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Peace journalism where there is no war.

Conflict-sensitive reporting on urban violence and public security in Brazil and its potential role in conflict transformation

Kurzfassung: In einem Land wie Brasilien bedeutet die Abwesenheit von Krieg nicht automatisch Frieden für die Bevölkerung. Hohe Mordraten, Polizeimorde und gewalttätige Konflikte in urbanen Gebieten (in den Favelas und darüber hinaus) sind Teil des brasilianischen Alltags. Die nationalen Medien unterstützen hierbei die Entstehung eines Diskurses der Gewalt, der diesen Status Quo aufrechterhält – doch können die Medien eine positive Rolle im Konflikt spielen und eine friedensfördernde Kraft werden? Durch den Versuch, zu bestimmen, ob Friedensjournalismus ein nützliches Werkzeug bei der Berichterstattung über urbane Gewalt in Brasilien ist, analysiert diese qualitative Fallstudie ein Sonderdossier der Zeitung O Globo. Die Berichte aus Rio De Janeiro, welche unter de-eskalationsorientierten Konfliktberichterstattungskriterien in der vorliegenden Studie analysiert werden, stellen ein neuartiges Konzept der öffentlichen Sicherheit vor – die befriedenden Polizeieinheiten (UPP). Die Analyse legt eine Zusammensetzung von Eskalations- und Deeskalationselementen in der Artikelreihe offen, und obwohl sich das hier gewählte Untersuchungsobjekt als nicht konfliktensibel herausstellt, zeigt das theoretische Gerüst des Friedensjournalismus selbst großes Potenzial, die Berichterstattung über urbane Gewalt in Brasilien zu verbessern.

Abstract: The absence of war in a country like Brazil does not mean peace for its population. High murder rates, police killings, and violent urban conflict (in the favelas and beyond) are part of Brazilians' daily lives. The national media helps construct the discourses of violence which contribute to maintain the status quo – but can the media play a positive role in the conflict and become a force for peace? In attempting to determine whether Peace Journalism is a useful tool for reporting about urban violence in Brazil, this qualitative case study analyzes a special series in Rio de Janeiro newspaper O Globo about a novel public security model in the city – the Pacifier Police Units (UPP) – by employing adapted De-Escalation-Oriented Conflict Coverage (DEOCC) criteria. The analysis reveals a combination of escalation and de-escalation elements in the series, and while this particular example does not prove to be conflict sensitive, the Peace Journalism framework itself shows great potential if implemented to improve coverage of urban violence in Brazil.

1. Introduction

By most definitions, Brazil is considered a country at peace. According to one of the most respected indicators in Europe, the Heidelberg Institute for International Conflict Research's Conflict Barometer of 2009, there were 31 high-intensity violent conflicts in the world during that year, including 7 wars, but none of them were in Brazil.¹ Yet, almost 50,000 people have died every year in Brazil for the past decade as a result of violence (Waiselfisz, 2010).² These numbers make the casualties in the Afghanistan war, for instance, pale in comparison.³ For the millions of Brazilians who are daily exposed to and confronted with such levels of violence, "peace" has a very different meaning than the simple absence of war. Peace in Brazil is a matter of public security, and the insecurity of daily life is one of the population's greatest concerns.⁴ Needless to say, reducing violence in the country, and attempting to address its underlying causes in order to prevent violent conflict, is one of the top priorities for both the government and civil society.

In light of this prioritization, the dialogue about violence and public security in Brazil has occupied a central stage in the public sphere. At the macro-level, this dialogue is mediated, shaped, and amplified by the media. As such, the media in general, and especially the news media in particular, has the power to influence public opinion and, thus, the potential to influence actions taken with regards to violence and public security in Brazil, be it legislation or political processes, private initiatives or individual reactions. It follows that the Brazilian media can exert its influence so as to be a part of the solution and a force for peace; on the other hand, its influence can have disastrous consequences and serve to perpetuate and aggravate the problem.

The news media in Brazil, just as in any other country with at least a relative amount of press freedom, is guided by certain

1. The only conflict in Brazil present in the report was the political conflict over land in between the MST (Landless Movement) and the Brazilian government, rated a 2 ("manifest conflict") on a 1 to 5 scale.
2. The author compiled, in his latest report, homicide data from 1997 to 2007 in Brazil. The total number of homicides in the country for that period ranged from 40,507 (1997) to 51,043 (2003) per year. In the latest data, from 2007, a total of 47,707 homicides were reported. A total of 512,216 homicides have been reported for the eleven-year period.
3. According to the Afghanistan Conflict Monitor Website, estimates of military casualties in the Afghanistan war point to almost 2,000 deaths since 2001; while official figures for the total civilian casualties since the start of the war do not exist, the U.N. reported that 2,400 civilians were killed in 2009.
4. A study cited by Caldeirinha and Albernaz (2009) conducted by the United Nations Development Program (UNPD) with 500,000 Brazilians in 2008 asked participants what would have to change for life in Brazil to improve; "violence" was the second most given answer (14%), just behind education (18%).

journalistic standards. These standards, especially in the so-called “quality” press, are employed in the pursuit of “good journalism”: accuracy, objectivity, neutrality, impartiality and detachment are some that are often named (cf. Howard, 2003; Kempf, 2007). But to what extent are these journalistic standards contributing to the reporting about violence in Brazil, so that it becomes part of the solution and not of the problem? Can journalists be guided by the ethical norms and values of their profession and still contribute to the alleviation of violent conflicts? In other words, if “bad journalism” can incite more violence, how can “good journalism” promote peace?

A number of scholars have devoted themselves to answering this question, and some of them have come up with what they believe is an answer: Peace Journalism. This approach attempts to maximize the media’s potential to contribute to peaceful conflict resolution. However, these scholars have, up to date, only described and analyzed Peace Journalism as opposed to War Journalism, that is, they have proposed it as an alternative when reporting about high-intensity, political, ethnic and/or religious violent conflicts, which involve armies and military interventions. As already mentioned, however, the absence of war in Brazil does not guarantee peace for its people. Therefore, Peace Journalism could potentially be beneficial as an alternative to “mainstream” reporting about social conflicts, violence and public security in Brazil. It is my intent to explore that possibility.

1.1 Starting point: Problem diagnosis

This work attempts to address the role of the Brazilian media in perpetuating violent discourses which feed into societal insecurities and, in turn, intensify societal tensions and divisions which are themselves contributing factors to violence. This vicious cycle of fear and violence has been discussed at length by scholars (cf. Caldeira and Holston, 1999; Leite, 2000; Caldeira, 2000, 2002; Oliveira, 2003; Penglase, 2007); however, the debate as to the way in which this cycle can be broken is still open, and many possibilities are still unexplored.

As a result of the elevated levels of violence, many citizens and government officials have called for authoritative, and sometimes brutal, measures to combat crime in Brazil’s large urban areas. This has led to the wide acceptance of systematic human rights violations, including a disproportionately high number of police killings (HRW, 2009; Ahnen, 2007; Caldeira, 2002). These demands for “eye for an eye” security policies are triggered in part by actual violence, but in part also because of the perception of violence created by violent discourses. However, such heavy-handed strategies have done little to tackle the root causes of violence in Brazil. Combating the high levels of violence in Brazil cannot be achieved single-handedly through force, but must invariably comprise cooperation and dialogue involving all layers of society.

The Brazilian media could play a vital role in stimulating this dialogue and providing a space for investigation, analysis and reflection on the causes of violence and possible solutions for the problem, as well as evaluating the current security policies pursued by the government and acting as a watchdog while denouncing human rights violations. However, media analysts have concluded that the Brazilian media has currently not fulfilled its potential when it comes to the coverage of public security matters (Ramos and Paiva, 2007), and may even work against conflict resolution by disseminating stereotypes, simplifying the complexity of the problem and helping to widen the gap in between different societal groups based on class and the spatial divisions of urban areas (Lisovsky and Vaz, 2009; Varjão, 2009).

No other place has been more associated with violence and societal divisions in Brazil than the city of Rio de Janeiro. The city has famously been stage to some of the bloodiest “battles” between (real or supposed) drug traffickers and the police, leading the press to constantly refer to the city as being in a “war” (Leite, 2000; Leu, 2004; Penglase, 2007). Rio is also a city of contrasts: while the wealthier populations live in expensive beachfront neighborhoods, hundreds of thousands of poor residents live in illegal squatter settlements up on the hills surrounding the city – the favelas, places which are generally associated with violence and criminality (Lisovsky and Vaz, 2009; Penglase, 2007; Machado da Silva, 2008). For this reason, Rio has been called “The Divided City”.

However, a new model of public security has been implemented in Rio de Janeiro which, according to its proponents, attempts to approximate the police to the favela residents and aims to support social initiatives and promote the inclusion of the populations: these are the Pacifier Police Units (UPP), first inaugurated in December of 2008 and now present in 13 of the city’s favelas. These units permanently occupy areas previously “controlled” by drug trafficking groups in order to “pacify” them. This new policing method has received extensive – overwhelmingly positive – coverage in the press, thus opening new possibilities for debate about security policy in the city.

