Eluding the *Esculacho*

A Masculinities Perspective on the Enduring Warrior Ethos of Rio de Janeiro's Police

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ABSTRACT: The Police "Pacification" Unit (Unidade de Polícia Pacificadora—UPP) program in Rio de Janeiro pledged to pacify both militarized police officers and the communities they patrolled: favelas occupied by armed drug traffickers. While the UPPs promoted a softer approach, police practices remained permeated with logics of violence. In understanding why, this article examines how an enduring "warrior ethos" influences the occupational culture of the police. I frame this warrior ethos by reference to notions of masculinity and honor both in the police culture and in the favela, and approach the warrior as a masculine performance. This masculinities perspective on the ways in which policing activities are framed and enacted provides important insights into why it was so difficult to change police attitudes and practices.

KEYWORDS: hegemonic masculinity, police culture, Rio de Janeiro, urban violence, urban security, warrior ethos

It was early Sunday afternoon, and the streets were buzzing with life as the weekly vegetable market brought everyone out to do their shopping. I was walking down the main street at the bottom of the favela I had recently moved to, one of only a handful of streets that are wide enough for vehicles to pass. The rest of the favela is a seemingly endless maze of narrow footpaths winding their way up steep hillsides. Still, few cars attempt the patience-requiring task of navigating between the pedestrians, street vendors, and motorcycle taxis that crowd the street on a Sunday afternoon. I therefore jumped when a car honked behind me, and turned to see a police vehicle wanting to pass. In it sat four large policemen made even larger by their heavy gear of bulletproof vests, boots, and thick-fabricked uniforms that must be a nightmare in the Rio heat. The three passengers had their machine guns in their laps, fingers resting casually on the triggers, and the gun barrels protruding out the open windows as phallus symbols. As I stepped aside and the guns grazed by me, I made eye contact with one of the officers, who seemed to radiate a lazily arrogant "I dare you" attitude. This in-your-face, show-of-force is but one illustration of what the article views as a hypermasculine and militaristic "warrior" identity and ethos in the police occupational culture, drawing on the literature on warrior-based masculinity in favelas (Zaluar 1994, 2004) and in police cultures (Brown 2007; Gripp and Zaluar 2017).

The police officers were from the Police "Pacification" Unit (Unidade de Polícia Pacificadora—UPP) program in Rio de Janeiro, one of the most debated public security projects in Latin

America in recent years. The program started as an ad hoc initiative in one favela in 2008, but was expanded over the following years to 39 UPPs covering 264 of the city's 900-plus favelas. In place of the former practice of sporadic militarized interventions, the UPPs promoted the permanent presence of police forces in targeted communities and "proximity" policing practices. This was defined by the police as a shift toward more preventive police work, and combined policing with projects of social inclusion (see Salem and Bertelsen, this issue). The city saw five years of decreasing levels of police and urban violence due to the expansion of the program, but the trend has since turned. Today, the UPPs are largely considered a failed policy. A substantial body of literature has analyzed this failure by pointing to the UPPs' situatedness in the political and social context of the city, securing centrally located favelas before the 2016 Summer Olympics (see, e.g., Freeman 2014; Leite 2014; Muniz and Mello 2015). This literature further draws on the wider academic production on police violence in Brazil that emphasizes how the police institution—against a backdrop of structural inequalities and a lingering authoritarianism from the military dictatorship—has served as a tool of "necropolitics" (Mbembé 2003) against young, black men from favelas (Alves 2018; Caldeira 2000; Wacqant 2003). Much less research has, however, focused on how the UPP program was received in the police culture and how police officers understood and adapted to changing role expectations in the context of proximity policing.

In this article, I therefore focus on the police culture, more specifically its gendered dynamics, which has been relatively under-examined in research on police violence in Brazil (Gripp and Zaluar 2017; Lopes et al. 2016). I apply a masculinities perspective to the ways in which policing activities are framed and enacted as I examine the social processes that endorse and reproduce a militaristic warrior ethos. I foreground one social dynamic in particular: the *esculacho,* which may refer to a physical or a psychological attack or humiliation. The way the police use and elude *esculachos* show the warrior ethos as tied to notions of masculinity and honor that are reproduced both in the police culture and in the favela. I thus situate the warrior ethos as a masculine performance shaped by gendered role expectations in the organizational, occupational, and street-working environment of the police. With this emphasis on the masculinized militaristic dispositions of the police, I aim to provide new understandings into why it was so difficult to change police attitudes and practices within the UPPs.

