suggest that various Latin American countries, including Brazil, have characteristics of a "*disjunctive democracy*" (Holston 1999, 2008; Caldeira 2000). The expression serves to classify emerging democracies that have a healthy electoral system, but where formal institutions for social control, especially the public safety apparatus and the justice system are incapable of assuring the civil rights of their citizens in a universal manner. Brazil certainly fits this definition. Not only has the state shown itself to be incapable of guaranteeing the basic rights of the population, but it is one of the main violators of those rights. Despite the expectations generated by the promulgation of the Constitution of 1988 and of the adhesion of the Brazilian state to international human rights treaties (Adorno 1998; Kant de Lima 2001), in practice, the last thirty years have been marked by increased rates of crime, police violence and homicide (Caldeira 2000; Minayo 2009; Zaluar 2010). Whether due to selectivity, brutality and lethal police actions, or because of the violent dynamics of organized crime related to drug trafficking, the guarantee of civil rights is still presented as an complex challenge.

Part of the problem has historic roots and concerns the increasing poor reputation of the police, which had been organized to guarantee the interests of the eventual detainers of state power. As various researchers have indicated, it is up to the police to impose harmonic order that controls certain classes and social groups considered to be a threat to the *status quo* (Holloway 1997; Muniz 1999; Mesquita Neto 2004). Within this framework, it has been difficult to incorporate respect for the civil rights of society as a whole as a priority concern of public safety institutions. The other part of the problem involves the articulation begun in the 1980s, between the intensification of international arms dealing and the consolidation of groups of narco-traffickers, which, in the case of Rio de Janeiro, began to operate in the favelas and poor neighborhoods (Zaluar 1985, 1994, 2000). Since then, the so-called "war" against violence began to take place in the favelas and periphery of the state. The consequences of this were already discussed above; I emphasize the stigma about these areas and successive episodes of a lack of consideration of basic rights of their residents, with the justification that they were necessary to defeat the "enemy."

Nevertheless, favela residents do not experience the assault on their rights passively, as victims relegated to silent suffering, made invisible by the

combination of oppression by institutions for social control and by the lack of interest of the communication media in recording the daily abuses that take place in these locations. They use the language and the means available to them to denounce the abuses and call for change in this situation. Various researchers, beginning with Durham (1997), point out that, since the 1970s, minority groups have been incorporating the discourse of individual rights and of citizenship to denounce inequalities. Even if with different meanings, progressively, the language of rights acquires legitimacy among the various segments of society (Machado 2003; Cardoso de Oliveira 2011a, 2011b; Cardoso 2013; 2014). This allows us to question if we are witnessing a modification, at least in the discursive field, of that situation described by DaMatta (2000), in which citizenship and the citizen were signified negatively.

In the case of favela residents, it is perceived that the demands for consideration of rights are not always revealed in the public space in the conventional manner that is conceived by political participation. When their narratives or charges are not sufficient to move governments and public opinion, their dissatisfaction can emerge in other forms, as is the case of the riots. It is not new for a dissatisfaction with the lack of consideration of rights to trigger collective violent manifestations (Tambiah 1996; Holston and Appadurai, 1999). These events are capable of simultaneously allowing discontent to find a channel to be revealed and for the responsible agencies become sensitized (to some degree) to the demands.

The perception that certain violent episodes are presented as a language that communicates discontent and desire for a transformation in social relations is supported in anthropological literature. In this sense, violent episodes like riots can be analyzed as "*critical events*", which can simultaneously be mobilizers and transformers, as indicated by Das (1995), given that by acquiring a public dimension they acquire the potential to produce meanings and reorient practices. The riots that have at times erupted in Rio de Janeiro, as a rule, denounce abuses and reveal dissatisfaction with the treatment by the police. They are reactions to that which we can call "unsupportable insults." At the same time they also have the potential to pressure the state government to make changes or to express that measures seeking the modification of this situation will be adopted. This is what took place in Cantagalo and in Pavão-Pavãozinho.

The riot that took place in Copacabana helps us to frame the situation

presented until now. We can consider that the riot revealed in the public sphere the dissatisfaction with the police's refusal to recognize the residents of Pavão-Pavãozinho and of Cantagalo as subjects that carry dignity and those who deserve to be treated with respect. This riot also expressed a demand for a change in this situation. After all, as one of the residents said, they also want to be treated with respect, which is a right of the *good people* and *workers*. The arrival of the GPAE and what took place since then is signified by the residents as this recognition.

To conclude, it should be questioned if the specific experience of the Cantagalo and Pavão-Pavãozinho can teach us something about the possibilities for success or failure of initiatives of this nature. I believe they can. As various authors demonstrate, for projects based on the premise of community policing to be successful, they must have the support of the population that will receive the service. For this to happen there must be a sharing of trust, side by side. Without this there is no possibility to establish a relationship capable of providing the "coproduction of security."

The lack of trust of the police among the residents of the favelas of Rio de Janeiro is historic and not without cause. To change this situation requires time and commitment that must go beyond conventional policies and electoral interests, in addition to a constant effort to change the police culture. If not, the means will not be found to bring the two sides together, which in most cases are seen as antagonistic. Overcoming this difficulty will only be possible if the residents of these areas see in the police action recognition of their moral condition as subjects who deserve to be treated with respect. For this to occur the police must pay attention to the residents' demands, complaints and notions of rights and justice.

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