But are news media channels truly taking advantage of this opportunity in order to produce critical, in-depth, analytical coverage of public security in Rio de Janeiro? Is the press merely echoing police reports, or is it digging deeper and looking for the bigger picture? Are journalists shaping the debate so that it addresses the roots of violence and conflict in the city? Are they weighing the UPP approach against other possible solutions to the security problem? In summary, are they pursuing journalism which is oriented towards the peaceful resolution of the conflict?

Answering these questions is not a simple task, especially because of the immense diversity in journalistic standards and approaches, from medium to medium (newspapers, television, internet), from publication to publication, and even from one individual reporter to the next. This work will examine closely one example of how the UPP concept is being approached in the media – a special, award-winning series of articles in the newspaper *O Globo* – with the full awareness that this represents a fraction of the recent UPP coverage, and the results are in no way to be generalized. In doing so, it will attempt to shed some light on the issue through a relevant case as well as provide a starting point for broader analyses.

1.2 Theories and methods

This study is guided by the theoretical foundations and framework of Peace Journalism. Underlying it are Johan Galtung's concepts of structural and cultural violence, in which violence is not seen as merely direct and physical, but also the result of societal and institutional mechanisms which prohibit a person from fulfilling his or her potential, such as racism, poverty, gender and religious discrimination (cf. Lynch and McGoldrick, 2005). While war reporting focuses mostly on individual, isolated events of physical violence, Galtung and the proponents of Peace Journalism argue that news reports should contextualize the violence and expose the structural and cultural roots of the conflict. It adopts a "win-win" orientation as opposed to the classic portrayal of conflict as a zero-sum, "win-lose" scenario. It avoids simplifying the conflict into two sides and polarizing them into an "us" versus "them" perspective, arguing that there are always many sides to conflict (Galtung, 1998). Thus, it attempts to give readers and viewers a more truthful account of the conflict by presenting a more complete and complex picture that de-stigmatizes the "enemy" and shows violence as only one way of responding to conflict among many others.

Just as Peace Journalism, this work also relies on theories of Psychology, Communication and Media Studies, especially in the basic (and well-established) assumption that the Media not only reflects reality, but also actively contributes to the shaping of reality (cf. Kempf, 2003). This constructivist approach provides the foundation as well as the underlying argument for the crucial role that media plays when reporting about conflict (cf. Howard, 2003). Two important theories derived from this approach are "Agenda-Setting" and "Framing". Agenda-setting theory states that, although journalists don't necessarily tell their audiences what to think, they certainly tell them what to think about (Cohen, 1963). In addition, Framing theory states that the way the media uses language and presents certain topics can alter the perception of audiences and subconsciously encourage certain interpretations of the facts (cf. Boaz, 2005); these selective procedures shape the societal discourse and thus have very practical social, cultural, economical and political implications.

To determine whether Peace Journalism is a useful tool for reporting about violence in Brazil, this work "zooms in" to a specific context, a specific medium and a specific situation which present all of the right conditions for this illustrative, qualitative case study. The city of Rio de Janeiro was chosen as the geographical location, both for its high levels of violence and criminality and its high-profile coverage of conflict in between the police and drug gangs in the favelas, as well as for being the place with some of the most controversial security policies in the country.¹ The particular topic to be analyzed, the Pacifier Police Units (UPP), was selected because of receiving high visibility and intense coverage from the press in the past year, for being an innovative public security approach which is not without its controversies, and for marking an apparent shift in the framing of the conflict (which will be further explored in this study). The medium chosen was the newspaper *O Globo*, for being the quality newspaper with the highest circulation in Rio and the second highest circulation in the country,² and having a web portal with free access to most articles, further increasing its reach.³ Finally, the special multimedia series produced by *O Globo* regarding the implementation of UPPs, named "Democracy in the Favelas", was chosen because of its critical acclaim (it won the Regional category of the most important Journalism award in the country, the Esso Prize for Journalism, in 2009) and because it provides a consistent and self-contained unit for analysis.

The series, "Democracy in the Favelas", contains 24 articles and an online multimedia presentation with photos of the "pacified" favelas, maps showing their locations, music and videos. Although the multimedia aspects will be mentioned to provide context, the analysis will focus mainly on the text of the articles. The texts will be analyzed qualitatively employing the De-Escalation-Oriented Conflict Coverage (DEOCC) criteria developed by Kempf (2003) and updated in Kempf (2010). These criteria, which expand on the characteristics of Peace vs. War Journalism developed by Galtung, help determine ways in which the framing of a conflict in the news can contribute to a perception of escalation or of de-escalation of the conflict. The criteria were adapted to fit the particular context of urban violence and conflict as opposed to the context of war and military force (see Tables 1.1-1.6) and new ones were added which are based on the precepts of Peace Journalism but take the specific problems of conflict reporting in Brazil into consideration (see Tables 2.1-2.4).

1. "Rio de Janeiro has been considered an exemplary case, almost an ideal type, of metropolis affected by the question of public (in)security. ... The city presents, in high doses, all of the ingredients... which make it ... a good case for thinking about these questions" (Machado da Silva, Leite and Fridman, 2005).
2. Brazil's National Association of Newspapers reported *O Globo* had a daily circulation of 257,262 issues in 2009, only behind the tabloid *Super Noticia* (289.436), from Belo Horizonte, and the quality newspaper *Folha de S. Paulo* (295.558).
3. Brazil has the largest online population in Latin America, with 42.6 million internet users (Herscovitz, 2009).

This study will focus specifically in answering the following question:

- To what extent, if at all, is the coverage of the Pacifier Police Units in the series "Democracy in the Favelas" from newspaper *O Globo* conflict-sensitive? Is it escalation-oriented or de-escalation-oriented?

In answering that specific question, the author intends to arrive at a conclusion regarding the following broader, contextual questions:

- To what extent, if at all, is the Peace Journalism framework applicable to coverage about urban violence and conflict in Brazilian large urban areas?
- To what extent, if at all, can conflict-sensitive reporting play a role in transforming the conflict at hand?

The paper is structured as follows: Section 2 will explore the public security issues in Brazil and in Rio which must be considered in order to understand the current societal conflict which leads to increased levels of violence in the city and country. Section 3 will present how the Brazilian media has reported on violence, criminality and public security so far, against the backdrop of which the articles to be analyzed should be contextualized. Section 4 will present the new UPP approach. Section 5 contains the analysis of the *O Globo* series "Democracy in the Favelas". In the conclusion, the results will be presented, as well as recommendations for further research.

2. Public security in Brazil: Issues, perceptions, discourses

Brazil is a democratic country, but has not been one for long. The first popular elections after 20 years of military dictatorship happened in 1985; the Brazilian Constitution was adopted in 1988. Yet it was also about that time that urban violence started increasing alarmingly and creating a generalized sense of insecurity in large Brazilian cities, and with it the call for a repressive State apparatus. Authors have called this the paradox of democratization in Brazil (cf. Holston, 2008). Brazil operates largely as a 'disjunctive democracy', in which democratic elections are successful and all are granted equal rights on paper, yet in practice only a few privileged citizens have access to civil and legal rights (Holston and Caldeira, 1999). This disjunction in the Brazilian democratization process is directly related to the social conflict from which the urban violence also originates.

The rise in violence in Brazilian cities is generally attributed to the appearance and establishment of the drug trade. Several gang factions, formed in the prisons in the 90s to demand better conditions for prisoners (Holston, 2008), took charge of drug trafficking operations, settled in the favelas, divided their territories, armed themselves heavily and fought against each other and the police to maintain control over drug sales locations. Despite the popular belief that drug traffickers replace the State in the favelas, both the gangs and the State (to a greater or lesser degree) exert influence in these areas; even those "controlled" by certain factions which impose their own rule of law count on sporadic and weak public presence through social projects and other state-sponsored organs (Machado da Silva, 2008). Although drug traffickers provide the residents with services they lack because of the absence of the state in order to gain acceptance and recruit new members, they also routinely use violence as a symbolic demonstration of power, threatening those who deny them assistance or who collaborate with the police and other drug factions, carrying out torture and executions and causing for widespread fear (Penglase, 2005).

Recently, a new dimension to the conflict has emerged. As a response to calls for "justice with one's hands", militias, or paramilitary groups, have been forming in the past decade, usually by former or off-duty police officers and sympathizers. These armed groups fight against the drug traffickers but also attempt to take control of the "occupied" territories under pretext of offering security to the population and keeping drug gangs away. They charge for their security services, as well as monopolize additional local services which would otherwise be offered by the traffickers, such as transportation and illegal cable (Machado da Silva, 2008). This is further evidence that urban violence is intrinsically connected to economic factors: in the same way that violence has become an integral part of the drug trade's business model, those who present themselves as countering that violence have adopted that same model, which depends on violence for its existence. In addition, the government and its agents are also involved in these violent economies through extortion and corruption – police officers are regularly caught transacting with drug dealers, taking fees for looking the other way and supplying them with weapons.