The data informing this text comes from 18 months of fieldwork conducted in Rio de Janeiro and a "pacified" favela: a favela with a UPP, between 2012 and 2016 (see also Sørbøe 2013, 2018). During eight of these months (four in 2012, four in 2016), I lived in the favela, which allowed for observing police-resident interactions over time and how this relationship evolved. The article foregrounds the perspectives of police officers who, in different ways, have been at the forefront of developing and implementing the UPP program. I draw primarily on four in-depth interviews conducted with key informants in 2016: "Coronel Lima," a former head of the UPPs; "Sergeant Oliveira," in charge of teaching recruits the sensitive topic of human rights; "Lieutenant Morais," the commander of a UPP Unit in a large favela, and "Soldier Silva," a patrol officer. In my analysis, excerpts from these interviews provide important qualitative insights into how and why it has been so difficult to change the police culture. My analysis is also informed by field observations and approximately 30 additional interviews with other police agents, favela residents, human rights activists, journalists, and academics on the topics of security politics and the UPPs.

First, I present a masculinities perspective on police culture to serve as a conceptual and analytical framework for examining gender dynamics in Rio's Military Police. The subsequent analysis is divided in three parts, examining (1) gendered role expectations patrol officers have faced; (2) the efforts the UPP program made to change the police culture; and (3) how and why it has been so difficult to change police attitudes and practices. It underlines the centrality of

officers' social positionality in understanding their room of maneuver to act outside of dominant and normative gender role performances within the hierarchical and authoritarian police institution. The article concludes by connecting with the special section's focus on gendered and racialized dimensions of urban (in)security in Rio de Janeiro.

A Masculinities Perspective on Police Culture

Police Culture

The literature on police culture[1] examines the set of values, beliefs, and informal rules that orient how the police see the world and how they should act in it (Skolnick [1966] 2011; see also Chan 1997; Loftus 2009; Reiner 2004). The police culture literature distinguishes between the organizational culture transmitted top-down within a police department and the occupational culture developed through officers' interactions with peers, superiors, and citizens in the streets (Manning 2007; Pauline and Gau 2018). In this text, I focus primarily on the occupational culture of patrol officers with street-level assignments, drawing on Eugene Paoline and William Terrill's (2014: 5) definition of the concept as "the attitudes, values, and norms that are transmitted and shared among groups of individuals in an effort to collectively cope with the common problems and conditions members face."

In Brazil, the police are divided between a Civil and a Military force; the former conducts investigative work, while the latter is in charge of ostensive policing. There are two points of entry to the Military Police: as a soldier or through the officer's school (six months' and three years' education, respectively). These two career paths attract people from notably different backgrounds. Whereas commanding officers have traditionally been recruited from families with higher social status, men from low-income households turn to the high-risk, low-pay work of being a patrol officer (Mena 2015). A 2014 survey found that 80 percent of UPP officers were between 24 and 33 years old, 90.3 percent were men, and 67.6 percent self-declared as black or brown. In terms of income, 83.2 percent affirmed that their salaries, including bonuses, were insufficient to sustain their families (Musumeci 2015).

"Doing Gender" and Hegemonic Masculinity

In order to discuss the gendered performances of police officers, it is first necessary to look at what is meant by gendered performances and masculinity. Gender identity development is as much a social process as it is a psychological one (Bussey 2011). As a social construction rather than a property of individual men, masculinity is defined by Deborah Kerfoot and David Knights (1996: 86) as "the socially generated consensus of what it means to be a man, to be 'manly' or to display such behavior at any one time." Multiple forms of masculinity exist because men (and women) construct masculinity in particular social and historical contexts (Connell 1995). Further, any form of masculinity is always intersecting with race, class, sexual orientation, and so on (Shields 2008). Thus, gender is not an individual attribute but an emergent property of social practice; people "do gender" in interactions with others within the context of larger social structures and institutions (Chan et al. 2010: 427; see also Martin and Jurik 2006; West and Zimmermann 1987).

Such a focus on the performative aspects of gender enables an analysis of the social processes that form "hegemonic masculinity." Hegemonic masculinity is based on two interrelated and inseparable dimensions: (a) dominance of men and oppression of women; and (b) a hierarchical

classification of masculinities. The concept describes dominant and normative forms of masculinity as holding an authoritative positioning "in relation to subordinate masculinities as well as in relation to women" (Connell [1987] 2003: 183). Hegemonic masculinity has been criticized for presenting certain expressions of masculinity as all-pervasive, and for being characterized by ambiguities in particular when it comes to power relations between men (Christensen and Jensen 2014). Robert Connell and James Messerschmidt (2005: 832–838) clarify that only a few (if any) men actually practice or enact hegemonic masculinity. While hegemonic masculinity is not the norm, it is certainly normative. It regulates masculinities as men strive to live up to the "ideals, fantasies and desires" embedded in hegemonic masculinity or are punished for practicing masculinity in forms perceived as different. As such, the concept can help make sense of how violent and oppressive forms of masculinity have come to be acceptable, and even encouraged, forms of behavior in the police culture.

Gendered Dimensions of Police Work

Literature on gender and policing draws attention to gender hierarchies both when it comes to the role of men and women actors within police organizations, as well as in the gendering of police practices (Chan et al. 2010; Martin 1980, 1996). Coercive crime-fighting tasks are often contrasted with more cooperative, problem-solving, and compassionate modes of police work, such as engaging with vulnerable communities to build trust relations and mentoring young people at risk of crime. The latter, softer policing activities have traditionally been considered feminine and inferior forms of police work compared to "proper" images of policing associated with masculine ideals of fighting crime (Fielding 2013; Reiner 2004; Westmarland 2001). Such gendered value systems and role regulations are seen to create an environment that is hostile to women and to subordinate masculinities (Brown 2007; Franklin 2007; Prokos and Padavic 2002).

Police culture is not homogenous, as different functions (patrol versus managerial work) levels of hierarchy (rank and file), in addition to racialized, gendered, and class distinctions between individual officers, will impact on role expectations and regulations (Manning 2007). Furthermore, it is not immune to change. The proportion of women officers has increased substantially in recent decades, and shifts toward softer forms of community and proximity policing have gained ground (Brogden and Nijhar 2005). Despite substantial changes in operational policing and its management, however, research on police culture across different countries and contexts continues to find that it is pervaded by hegemonic masculinity (e.g., Brown 2007; Franklin 2007; Gripp and Zaluar 2017; Prokos and Padavic 2002; Sirimarco 2013). Rio de Janeiro's Military Police is no exception.

In Rio de Janeiro, the first women were accepted into the police academy in 1982. While no longer male by embodied default, the basic institutional masculinity of the Military Police continued to be rigorously defended. This institutional masculinity is shaped by the legacy of the military dictatorship (1964–1985) when the police was subsumed under the armed forces. During this period, a new brand of military masculinity was cultivated in militaries across the Americas. The anti-communist "New Man" was modeled on the guerilla warrior it sought to combat and promoted a masculinity without physical or moral restraints (Cowan 2014; see also Gardiner 2012). The police was not demilitarized with Brazil's return to democracy, thus maintaining the job description of combatting an enemy that is ingrained in the military logic (Calazans 2004; Lopes et al. 2016; Poncioni 2005). Rather than the communist threat, however, the police found a new enemy in the drug trafficker. Within the "war on drugs"—an international campaign to hinder the production, distribution, and consumption of drugs by means of

punitive policies and militarized intervention—the policing of favelas came to rely on street-sweeping and mass imprisonment that publicly dramatized the commitment to slay the monster of urban crime (Ahnen 2007; Wacquant 2003).

Hypermasculinity and the Warrior Ethos in Favelas

Rio's favelas and urban peripheries are marked by socioeconomic disparities and the misuse of firearms due to three decades of turf wars between rival drug "commands" and the police. Brazilian researchers have examined the relationship between urban poverty, violence, and male identity in Rio de Janeiro by highlighting how a "violent sociability" (Machado da Silva 2004) shapes the identity formation of men in favelas. Favela boys are exposed to multiple forms of violence in their households and communities from a young age (Alves 2018; Leite 2014; Machado da Silva 2004). Growing up in contexts marked by urban violence, young men may turn to hypermasculinity within competitions for reputation, recognition, honor, and prestige (Alvito 1996; Cecchetto 2004; Penglase 2010; Zaluar 2001). Hypermasculinity is a trait associated with the assertion of power through physically and sexually aggressive behaviors, competition, and dominance that despises the dearth of these characteristics as weak and feminine (Harris 1999; Mosher and Sirkin 1984). It can be understood as a coping response of males who fear assault or victimization by police or by gangs operating in their territory (Spencer et al. 2004). Alba Zaluar (1994, 2010, 2014) has written extensively on this destructive virility as a "warrior ethos." Within this ethos, she argues, a man cannot leave provocations or offenses unanswered, but instead is expected to react with a violent response toward his opponents. Joseph Vandello and Dov Cohen (2003) have described such tendencies as a masculine "culture of honor," where men use violence in competitions over honor and prestige and where insults require violence as a means of restoring social standing (see also Anderson 1999; Cohen and Nisbeth 1994).