Although the victims of violence in Brazil and Rio are overwhelmingly poor, and homicide rates are highly influenced by race, gender and age¹, to say that poverty and social inequality are the only causes for the high levels of violence would be to simplify a very complex problem (Zaluar, 2002, 2007; Oliveira, 2003), which also involves a desire by young males

1. The homicide rate for 22 to 24-year-old black males from the state of Rio in 2006 was 380 per 100,000 inhabitants, significantly above the average rate for the whole state (47,5 per 100,000) – Brazil's average homicide rate for that year was 26,6 per 100,000 (Ramos 2009).

who join drug trafficking gangs to have a sensation of power by owning a weapon and to be able to attract women (Ramos, 2009). Nevertheless, the fact that favela residents are stereotyped, ostracized and discriminated against cannot be dissociated from the causes of violence. Although only a small fraction of favela residents have direct connections to drug trafficking, there is a common assumption in Brazilian popular culture that favelas are dangerous places and its residents are all either potential or actual criminals (Penglase, 2007; Machado da Silva, 2008; OMCT, 2009). The criminalization of poverty has dire consequences in the shape of public security policies that target the favelas and the poor (cf. Caldeira and Houston, 1999; Espinheira, 2008; OMCT, 2009), as discussed in greater detail in the following section.

2.1 Police violence

According to a Human Rights Watch report, more than 11,000 people have been killed by the Rio and São Paulo state polices since 2003; in the state of Rio, a record 1,330 police killings, allegedly self-defense acts, took place in 2007 (HRW, 2009). A substantial portion of these so-called "resistance" killings have been found to be extrajudicial executions (HRW, 2009: 2). Authoritarian police practices in Brazil are not new, as they stem from the times of the dictatorship, when national defense was intertwined with the maintenance of internal order (Zaverucha, 2008). The constitution of 1988 preserved the previous divisions of the police into two sections: the civil police and the military police – the latter, as the name indicates, incorporating the structures and training techniques of the army. The constitution also preserved the law created under the dictatorship that military police crimes can only be judged by a military court, thus maintaining a system which assures impunity for extra-legal actions (Holston and Caldeira, 1999).

The early 90s brought violent police actions to the public spotlight. In Rio, in 1993, two police killing events which were highly publicized by the media took place: the Candelária¹ and the Vigário Geral² massacres. Although these episodes were responsible for intense civil society mobilization, including the creation of two of the most important of Rio's anti-violence NGOs – Afro-Reggae and Viva Rio – violent acts committed by police officers have endured, with the latest police massacre as recent as 2005.³

Violent force is not just a recourse used by "rogue" or off-duty police officers, however, but as an integral part of police strategies which mostly target the favelas for harboring drug traffickers. Prime examples of that are the so-called "mega-operations", which involve both civil and military police as well as the armed forces. A particularly high-profile mega-operation, which took place in the favela cluster "Complexo do Alemão" in 2007, involved a force of 1,350 officers/troops; 19 people were killed and 44 were injured, even though only 14 rifles and a small amount of drugs were seized, as well as a disproportionately low number of arrests were made (Soares e Souza and Pedrinhas, 2009). Another symbol of the militarization of police and the abuse of force in Rio is the "caveirão" ("big skull"),⁴ an armored tank the military police's Special Police Operations Battalion (BOPE, also known as the "Elite Squad") uses since 2005 to enter the favelas and intimidate the population (Amnesty International, 2006), announcing through its speakers "we will roll over [you], we will get your soul" (Machado da Silva, Leite and Fridman, 2005: 18). The "caveirão" has not only caused traumas and psychological problems among the favela residents and been responsible for the "accidental" deaths of several civilians, including an 11-year-old child, but has also provoked the escalation of violence through an arms race with drug traffickers, who started investing in heavier artillery items after its introduction (Amnesty International, 2006).

Breaking the pattern of police violence in Brazil has proved to be particularly difficult because, despite general disapproval of the police as a corrupt, inefficient institution, there is still wide public support for a police that kills. Caldeira argues that this paradox is justified not only by the history of disrespect for civil rights in the country, particularly when they apply to poor people, but by "a deep disbelief in the fairness of the justice system and its biased functioning" (Caldeira, 2002: 236). Surprisingly, the approval for violent policing practices comes even from those who most suffer from them. Although favela residents reportedly feel discriminated by the police, because they do not differentiate in between "good people" and the actual criminals, many are not against violent policing methods per se; their complaint is that these are directed at the wrong persons (Machado da Silva, 2008).

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1. On July 23, 1993, off-duty cops opened fire against more than 50 street children and teenagers, who were asleep in front of the Candelária church in downtown Rio, in retribution for an earlier episode in which some of the children threw stones at a police vehicle. Eight children were killed and two were severely wounded.
 2. On August 29, 1993, 21 residents of the Vigário Geral favela in Rio were murdered. Investigations showed the killers were around 50 off-duty police officers wearing masks. The killings were in retribution to the murder of four police officers by drug traffickers who operate in the favela (Ramos and Paiva, 2007). The officers shot randomly and none of the victims were drug traffickers (Arias and Rodrigues, 2006).
 3. On March 31, 2005, 29 people from two small municipalities in Rio state were murdered by police officers in retaliation for the arrest of 8 colleagues, who had been accused of murder.
 4. The name of the tank is an allusion to BOPE's emblem, a skull impaled by a dagger over two crossed golden guns.

2.2 Fear and war narratives

Brazilians live in a society of fear (Espinheira, 2008). This fear is derived in part from the actual, real-life phenomenon of violence, which interrupts the routine and affects the everyday lives of Brazilians. However, this fear is fed and amplified by the so-called “talk of crime”, discourse narratives about crime and violence which, in attempting to make sense of and counteract the problem, end up creating and establishing stereotypes which help reinforce the violence cycle (Cadeira and Holston, 1999; Caldeira, 2000).

The perception of a “state of war” in the streets of Rio and the failure and inefficiency of public safety measures to protect its citizens gave rise to a culture of fear in the 90s which redefined the relationship Rio residents have with its public spaces and fellow citizens. This started cementing the dichotomies “hill vs. asphalt”¹ and “bandits vs. police” as two aspects of the same “war”, in which the bandits come from the hills and the police defends the asphalt (Leite, 2000). When confronted with the killing of innocent bystanders in favelas, police officers allude to the need to defend themselves in “war”. As Espinheira states, “by using the concept of ‘civil war’, the police officer shields himself in the justification that, in every war, there’s a record of losses, and that everything hangs on killing to not get killed, which implies shooting first” (2008: 46).

The social construction of the “dangerous classes” (cf. Leite, 2000; Machado da Silva, 2008; Espinheira, 2008), that is, the created common-sense understanding that the poor favela-dwellers are potential criminals and should therefore be treated with suspicion, gave rise to a security discourse by the middle-class and elites which focused mostly on heavy-handed policies as the solution for urban violence. Along with it came the argument that such war-like conditions as those being experienced at the time did not allow for the consideration of human or civil rights when dealing with dangerous zones (Leite, 2000). It has become part of the national discourse to state that defending human rights is equivalent to granting “privileges for bandits” (Caldeira, 2000, 2002; Holston, 2008). This has reinforced the relativization of civil and human rights based on “merit”: as rights are seen as scarce resources in Brazilian society, they should only be given to those who “deserve” it (Leite, 2000). More often than not, however, those who “deserve” these rights are the ones who can afford to buy them, that is, those with “power and resources to manipulate the legal system” (Holston, 2008: 14).

3. Violence and Public Security in the Brazilian News Media

3.1 Media discourses of violence and criminality

Previously, we have observed how discourses of violence can have a tremendous impact on how violence is perceived, dealt with, and propagated. In this chapter, the central role of the news media as a driver of these discourses will be analyzed. Although the media does not create discourse in a vacuum and is a vehicle for a variety of discourses which exist on their own – the political, academic and civil society discourses, for instance – the news media is itself a creator of meaning which selects, consolidates and amplifies all of these different discourses into one large collective narrative. The press reflects common stereotypes which are intrinsic to the national discourse about crime and violence and have been elevated to the status of “common sense”. Thus, there is a close exchange between the micro and macro dimensions of the violence discourses, in which individual experiences, behaviors, and prejudices feed into news production, and the news media, in turn, affects the way individuals perceive violence and form their preconceived notions on the issue.