The literature on the warrior ethos has focused mainly on what drives young men to join armed drug trafficking groups. However, Camila Gripp and Zaluar (2017) argue that studies on the UPPs would also benefit from focusing on this masculinity ethos. As their antagonists, the police have developed warrior-type ethos and practices within the war on drugs. While I follow Gripp and Zaluar in applying the concept to frame police practices, it is central to dwell on some of the criticism the warrior ethos literature has received. By arguing that violent forms of masculinity have gained a hegemonic position in favelas, it has been criticized for presenting hypermasculinity as a "culturally idealized form" of manhood these areas (Alves 2018). On the one hand, this invisibilizes struggles over hegemony and the presence of other culturally salient forms of masculinity. On the other, it leans toward asserting favelas and their "culture" as the source of urban violence, thereby obscuring the state's complicity in producing it. Through public policies of neglect that have allowed drug traffickers to take violent control over favelas, and through responding to this violence by means of war-oriented security policies, the state has been implicated in ways that deepen urban violence (Arias 2006). By drawing on Benjamin Cowan (2014), I wish to trace the warrior-type model of masculinity back to the military institution during the Cold War rather than favela culture, and, as such, underline the state's responsibility for hypermasculine forms of violence.

While not the only salient form of masculinity neither in favelas nor in the police, the warrior ethos can be seen as a dominant and dominating masculinity with appeal to men with few other available pathways by which to achieve and defend a sense of socially recognized manhood. Patrol officers and drug traffickers are thus united in a masculine community coded by similar

ideals, a context to keep in mind as the backdrop against which the UPP program was implemented. Before I get to that, the next section starts with looking at how patrol officers' warrior identity and practices have been shaped by gendered role expectations they have faced from superiors, peers, and favelas within the war on drugs.

The Masculine Warrior Ethos and the Policing of Rio's Favelas

The War on Drugs as "Necropolitics"

As noted initially, I spent an extended period of time living in one of Rio's favelas. While this text focuses on police perspectives, my initial interest in the UPP program was its implications for favela residents' sense of citizenship and security (Sørbøe 2013). When I talked with residents about their hopes for—and frustrations with—the program, an emblematic case that would often come up was the fate of Amarildo de Souza. On 14 July 2013, the bricklayer and father of six had been hanging out outside his home in the Rocinha favela when he was approached by UPP officers who mistook him for a drug trafficker. He was taken to the local UPP for questioning, his wife and children following right behind to demand his release. They were told he would be released the same afternoon, but Amarildo was never seen again. His disappearance could easily have joined the thousands of unsolved disappearances in Rio de Janeiro but ended up spurring massive outrage and an international campaign demanding to know, "Where is Amarildo?" It was eventually revealed that he had been tortured and killed, and his body disposed of, by the police. While favela residents would point to Amarildo as an example of how their rights are not protected and how the police mistreat black men from favelas, police officers I talked with framed it differently. Several suggested he was a "thug" that had surely been involved in the drug trade. Furthermore, they would argue that the real tragedy in this case was the consequences it had had for the police, as many "good" officers were arrested.[2]

The Amarildo case is just one example of how the police have conducted their work in Rio's favelas within the context of the "war on drugs." Between 2005 and 2014, 8,466 cases of police killings were recorded in the state of Rio de Janeiro, 5,132 of which occurred in the capital. In 2013, 99.5 percent of the victims were male, 79 percent were black, and 75 percent were between the age of 15 and 30 (AI 2015). Scholars, activists, and favela residents I interviewed have denounced these statistics as signifying a "necropolitics" on young, black men from underprivileged backgrounds (see also Alves 2018; Farias 2014). Achille Mbembé (2003: 11) defines necropolitics as concerning "the power and capacity of a sovereign power to dictate who may live and who must die." Drawing on Michel Foucault's writings on biopower and Carl Schmitt's concepts of sovereignty and exception, Mbembé emphasizes that so-called savage life—a segment of society beyond the line of civilization—is free to be killed without it representing a crime. Favela residents have been viewed as accomplices of drug traffickers based on neighborhood relations, kinship, or economic and political ties, and Marcia Leite (2012) argues that the police therefore have seen no innocents in the favelas. All are viewed as criminals, accomplices, or criminals in the making: "savage life" free to be killed with impunity.

Brazil's historically constituted inequalities are central for understanding both the context of the war on drugs and the profile of its victims. However, officers' embrace of a militaristic approach needs to be examined also by attentiveness to dynamics developed in the police culture—among patrol officers as they deal with the stressors it entails to be the agents of the state's necropolitics.

Police Occupational Culture as a Masculine Culture of Brotherhood

One officer who stressed the centrality of destructive dynamics in the police culture for understanding police violence was Lieutenant Morais, a UPP commander I interviewed in December 2016. Morais was is in his mid-thirties, and after years of climbing the police hierarchy, he was the commander of his second UPP at the time of our interview. A short, mild-spoken man with friendly eyes, he did not exude the kind of hypermasculine energy one could expect from a police commander in Rio. Perhaps these qualities were precisely what had taken him to a position of leadership within the UPPs, where he aspired to change the way the police worked in favelas. Describing what the war on drugs has demanded of police officers, he pointed out that "the institutional demand is that he goes there to arrest and kill, to capture the bad guys . . . and this is linked to skin color, origin, and social class because drug trafficking is not treated the same way in the *asphalto* [the 'formal' city]." The lieutenant explained the enemy image that patrol officers in turn have of drug traffickers, by pointing out that "you cannot—*not*—see the criminal or the drug trafficker as the worst of all evils, because he is the one that killed your friend, he is the one that is a threat to the police."

Jerome Skolnick's ([1966] 2011) pioneer research on police occupational culture defined it as a cognitive and behavioral response to three central elements of police work: danger, display of authority, and pressure for efficiency. He argued that a work environment characterized by the presence and potential for danger, where police officers are expected to create, display, and maintain their authority, stimulates behaviors such as suspiciousness and stereotyping based on appearance in order to deal with insecurities in interactions with strangers in the streets (see also Paoline 2003). Police officers that patrol Rio's favelas face an immanent possibility of deadly shootouts with drug traffickers, partially because of what Lieutenant Morais describes as an institutional demand to actively seek out confrontations. As the drug trafficker poses a real threat to police officer's lives, their perception of the trafficker as the "worst of all evils"—and the stereotyping of this figure on the basis of skin color, origin, and social class—can thus be interpreted as a coping mechanism to the stressors of the day-to-day working environment of the police.

Victor Kappeler and colleagues (1998) argue that danger has a unifying effect on police officers and that it works to separate them from the chief source of danger. Police officers therefore often display an extreme loyalty with fellow officers (Paoline 2003), which Angela Harris (1999: 794) describes as a masculine culture of brotherhood. This brotherhood rests on a division between "us" and "them"—our guys against their guys. In a working environment characterized by the ever-present possibility of being shot, officers will value the colleague—the brother—they trust to have their back and to revenge their death if killed in combat. An expression of this masculine brotherhood culture is the "warrior cop."

The "Warrior Cop" as a Masculine Performance

Solider Silva, a patrol officer at the UPP under Lieutenant Morais's command, had a few years of working experience when I talked to him in 2016. As we discussed the police culture and different forms of police work, he described a hierarchy of policing activities where, as he put it, "we return to the warrior cop, the one that fights the enemy. The female police officer is seen as a lesser officer, the police officer who works in the administration is seen as a lesser officer, and the police officer that works with proximity policing is seen as a lesser officer. Because while he is out there, giving his life to confront evil, the other is in a more comfortable position."

Silva here argues that the "warrior cop" with the capacity to confront "evil" is highly valued within the police culture, while women officers and softer policing functions are looked down

on (see also Gripp and Zaluar 2017; Mourão 2013, 2015). This warrior-type officer is imbued with what the police culture literature situates as masculine traits such as aggression, risk-taking, assertiveness, and courageousness (Brown 2007; Franklin 2005; Martin 1996; Prokos and Padavic 2002). Jennifer Brown (2007) emphasizes the identity formation aspects at stake in policing, arguing that demonstrations of bravery in the face of danger and physical prowess are ways of "doing" male gender that form police officers' identity. The "warrior cop" can thus be interpreted as a masculine performance that works as a mode of "self-making" in which officers define themselves through these images associated with the "masculine" (Martin 1996).