As levels of violence have risen over the years, so has the media attention to crime and security increased. This correlation is not necessarily always proportional, however. In the 80s, when violence was mostly restricted to the favela territories, it did not feature prominently in the news. The coverage of violence only became more intense when it happened in “noble” areas of the city (Leu, 2004). This focus of the press not as much on the violence itself, but on the transgression of violence into “civilized” territories was observed in the 90s, as press reports on two key events – coordinated beachside muggings by favela teenagers in 1992 popularly known as the “arrastão”, or “dragnet”, and the Brazilian army’s invasion of several of Rio’s favelas in 1994, in what became known as “Operation Rio” – marked a key shift in the discourse about crime and violence in Rio, in which crime reports formed a neo-racist narrative of spatial stigmatization, using imageries of the dangers of “invasion” and “infection” which must be controlled (Penglase, 2007). The almost exclusive concern of the press with the repercussion of violence within Rio’s “nobler” neighborhoods consequentially led to an increase in spectacularized violence in those areas. Indeed, drug traffickers, aware of its higher newsworthiness, orchestrated attacks in the “asphalt”, using fear and insecurity as symbolic weapons in order to make themselves visible outside the favelas and gain media and public attention (Leu, 2004; Penglase, 2005).

The militarized approach to public security in Rio reflects the mood created by the press, which in turn accepts this military

1. “Hill” is a nickname used to identify the favelas, which are usually – but not exclusively – located on the city’s hills. “Asphalt” refers to the more “civilized” areas of the city where middle and upper classes live, asphalted streets being one of many public services they enjoy which are not always (but nowadays more often than not) present in the favelas.

logic almost without question. This is illustrated by the insistence of the press in referring to Rio in news reports as being in a state of "war", even nicknaming a dangerous part of the city "Gaza Strip", which has helped construct the image of Rio as a city torn by conflict (Penglase, 2007). The alarmist, polarized language in post-9/11 international news of war and terrorism, good and evil was adopted by the Rio press for its local violence discourses. During the Iraq War in 2003, a different war dominated the pages of Rio newspapers: the war in the city's streets. Considering the attacks in question were, as discussed above, mostly symbolic, Leu argues that "what the newspapers have been calling the 'War in Rio', therefore, is more accurately a 'War *on* Rio', on the dominant representation, perception and occupation of the city by its ruling classes" (2004: 351).

Needless to say, not all violent acts by drug traffickers and criminals are purely symbolic in nature, and their cruelty has also been highlighted by the press – especially when the victim is someone journalists and their audiences can identify or empathize with. One case in particular gained special relevance through its proximity: the brutal murder of prominent television journalist Tim Lopes in 2002, as he investigated the sexual exploitation of minors at a drug-trafficker-sponsored "baile funk" (dance party with funk music) in a Rio favela. This and other cases which outraged society have given rise to the representation of drug dealers as monstrous and irrational (Leu, 2004). However, taking the common lack of differentiation in between drug traffickers, criminals, suspects, and merely poor favela residents – both by the police and the press – the dehumanization of the "other" becomes generalized, the categories diffuse, the "enemy" unclear. This has been evidenced by the labeling in the press of people as "bandidos" (bandits), even when no clear indication exists that the individuals in question committed a criminal act.

If the "anonymization" and dehumanization of the criminal is commonplace in the Brazilian press, the opposite process happens to the victims of crime and their loved ones. Stories are written so as to generate an emotional response from the reader as well as an association with the victim, making the reader a "virtual victim": "it could have happened to me" (Lissovski and Vaz, 2009: 35). However, in order to produce that identification effect on the reader (who is predominantly from the middle to upper-class layers of society), there is an inversion in the profile of preferential vs. occasional victims in the news; whereas, statistically, poor favela residents are much more likely to be a victim of violent crime, news about violent crimes portray predominantly middle- to upper-class victims (Varjão, 2009). Therefore, as the news value of an event is determined by how much interest it generates among its readers, priority is given to the coverage of violence that affects the wealthier layers of the population, helping create the common belief that these groups, and not the poor, are the greatest victims of violence.

3.2 The current state of newspaper coverage of crime and violence

Ramos and Paiva (2007) claim that the coverage of violence in the Brazilian press has greatly evolved over the decades. Journalists have gradually refrained from employing sensationalist language and started adopting a more serious approach. In their study, the authors found that only 0.4% of the articles suggested limitations on the rights of criminals as a solution for the violence.¹ In addition, starting in the 90s, newspapers started giving more attention to public safety issues instead of simply covering violent incidents. However, there are still only a relatively small number of articles dealing mainly with security policy (3.6% in national and 4.2% in Rio newspapers). In addition, the majority of news stories in the sector, both nationally and in Rio (63.8% and 77.7% respectively), only present factual information, without offering either context or analysis. The percentage of articles dedicated to individual events (murder, thefts, accidents, etc.) was even higher: in both cases over 80%. These numbers show that there is still very little initiative from the press to pursue investigative and analytical stories instead of just reacting to day-to-day happenings (Ramos and Paiva, 2007).

Another challenge is the diversification of the news sources. The study shows police are still the main voices in crime and security coverage, being the main source of 32.5% of news articles in the national sample, analyzed in 2004; when articles with no sources were excluded (such as columns), the percentage increased to 43.2%. In addition, more than 50% of the articles with the police as its main source were single-sourced, that is, presented one person or institution as the only source of information. This dependence on police reports indicates that journalists often simply transmit information given by official sources without questioning their actions or the reasoning behind them. Journalists have attributed this problem to the difficulty in finding reliable sources of information, including their lack of trust in residents' associations in the favelas, saying they are often spokespersons for drug traffickers (Ramos and Paiva, 2007).

While Brazilian journalists rely excessively on police officers as sources, the other side – those who are suspected or convicted of committing a crime – are ignored, or, as Ramos and Paiva state, "have gained the status of enemy troops" (2007: 57). While interviews with drug traffickers used to be more common in the past, today many journalists have adopted "not

1. Conducted for the Center for Security and Citizenship Studies, the study was divided in two parts: The first phase, in 2004, analyzed 2,514 texts in nine major national newspapers, while in the second phase, in 2006, 2,651 texts from the eight largest newspapers in Rio de Janeiro were analyzed. All of the information contained in this section is derived from this study.

giving voice to bandits" as a moral code. On the one hand, journalists are afraid of assigning a leadership position to drug dealers and, in doing so, increasing their power; on the other hand, they fear inciting more violence, as, depending on how revealing interviews are, they could provide crucial information to enemies from other factions and the police wanting revenge or retribution.

Finally, a controversial issue in the current coverage of criminality is the blaming of suspects. Of the national sample, only 12.7% of all articles in the Ramos and Paiva study contained the word "suspect". However, many of those involved in a crime are automatically labeled "traffickers" based on police accounts, even though this information cannot be verified.

4. Pacifier Police Units (UPP)

Despite being less than two years old, the UPP program is already being hailed as a great success. Having had great repercussion nationally and internationally, news reports have sung praises to Rio's new policing method, such as an article in the *Economist* which claims the city is experiencing a "renaissance" and a "magic moment" as a result of an "ambitious strategy... to restore law and order" (*Economist*, 2010).

The UPP method is described in its official news website as "a new model of Public Security and policing that intends to bring police and population closer together, as well as to strengthen social policies inside communities. By reestablishing control over areas that for decades were occupied by traffic and, recently, also by militias, the UPPs bring peace to communities" (*UPP Repórter*, 2010). Based on the precepts of communitarian policing, in which the population works together with public security institutions, posts have been created to establish a permanent police force in 9 of Rio's favelas, and new police officers have received special training to take part in the UPPs. Rio's government is investing US\$ 8 million in the training of 60,000 officers until the end of 2016. The "occupation" of the favelas by the UPP is usually preceded by an operation conducted by BOPE units to clear the way and prepare the grounds; the focus, however, is not to combat the drug traffickers by apprehending drugs and weapons, but to force them to either leave the area or go undercover. Adopting a typical "Hearts and Minds" strategy, the goal is to win the trust and support of the population by providing them with services which would usually be provided by drug traffickers, hoping they will switch their allegiance from the illegal armed groups to the police.

The attempt to win the hearts of the population takes place not only in the favelas, but in the media as well. Rio's Security Department has developed a significant Public Relations campaign for UPPs. The *UPP Repórter* website publishes Portuguese- and English-language news on a regular basis, shows videos of celebrities, such as singer Alicia Keys, visiting the "pacified" favelas, and contains a counter which constantly states how many people have been "freed from the traffic's oppression".¹ News articles, complete with photo slideshows, emphasize the good-natured attitude of the UPP officers: one article focuses on a female Captain, who leads the newest UPP, in the Morro da Formiga favela, with a "mother's tenderness", using the "tough love" way of disciplining her sons to lead her officers (Lopes, 2010b). The site also highlights new infrastructure and services either provided directly by the UPP or brought to the favelas by third parties after the "occupation": repairing and installing street lighting (Araújo, 2010), providing sports classes at a favela's UPP headquarters (Lopes, 2010a), and even a tree-planting event with the Reforestation Battalion (Marotti, 2010). Photos of police officers surrounded by smiling children abound.