Centrally, "doing" gender is a different project depending on a person's gender, age, occupation, and so on (Chan et al. 2010; Martin 1996; Martin and Jurik 2006). Older, higher-ranking men possess authority and control through their positions of power within the police institution and may as such feel more relaxed about demonstrating and proving their masculinity, as illustrated by the figure of Lieutenant Morais. While both his persona and the softer policing practices he advocated were more "feminine" than the "warrior cop," he had access to (masculine) power through his position. Meanwhile, patrol officers are at the bottom of the police hierarchy because of their rank and function and often because of social markers such as age, race, and socioeconomic background (Mena 2015; Musumeci 2015). As such, they have few means by which to achieve and defend a position of (masculine) power. The "warrior cop" therefore constitutes a dominant and normative masculinity as it has granted recognition and prestige both within the organizational culture (due to the institutional demand to "arrest and kill" traffickers within the war on drugs) and the occupational culture (due to the "brotherhood" that values the colleague that has their back) (see also Gripp and Zaluar 2017; Mourão 2013; 2016).

While this illustrates the pervasiveness of stereotypically gendered role expectations, it is important to recognize that there are significant differences between UPPs based on the profile of given commanders, the history of drug trafficking in the favela in question, and the historical relations between the police and residents (Mourão 2013: 134). Such differences will shape the role expectations officers face, expectations that further vary according to individual officers' background and life experiences. Later, I return to how such differences shape officers' room of maneuver to "undo" gender. Centrally, gendered role expectations are shaped not only by the police culture but also by norms of masculinity in the wider society. I therefore first turn to how the warrior masculinity in favelas shape officers' role performances.

The Esculacho*: On Masculinity, Honor, and Humiliation in Favelas*

In my conversations with both police officers and favela residents, the concept of *esculacho*, which means something akin to "bashing" or "humiliation," was a frequent reference in describing dynamics between the police, drug traffickers, and favela residents. An *esculacho* can be a physical attack such as beating someone up or torturing them. It can also be a moral or psychological attack, in terms of disrespecting someone, extorting them, or betraying a deal. Either way, "being subjected to an *esculacho*, it is as if a guy's honor were affected," Lieutenant Morais explained:

> Drug traffickers will *esculachar* residents; the problem is that the police also act with *esculachos*. This is because the police officer is not a resident of Vieira Souto [street in the high-end Ipanema neighborhood]; he is born in the favela himself. He is from the West Zone, from the Baixada [Rio's working-class peripheries], from places where people have a similar behavior, a similar language. The police officer does not belong to a totally different social class, he belongs to the same social class. He knows how to *esculachar*.

This common social background and cultural grammar of the police and drug traffickers is worth noting. They are united in a masculine community and a culture of honor coded by similar ideals, one where respect must be paid or else violence will follow. The scholarship on masculinity and honor has argued that manhood is demonstrated for other men, and that men are constantly suffering from anxiety that other men will unmask them as insufficiently manly (Cohen and Nisbeth 1994; Kimmel 2017; Vandello and Cohen 2003). Thus, the warrior ethos and practices of the police are arguably shaped not only by role expectations within the police culture but also by perceived expectations of enacting the warrior from the street-working environment: from their trafficker antagonist and from favela residents accustomed to violent forms of masculine authority.

The police use different forms of *esculachos* in their interactions with (male) residents, such as random frisking in the streets on the pretext of searching for drugs, patrolling favelas with the finger on loaded machine guns to demonstrate power, actively seeking out confrontations, and using torture and other forms of violence. Such episodes constitute a form of "masculinity contest" (Cooper 2008) where officers bolster their masculine esteem by dominating male civilians. Engaging in such masculinity contests can thus be interpreted as a mode of self-making: a performance through which officers, by demonstrating their capacity and willingness to exercise violence, become intelligible to themselves and to others as dominant masculine subjects (Martin 1996). The UPPs were to limit officers' engagements in such masculinity contests and thereby reduce police and urban violence.