Despite the overwhelmingly positive response the UPP policies have elicited, the troubled history of police intervention in the favelas has caused a few observers and scholars to express apprehension. Firstly, since the authorities have issued alerts to the communities before establishing the UPPs in them, and so causing the traffickers to leave before the actual "occupation", many worry that the UPPs do not actually deal with the problem, but simply push criminals to any of the hundreds of favelas which still do not have a police presence, giving the impression of an "out of sight, out of mind" solution (cf. Machado da Silva, 2010). Secondly, there are fears that the model is just another display of authoritarianism by Rio's police and that the reasoning behind such occupations is militaristic in nature (cf. Souza e Silva, 2010). In addition, the intense control and vigilance of the population restricts privacy and freedom (cf. Tristão, 2010).

However, even in face of those concerns, experts regard the UPP project as promising – with caveats. According to Machado da Silva, the UPPs could eliminate some the fear in public discourses, improving social relations and reducing calls for repressive measures: "even if the UPPs serve merely to push violent crime away from socially visible areas and further away from the big media, that in itself may be a good thing; it may release some of the tension and thus allow for more sober discussions of the public order enforcement policies and by so doing include the perspective of the... underprivileged in the debate" (2010). Furthermore, he adds, if the UPP is successful in training more democratic police officers, it could change the culture of Rio's police forces to be more respectful of favela residents. The concern with excessive militarism and authoritarian practices remains, but some scholars argue the initial military interventionist strategy can be overcome through

1. At the time of writing, the counter claimed 140,000 people had been "freed" from the oppression of drug trafficking.

partnerships with other state, civil society and private actors in the economic, social, environmental and cultural areas (Souza e Silva, 2010).

Nevertheless, all of the initial optimism regarding UPPs has already been marred by a few reality checks. In one favela where a UPP was implemented, Santa Marta, complaints about abuses by UPP officers have prompted the creation of a "Rights Handbook" by human rights organizations and local NGOs, in order to inform favela residents of what the police is allowed and not allowed to do. Reports of abuses range from sexual abuse of females during searches by male cops, disproportionate persecution of certain residents, and arbitrary prohibitions such as not allowing families to play funk music at private parties (Tristão, 2010). In addition, officers have also abused their power by arresting some residents under pretense of "disrespect to authority" (Machado da Silva, 2010). This points to the creation of a police state which severely limits democracy in the area; as Tristão states, "Peace without voice is not peace. It is fear" (2010).

Rio's largest newspaper, *O Globo*, has been one of the most enthusiastic followers of the UPP implementation; a search for the term on its website produces hundreds of results, showing the publication has reported almost daily on the topic. In addition, its special series on the five favelas where UPPs were first implemented is named "Democracy in the Favelas", which already evidences the newspaper's first assumption: that the installation of UPPs in the favelas brings democracy to them. The following analysis of the series will evaluate how much of the newspaper's optimism can be verified through its reporting.

5. *O Globo* Series "Democracy in the Favelas": Themes and patterns¹

The series "Democracia nas Favelas" was published by Rio newspaper *O Globo* in August 2009 both in print and electronic formats, whereas special emphasis was given to the latter medium: a home page was created for the series, which employs visual effects to create an interactive "favela complex", where the user can click on five different housing clusters, each representing a favela occupied by the UPPs: Tavares Bastos, Cidade de Deus, Santa Marta, Batam, and Babilônia/Chapéu Mangueira.² The introductory text tells readers they will be taken not merely on a touristic visit, but on a journey with details, photos, and historical facts. Their locations were pinpointed in maps of the city, along with information on their development index, area and population. Photos showed scenes of daily life along with panoramic shots of some of the favelas' privileged views of the city. Captions pointed to facts such as the use of some of the favelas, such as Cidade de Deus ("City of God") as film locations, which gave them notoriety.

While the title of the series displayed on the special home page is the general "Democracy in the Favelas", the page containing the written articles has a more specific title: "The Challenges of Democracy in the Favelas". The four journalists who worked on the series, Carla Rocha, Fábio Vasconcellos, Selma Schmidt and Vera Araújo, spent four months visiting the favelas for the articles. They report, in the introductory article of the series, that the UPPs sent away the traffickers' parallel power and made way for the state's retaking of their public spaces. But they also state that "the police occupation does not guarantee full democracy yet," as residents complain of abuses and interferences by the police, and point to the risk of establishing a police state. The series, they write, will follow the transformations brought by the UPPs and depict the "delicate and tense" relationship of residents with the "military-style" occupations. This suggests a balanced and critical treatment of the topic. However, by deconstructing the elements of the articles, both escalation and de-escalation patterns can be observed.

The first aspect to be analyzed is the conceptualization of the conflict situation, that is, whether the articles focus on polarization and the use of violent force as appropriate in conflict resolution, or question militaristic values and allow perspectives for peaceful alternatives (see Table 1.1). In this aspect, while reports showed awareness that the militaristic approach of UPP occupations created restrictions on residents' rights, there was an unquestioning acceptance that the military-style occupation was necessary to establish order: "the action, however, is considered, in this first instance, a fundamental step to guarantee control of the territory". On the one hand, the conflict was still portrayed mostly in a win-win orientation in between police and the residents; although some residents report abuses of power, others are quoted as manifesting themselves positively towards the police, and officers are described as talking to residents and playing with children. Violent force is not portrayed as an accepted solution to problems in those instances. On the other hand, the conflict has a definite win-lose orientation when considering the drug traffickers and other "criminals" as the opposing party. There is no mentioning of cooperative efforts to demobilize current "criminals" or reintegration of former traffickers into society. A few ac-

1. All citations and references in this section refer to the series, which can be found online at <http://oglobo.globo.com/rio/favelas/default.asp>. The series is published entirely in the Portuguese language. All translations of terms and direct quotations are provided exclusively by the author.
2. However, as the reader later finds out from the articles, the favela Tavares Bastos does not actually have an UPP. It was included in the special series because BOPE has occupied the area for nine years. At the time the series was published, those were the only favelas occupied by the UPP.

counts of police killings of traffickers go unexamined, as if it were the regular procedure. Moreover, cooperative efforts are sometimes downgraded: one article stated, “The camaraderie politics of the PM [military police] with residents was not enough to overcome difficulties”, saying shootouts and threats from criminals have persisted – implying such an approach was too soft.

Escalation-oriented aspects		De-escalation-oriented aspects	
E1	Polarization (or respectively support of “war”) & confrontationist (or respectively violent/military) logic	D1	Query of polarization (or respectively “warfare”) & confrontationist (or respectively violent/military) logic
E 1.1	Zero-sum or at least win-lose orientation (construction of conflict as competitive process); conflict resolution is regarded as impossible; agreements are interpreted as “giving in”, compromise is devalorized	D 1.1	Win-win orientation (or at least questioning win-lose) and/or presentation of structures for possible cooperation (construction of conflict as cooperative process)
E 1.2	Emphasis on military values	D 1.2	Cooperative values and/or questioning militarism or military values
E 1.3	Designation of military/police force as an appropriate means of conflict resolution and/or downgrading of doubt in its appropriateness	D 1.3	Emphasis on negative effects of (military/police) force and/or questioning its appropriateness
E 1.4	Refutation, questioning or downgrading peaceful alternatives; focus on violence reduces prospect of peace and/or obstacles to peace are emphasized or portrayed as overwhelming	D 1.4	Perspectives on, demands for and/or agreement with peaceful alternatives
E 1.5	Emphasis on antagonism	D 1.5	Emphasis on openness to all sides or at least abandonment of dividing the protagonists into two camps

Table 1.1: Conceptualization of the (conflict) situation¹

Escalation-oriented aspects		De-escalation-oriented aspects	
E2	Antagonism	D2	Balance
E 2.1	Demonization of the opponent, denial of his rights and/or demonization of his intentions	D 2.1	Respecting the opponent’s rights and/or unbiased description of his intentions
E 2.2	Idealization of one’s own rights and intentions	D 2.2	Realistic and self-critical evaluation of one’s own rights and intentions
E 2.3	Denial of common interests or emphasis on incompatibility of interests, culture, etc.	D 2.3	Emphasis on common interests and/or description of the (concrete) benefits that both sides could gain from ending the violent conflict

Table 1.2: Evaluation of the conflict parties’ rights and intentions

A closer look at the second aspect, the evaluation of the conflict parties’ rights and intentions (see Table 1.2), shows both antagonism and balance being portrayed in the articles. While some recognition of the rights of favela residents is present in the reports, and violations of those rights by police are reported, those violations are depicted as a “necessary evil” in order to bring order to the occupied areas, even though officers only have the best of intentions. Instances of police officers disregarding the safety of the favela population are reported matter-of-factly and without questioning, such as a woman who had her face grazed by a bullet while sitting at a church service at Cidade de Deus, which was interrupted “by shots from PMs, who chased a minor”. This is reported in the same article that states that the police occupation increased the sensation of security in the favelas by guaranteeing “the right to privacy, freedom of movement and the end of tortures and homicides practiced by bandits”. There is a double standard in reporting rights violations: while the police is blamed only for minor violations, such as restricting freedom of expression by not allowing residents to play loud funk music – they must “learn to dance to [the police’s] tune” – drug traffickers are blamed for imposing “harsh” limitations, such as intimidating residents and causing fear of stray bullets by shooting towards the favela after being expelled. The shots and stray bullets from the police officers, on the other hand, are not portrayed as contributing to violence or rights violations; they are simply a side effect of the maintenance of order.

1. Tables 1.1-1.6: Escalation and De-escalation aspects of conflict coverage adapted from Kempf (2010)

Escalation-oriented aspects		De-escalation-oriented aspects	
E3	Confrontation	D3	Cooperation
E 3.1	Justification of one's own side's actions and underlining of one's own rightness ----- Demonstration of uniformity and/or downgrading differences within one's own party	D 3.1	Self-critical evaluation of one's own side's actions ----- Focus on plurality of behavioral options within one's own party
E 3.2	Condemnation of the opponent's actions ----- Disregarding plurality on "their" side	D 3.2	Less confrontationalist or unbiased evaluation of the opponent's actions ----- Focus on plurality of "their" behavioral options
E 3.3	Antagonistic behavior is emphasized, possibilities for cooperation or common gain from ending the violent conflict are denied, cooperation between conflict parties is not taken seriously and/or ----- The role of third parties is interpreted more as exerting (moral, economic or military) pressure (win-lose) than as mediating (win-win)	D 3.3	(Supporting) description of cooperative behavior, of possibilities for cooperation or common gain from ending the violent conflict and/or ----- The role of third parties is interpreted as mediating (win-win) rather than exerting (moral, economic or military) pressure (win-lose)

Table 1.3: Evaluation of the conflict parties' actions

A similar pattern is observed regarding the third aspect, or the evaluation of the conflict parties' actions (see Table 1.3). Even though emphasis is given to the cooperative actions of the police and favela residents, such as the partnership of the leaders of AMs ("associação de moradores", or residents' associations) with the UPPs in Chapéu Mangueira and Babilônia, the writers tend to justify the actions of the police and attempt to demonstrate their "rightness" even though they may seem like an abuse of power. For instance, in Batam, before the UPP was installed, police officers simply took over residents' associations: the president of the AM is a BOPE officer (who, granted, has also been a resident in the community for more than 28 years), but reporters do not question the conflict of interest or how that could lead to a stifling of the opposition when said officer states that, despite being AM president, he is a police officer 24 hours a day, "inspecting good manners" while distributing food to residents. Moreover, there is an effort to idealize the transformation of the favelas after the UPPs and to play down any occurrences which do not fit the image of the "pacified" favela. In one story, the writers report, "the absence of the parallel power [of drug traffickers] has caused a turnaround in habits and relations inside the favelas. Children play in the streets until late at night. The joy and lack of worry about violence are evident". One paragraph later, they state that even with a shootout happening days earlier in the Chapéu Mangueira favela, the children still have a great image of the police occupation. In an article about a different favela, Santa Marta, the sub-headline reads: "Fear of stray bullets over", in a sweeping generalization which belies the danger still present in the areas, as demonstrated by several examples throughout the series.

When it comes to the emotional involvement in the conflict (see Table 1.4), the series is generally de-escalation-oriented, in the sense that the reporters mostly attempt to remain neutral with regard to both favela residents and police officers and refrain from judgment of character and behavior. Only rarely do the articles try to sensitize the readers by telling about atrocities committed by drug traffickers. However, such atrocities are never attributed to "normal" favela residents; in one exception, the authors describe residents participating in acts of violence: as a police officer's father told drug traffickers they could not hide drugs at his home in the favela, gang members incited dozens of residents, "accomplices of the group's criminal acts... holding pieces of wood and stones, besides a plastic bottle filled with a liquid which looked like gasoline, walking down Cidade de Deus' narrow pedestrian street".

Escalation-oriented aspects		De-escalation-oriented aspects	
E4	Destructive emotions	D4	Constructive emotions
E 4.1	A focus on "their" viciousness and dangerousness and accentuation of "our" strength create a balance between threat and confidence which promotes willingness to engage in struggle	D 4.1	Unbiased assessment of "their" intentions & behavior and emphasis on the price of victory deconstruct threat and confidence and promote "our" willingness for peace
E 4.2	Mistrust of the opponent and/or neutral third parties who try to mediate in the conflict is encouraged (e.g., by depicting the party as untrustworthy, prone to violating treaties, etc.)	D 4.2	Respect for "their" rights and unbiased assessment of "their" behavior reduce mistrust
E 4.3	A focus on "their" atrocities and "our" justness transforms outrage at violent conflict into outrage at the enemy	D 4.3	Empathy with both sides' victims, emphasis on both sides' casualties and unbiased evaluation of both sides' behavior redirects outrage at the violent conflict
E 4.4	Demonization of "their" intentions and/or justification of "our" behavior jeopardize empathy with "their" situation: if they behave well, they have nothing to fear	D 4.4	Empathy for "their" situation opens up a new perspective: if we find a solution together that takes (all) sides' needs into account, reconciliation will become possible
E 4.5	Denial of possibilities for cooperation and/or blaming the opponent for the failure of cooperation jeopardizes rebuilding of trust	D 4.5	Emphasis on cooperative experiences (also in the past) rebuilds trust

Table 1.4: Emotional involvement in the conflict

Escalation-oriented aspects		De-escalation-oriented aspects	
E5	Confrontationist social commitment	D5	Cooperative social commitment
E 5.1	Humanizes "our" political or military/police leaders and/or dehumanizes "their" leaders	D 5.1	Refrains from identification with escalation-oriented political or military/police leaders on all sides
E 5.2	Humanizes "our" fighters (cops/soldiers) and/or dehumanizes "their" fighters	D 5.2	Refrains from identification with perpetrators of violence on all sides
E 5.3	Humanizes "our" victims and/or ignores or dehumanizes "their" victims	D 5.3	Humanizes or at least respects victims of the conflict on all sides
E 5.4	Humanizes "our" population ("asphalt" residents) for its loyalty and sacrifice and/or ignores or dehumanizes "their" population (favela residents) for its connivance, etc.	D 5.4	Humanizes or at least respects members of civil society and/or refrains from identification with supporters of use of violent force on all sides
E 5.5	Humanizes "their" anti-violence opposition and/or ignores or dehumanizes "our" anti-violence opposition	D 5.5	Humanizes or at least respects those who strive for a peaceful conflict resolution on all sides
E 5.6	Devalues positive (emotional) reactions to the prospect of peace	D 5.6	Emphasizes positive (emotional) reactions to the prospect of peace

Table 1.5: Social identification and personal entanglement

The aspects of social identification and personal entanglement (see Table 1.5) in the conflict are relevant both for their presence and for their absence in the reporting. Both police and favela residents are generally humanized, albeit in a superficial manner. Short stories are told of people who had to abandon their homes, obeying orders from drug traffickers, and now were trying to come back; of police officers who try to help solve family disputes which were previously negotiated by the old "bosses", such as helping a separated couple divide their house in two parts. A small profile told the story of a chef who had started selling warm meals for workers working at the UPP headquarters' construction site in Babilônia, and now has opened a restaurant which has been quite successful, while the owner of a pub in the neighboring favela complains that the UPP scared her night clients away. There is no attempt to identify with those who use violent force; as usual, however, drug traffickers, militias, and supposed "bandits" or "criminals" are dehumanized: although they are referred to several times in every article, they are merely a disembodied presence. Despite being concrete in stories of residents who were victims of violence, only six are called by name – three of whom were mentioned as historical figures of traffic. The dozens of references to criminals and traffickers which are not attributed to any individual make it close to impossible to know who the "enemy" really is. Who are the people who present such a threat to these communities? Are they just the

powerful drug lords, or do they include the children and teenagers employed as lookouts in exchange for toys and treats? Do they include drug addicts, or lower gang members forced by the “boss” to carry out administrative tasks under penalty of death? This dismissal of an unknown section of the population follows previous press trends which are clearly escalation-oriented.

Escalation-oriented aspects		De-escalation-oriented aspects	
E6	Motivation for use of violent force	D6	Motivation for peace
E 6.1	Violent force as a bulwark against destruction and/or peace as a risk	D 6.1	Peace as an alternative to destruction and/or violent force as a risk
E 6.2	Violent force as a bridge to a brighter future and/or peace as a risk	D 6.2	Peace as a bridge to a brighter future and/or violent force as a risk

Table 1.6: Motivational logic

When analyzing the motivational logic (see Table 1.6), the articles seem to neither present a motivation for violent force nor a clear motivation for peace. While the series tended to present a de-escalation-oriented perspective on this regard – since it set out to examine how favelas and its population could be brought to enjoy democracy and citizenship, which would include the monopoly of force by the state, one of the prerequisites for peace – the reports seemed to stay mostly at the surface of the issues; as one article itself states, the UPPs, by themselves, do not guarantee democracy; nor can peace be achieved solely through state control and the maintenance of the order. However, the series does not discuss any real, long-term solutions to the violence, taking for granted that, as long as traffickers and criminals are expelled from the area, the problem disappears. Even when questioning the efficiency of the UPP solution, the reports do so only because traffickers still manage to somehow appear again, but not because the strategy fails to address the root causes of the conflict. In addition, several articles focused on economic gains brought by the UPPs – the real estate market receiving a boost in the “pacified” favelas; businesses going back to legal hands, thus bringing profits to electricity and cable/satellite television providers; dentists and tourist guides (from the “asphalt”) finding new clientele in the favelas; the neighborhoods surrounding the favelas attract new industry to the region; and a growth of R\$90 million to Rio’s economy just from new taxes collected from the UPP favelas. Thus, the motivational logic for the series seems to be less focused on whether the UPP is able to bring democracy to the favelas, thus contributing to a more peaceful society, and more focused on how the occupation of the favelas can bring material advantages and serve the interests of Rio’s society at large.

Escalation-oriented aspects		De-escalation-oriented aspects	
E7	War language	D7	Conflict language
E 7.1	Designation/description of the urban conflict as “war”	D 7.1	Refraining from using word “war” to describe urban conflict
E 7.2	Using words typical of military/war strategy to describe actions of police officers and/or criminals	D 7.2	Realistically describe actions of police officers and/or criminals without resorting to military analogies

Table 2.1: War as metaphor¹

The analysis of the context-specific (de)-escalation-oriented aspects reveals, once again, a divided picture: while a certain sensitivity to the use of language seems to be present, the series does not manage to completely avoid certain “bad habits” of violence coverage which are common in the Brazilian press. The use of war as metaphor (see Table 2.1), for instance, is not prevalent throughout the series; however, the word “war” appeared 9 times throughout the articles in connection with urban violence, two of which were in headlines.² Although “war” was used mostly in connection with historical or past events, it also had a present connotation in one instance: the authors write about the existence of a “cold war” between the UPP communities and the expelled traffickers who threaten them. In addition, one article mentions the Complexo do Alemão, which has not received a UPP yet, as being “located in Rio’s ‘Gaza Strip’”.

1. Tables 2.1 – 2.4: Additional escalation and de-escalation aspects of conflict coverage
 2. One time the word was used, however, was in reference to the title of a documentary film shot in the Santa Marta favela, “Notícias de uma guerra particular” (“News from a private war”) (*O Globo* 2009e)

Escalation-oriented aspects		De-escalation-oriented aspects	
E8	Loaded and/or generalizing language	D8	Neutral and/or precise language
E 8.2	Discriminatory portrayal of favela residents and/or indiscriminate attribution of violence to population	D 8.2	Differentiation in between (alleged) perpetrators of violent acts, criminals, spectators, population and victims
E 8.3	Using of labels such as "marginals", "bandits", "delinquents" or "criminals" without proper clarification	D 8.3	Avoiding the use of polarizing labels. Clear designation of conflict parties without pre-judgment: accused, suspect, convicted, etc.

Table 2.2: Blame attribution

Significantly more problematic is still the aspect of blame attribution (see Table 2.2). The writers show carelessness with language in this regard, especially when it comes to the word "bandido" (bandit). This is a very loaded word in Brazilian discourses of violence: unlike "criminal", which refers (hopefully) specifically to someone who has committed a crime, or "trafficker", which should only connect to those who work in the drug trade, "bandit" is open-ended and vague, and has a connotation of "bad person" or "evildoer". Troublingly, the word appears 34 times in total throughout the series, three of which in headlines. Only three appear in direct quotations from sources, meaning that, the great majority of times, the word was chosen by the authors. They also never place the word in between quotation marks so as to signal distancing from the term. By contrast, the terms "suspect" and "accused" were never used, and the term "alleged" ("suposto") appeared only once in the entire series, when identifying a drug trafficker as the "alleged leader of traffic in the favela". This causes the critical reader to run into the same problem described with regards to social identification: who is the bandit, and what must one do to deserve this title? Even though the authors attempt to differentiate in between favela residents and perpetrators of violence, the lines are blurred when it comes to individuals identified by such generalizing, stigmatizing terms.

Escalation-oriented aspects		De-escalation-oriented aspects	
E9	Elite-oriented	D9	People-oriented
E 9.1	One-sided portrayal of conflict; single-sourced and/or only institutional/famous/powerful sources	D 9.1	Including voices from all sides of conflict and people affected by it
E 9.2	Disproportional emphasis on the victimization of elites	D 9.2	Balanced portrayal of victims from all layers of society

Table 2.3: Diversity and balance of perspectives

With regards to the diversity and balance of perspectives (see Table 2.3), the series seems, at first glance, to be more de-escalation-oriented, but a closer look shows a more nuanced picture. The choice of sources is varied and includes several favela residents assuming a variety of roles: victims of drug traffickers, victims of police abuse (the former much more numerous than the latter), witnesses, workers, small business owners, and relatives of "criminals". Therefore, the articles do include voices expressing a variety of perspectives from people affected by the conflict in different ways, including those coming from the usually marginalized members of the population. Despite the variety of voices, however, they were all generally either condemning the drug traffickers or distancing themselves from them. This fact may seem self-evident, considering the drug traffickers comprised only a small part of the population; however, it is deceiving, as a part of the picture is lacking. It is hard to imagine that communities which partially depended on drug traffickers for income and protection have been able to sever all ties to such individuals. The traffickers established relationships in their communities in order to operate their businesses and maintain a certain level of acceptance for their permanence there. That these relationships are simply assumed to be gone and that all residents are portrayed as relieved with the expulsion of alleged criminals – although that may be true for the majority of the population – simplifies a complex picture of networks which join residents formally and informally in varying degrees of intimacy, dependence, and acceptance.

As for the portrayal of victims, the articles did not focus on the victimization of the elites as opposed to that of favela residents. Since the stories were about the favelas and told mostly from within, the elites played only minor roles. However, there was still a clear elite-orientation when it came to reporting some of the physical and financial benefits with the installment of the UPPs. For instance, the marketing manager of a luxury hotel chain who bought a hotel that had been shut down in the area is quoted as optimistic, saying, "to him, the pacification increases the value of the region. So much so that, in a year, he will re-inaugurate the hotel". Another article states that, while the cost of implementing UPPs in all of Rio's favelas would be about a thousandth of Rio's GDP, experts estimate the increase of GDP due to state control of trafficker-dominated areas could be 20 to 30%; an economist is quoted as saying, "The existing real estate stock will increase in value. There will be Paulistas [São Paulo residents] wanting to live here, retired Americans exchanging Miami for Rio".

The focus on economic benefits to companies and the middle class appear in stark contrast to losses for the favela residents, usually buried in stories about the benefits brought by legal service providers. Even though some small business owners in the favela are profiting from the occupation, others in the informal economy have been harmed, such as “moto-taxi” services which were no longer allowed and a reduction in sales at some shops and restaurants. This conveys to the reader a decidedly elitist understanding of the conflict, in which security is portrayed as creating a “favorable business environment” and violence as bad for tourism: “When there are actions with many left dead in the favelas, they go around the world and tarnish our image. We have lost conventions because of that. Tourism will grow if violence is not the background of the city”.

Escalation-oriented aspects		De-escalation-oriented aspects	
E10	Superficial and uncritical portrayal of conflict	D10	Thoughtful and critical portrayal of conflict
E10.1	Ignoring causes and context of conflict with simplifications, generalizations, and shallow portrayal of involved parties	D10.1	Contextualization and embedding the conflict in its wider social, cultural and historical roots
E10.2	Repeating of clichés and “common-sense” phrases/expressions without explanation or justification	D10.2	Deconstructing and questioning well-known clichés and “common sense” knowledge about conflict

Table 2.4: Reflectivity and critical thinking

Finally, the most crucial aspects to be analyzed in the series – those regarding reflectivity and critical thinking (see Table 2.4) – seem to be the most disappointing of all. Superficiality seems to be a characteristic of almost every article in the series. The roots of poverty, the causes of violence, the reasons why one would turn to criminal activities, and solutions for the drug trade problem were all but completely ignored. Context was hardly ever provided; generalizing statements without explanation dot the pages, and questioning of police violence in any form was completely absent from the series. The authors claim that “the presence of the parallel power led to constant shootouts” in a favela, but fail to mention that, more often than not, police officers also took part in the shootouts, thus being partially responsible for the violence there. Also missing from the articles was a discussion on drug policy and drug use, which should be central in addressing drug trafficking. One article celebrates that, with the UPPs, “in place of squares filled with crack addicts, today it is possible to see children using the space to participate in a soccer school”. The assumption is that, because the crack addicts were kicked out of public spaces, they no longer represent a nuisance and are therefore no longer society’s problem. Removing drug addicts from sight will not solve the problem of drug consumption, however, and as long as there is consumption, there will be trafficking.

What the stories lack in terms of context, however, they make up for in clichés and references to the favelas’ exoticness. Several articles mentioned the fact that the favelas occupied by the UPPs and BOPE were used as locations for films, videos and soap operas. Two short articles about the history of the favelas Babilônia and Santa Marta highlight the following interesting facts: the former was stage to traffic wars as well as three films (*Elite Squad*, *Babilônia 2000*, and *Black Orpheus*) and the latter became famous for its traffic wars as well as the recording of a Michael Jackson video. The authors thus rely on the combination of violence and entertainment to make their stories interesting. The same pattern can be seen in an article about BOPE-occupied favela, Tavares Bastos: the text starts with a battle scene, with masked enemies shooting each other and running; one ends up executed. Later, the writer explains the scene is part of a paintball game which takes place at the favela – even though paintball is not legal, BOPE authorized it; the game is too expensive for “favela standards”, but it “attracts people from the outside” – middle and upper-class youth, that is. Not once does the author question the fact that there is a police-approved, illegal game in a favela, which attracts wealthy “tourists” so they can pretend to be drug traffickers in a battle zone. This favela, she states, is scenic, like a movie set, where “shacks have porches with plants and... sidewalks with small Portuguese stones. Precious details which can be admired in television series, soap operas and movies like *Hulk*”.

When it comes to the analysis and evaluation of the UPPs themselves, and their contextualization in a wider public security policy agenda for Rio, the series fails to provide any significant contribution. The deeper question, that of the “pacification”, that is, whether they truly contribute to peace, does not come to the surface. The police terminology is adopted without question: throughout the articles, the words “pacification” and “pacified” were used eight times, without quotation marks, to refer to the presence of UPPs in the favelas. Even though that number is not high, and the word “occupation” was used a lot more often, the concept itself and the meaning behind the words were never analyzed. The authors failed to ask themselves very important questions: “To what extent do the residents see in the police a potential for pacification? To what extent do the police have, in fact, that potential? To what extent is that the way for the reduction of violence in the favelas? And, much beyond violence, to what extent is that the way to democracy?” (Tavares et al., 2010). The fact that the series treated the 9-year BOPE occupation of a favela in the same way as the new UPP occupations, making hardly any differentiation in between the two policing systems, reveals the superficiality of the reports.

6. Conclusion

Before addressing the specific question which this analysis set out to answer, that is, to what extent the UPP coverage in "Democracy in the Favelas" is conflict-sensitive, it is necessary to note that the DEOCC criteria employed to determine whether the reports are escalation-oriented or de-escalation-oriented are highly subjective, and thus open to interpretation. However, I believe therein also lies the strength of the model. Simply counting escalation vs. de-escalation "points" in a black-and-white manner would be less successful in accounting for nuanced and subtle uses of language and the difference in weight and importance in between separate aspects. With that considered, the series contained both escalation and de-escalation aspects throughout its articles. Elements from both sides were found in almost every single article, meaning that no article was entirely de-escalation or escalation oriented. While some aspects, such as emotional involvement in the conflict and diversity and balance of perspectives, displayed a tendency to de-escalation orientation, other aspects, such as the use of war as metaphor, blame attribution, and reflectivity and critical thinking showed a more pronounced escalation-orientation. Aspects such as the conceptualization of the conflict situation, evaluation of the conflict parties' rights and intentions, evaluation of the conflict parties' actions, social identification and personal entanglement, and motivational logic displayed both escalation and de-escalation orientation in a relatively balanced way. Thus, it is fair to say that, while the series does not contribute entirely to an escalated perception of the conflict, it also does not contribute significantly to break down pre-conceived antagonisms and polarized perceptions.

However, to assume that the presence of de-escalation-oriented aspects automatically makes the series conflict-sensitive would mean not seeing the forest for the trees. When looking at the bigger picture, the reports fail to address the root causes of conflict and to consider opportunities for a real, lasting, non-violent public security solution to urban violence. Thus, the series is unlikely to contribute to conflict transformation, as it helps maintain the status quo and does not lead to the questioning of social relations and the structural and cultural aspects of society which are responsible for violence.

Nevertheless, the analysis shows that it is possible to think in terms of conflict-sensitive reporting with regards to urban violence in Brazil. The Peace Journalism framework helped identify patterns which have contributed to perpetuate violent discourses in Brazilian society, allowed to question misrepresentations commonly regarded as common sense in the journalists' understanding of the urban conflict, and provides clear guidelines which Brazilian journalists could follow in order to conduct reporting which contributes to a demystification of violence and a destigmatization of conflict parties, thus increasing its potential to contribute to a constructive societal dialogue which can help transform and overcome the conflict. Further employing this framework, and further developing it and adapting it to the realities of press coverage and urban violence in Brazil, is thus encouraged both to theoretical scholars and professional journalists alike. As Kempf states, good conflict journalism goes beyond knowing how to employ the tools of the trade: "In order to produce good journalism, journalists need knowledge, competencies and qualifications that go beyond traditional journalistic training and enable them to counteract the escalation-prone misperceptions of reality" (2007: 5). Training Brazilian journalists in conflict-sensitive reporting would empower them to be more self-aware of the role they play in the conflict, thus allowing them to shape that influence (which they inevitably have, whether they want it or not) to be a positive one. This does not mean, however, that they would have to throw their previously learned journalistic values out the window; Peace Journalism does not stand in contrast to the so-called "quality journalism", but is complementary to it, taking the ethical guidelines of the profession one step further: "good journalism = responsible journalism = peace journalism" (Kempf, 2007: 3).

In the practical reality of Brazilian newsrooms, however, where journalists are mostly overworked and underpaid, this may not be necessarily an easy task. The fact that the reports analyzed are taken from a special series, and not from regular, every-day reports, also must be taken into account; normally, journalists have a lot more time and resources and less restrictions when working on this kind of "special" material. If the *O Globo* series is already so simplified, regular news would, as a rule, be even more factual and less contextualized. Thus, there are concrete structural hurdles which can make implementing peace journalistic strategies into the coverage of crime and violence a real challenge.

Given its value as a conflict transformation tool, however, there is no reason why journalists committed to a positive social impact should shy away from that challenge. The potential is already there, and has been steadily increasing with the democratization of media channels through the internet. "Since the essence of conflict transformation is the transformation of mentalities, both within the society and the individual, societies have to be involved from the top-down and the bottom-up. The media have the potential to be a gateway through which to reach the largest possible number of people" (Melone, Terzis and Beleli, 2002: 4). The introduction of the Peace Journalism framework into the Brazilian media landscape will inevitably have to happen from the bottom of the media "food chain", that is, with small, independent media channels dedicated to such goals. Examples of similar approaches already exist: the NGO Viva Rio, which advocates against violence and works for the improvement of public security in the city, has several projects in the communications area, including a web news portal for the coverage of public security, called *Comunidade Segura* ("Safe Community"). The portal, which is now four years old, produces content which aims to stimulate the public security debate, highlighting good practices in the field and tackling issues such as human security, arms control, youth violence, drug policy, and more. In an e-mail message

to the author, the news portal's editor, Shelley de Botton, wrote that, since its creation, the site has already received 70,000 unique visitors, is visited on average 90,000 times monthly, and has 5,000 registered users. Such projects have the potential to open up the debate to new perspectives and approaches, and so evaluating the possibilities for the incorporation of peace journalistic standards in this context may be an enlightening endeavor for future studies.

Other mediums and communication models should also be explored for their conflict-sensitivity and potential for conflict transformation. Because the present study focused on a "mainstream" print/online publication whose audience is made up mostly of middle and upper-class Brazilians, its focus and scope is invariably limited mainly to those who fit those demographics. However, there are infinite new possibilities when analyzing television content, for instance, for its immense reach in every layer of Brazilian society. Here, it is important to note that a crucial factor in implementing conflict-sensitive reporting and breaking down communication barriers which promote conflict is not only that it should be intended for the marginalized classes as well, having all social groups in mind as their audience, but also that the marginalized should have an active involvement in the production of news and give input on the coverage as well. Another Viva Rio project, for instance, is a website called Viva Favela, which employs a number of favela residents as "community correspondents" and thus provides a true "insider look" into their realities. While such projects are still mostly "underground", a closer analysis of their potential and how they can contribute to the societal dialogue would provide very valuable insight.

In sum, the possibilities for the media's contribution to a more peaceful society in Brazil are endless; just as the media has proven itself an invaluable tool in the transformation of ethnic conflicts throughout the world (cf. Melone, Terzis and Beleli, 2002; Bratic and Schirch, 2007), exploring its use as an integral part of addressing urban violence in Brazil and elsewhere should be a top priority in both peace researchers' and communication scholars' agenda.

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