UPPs as a "Feminine" Police Program

Security Politics in Olympic Rio de Janeiro

The UPP program never had ambitions of ending drug trafficking, but sought to reduce its armed presence in the streets by focusing on prevention rather than ostensive and confrontational police work. As such, it challenged hegemonic masculinity within the Military Police. On the one hand, the UPP approach involved shifts in policing practices toward community engagement and more collaborative styles of policing, which emphasize skill sets such as empathy and mediation. These capacities are construed as feminine in the police culture literature and have been viewed with cynicism within the broader crime-fighting approach that has dominated the police culture in Brazil (Calazans 2004; Lopes et al. 2016; Poncioni 2005). Further, it had a larger proportion of women officers than the wider institution. The first commander of a UPP was a woman, and whereas women make up 4 percent of the Military Police as a whole, 14.3 percent of UPP officers in 2016 were women (Gripp and Zaluar 2017: 10).

The rapid expansion of the program was a result of the interests of politicians wanting to improve Rio's security before the 2016 Olympics[3] and certain reform-oriented leaders within the police (Salem and Bertelsen, this issue). One of these leaders was Coronel Lima, who played a key role in designing and implementing the UPP program in its first, ambitious years. When I interviewed him in July 2016, Lima explained that he had seen the program as a unique opportunity to change the course of Rio's security policies at a crucial time in the city's history. He praised the UPPs' ambitions of "recuperating legitimacy, reestablishing trust, and . . . diminishing violence and crime." However, he noted that these objectives had not been clearly defined when he took the position as coordinator of the program, as his predecessors "never actually designed a proximity policing program." He thus explained: "We started to do it in a very intuitive way. But we were using police officers that were trained within the former concepts of 'us

versus them,' of 'good versus bad.' I had to, in an improvised manner, create courses to try to modify this way of seeing the world of the police officer."

Next, I look at how the UPP program approached changing the police culture through training a new generation of police officers. Despite these efforts, the police culture would prove resistant to change.

Creating a New Police Culture? Human Rights and Positive Peers

Police culture is transmitted through rituals, symbols, ceremonies, and stories that are passed through the generations and influence officers' behaviors (Chan 1997). Over time, it becomes institutionalized to a degree that makes it difficult to challenge and question (Johnson et al. 2008). The initial training is therefore seen as central for police reform initiatives (Constable and Smith 2015; Haarr 2001; Palmiotto et al. 2000). The UPP program relied on what the literature calls a "philosophy of early intervention" (McCarthy 2013): it only accepted new recruits so that they would not be "spoiled" by the prevailing police culture. One of the key aspects of recruits' training was a course in human rights to modify the "us versus them," "good versus bad" dichotomies that have guided police practices.

Human rights is a contested issue both within the police and in wider debates on security politics in Brazil, regarded by some as a leftist ideology that protects criminals (Leite 2000, 2012). In a survey examining police attitudes to human rights in the state of Paraná, Cleber da Silva Lopes and colleagues (2016: 337) found that 67 percent of police officers agreed that "human rights are an obstacle in the fight against violent crime," while 85 percent agreed that "criminals use human rights to dodge criminal law enforcement." A survey examining Rio residents' perceptions of the framework found similar tendencies, with 56 percent agreeing that "whoever defends human rights are defending criminals" (Lembgruber et al. 2017: 17). This inherent skepticism needs to be contextualized by reference to the relationship Brazilians have with the law. While the Brazilian Constitution guarantees individual rights and freedoms, laws do not apply equally in practice. James Holston (2009: 19) argues that Brazilians have generally viewed the law as "providing special treatment to particular categories of citizens that the state differentiates, regulates and rewards." When I interviewed Lieutenant Morais, he said, "People do not see the state as a source of legitimacy, the law has a punitive function. Understanding this, you will understand the aversion of human rights; human rights are laws. We do not see the law as a guarantor of rights and freedoms . . . All human rights will do is arrest the police officer." Morais thus argues that the police do not see themselves as part of the population the law will protect. In the eyes of the police, the human rights framework and other laws will be used only against the police, in a punitive manner. They have therefore instead put their trust in their colleagues—the "brotherhood" that will have their back—and extrajudicial forms of "justice."

The officer in charge of teaching UPP recruits about human rights and confronting entrenched understandings of the framework was Sergeant Oliveira, whom I met at the UPPs' headquarters in late 2016. Oliveira told me that he had himself been highly skeptical of the human rights framework most of his career. However, after meeting Coronel Lima, he had been convinced that the police needed to change the way it worked which he himself had intimate personal knowledge from. Before he joined the UPP's central command, Sergeant Oliveira had been part of an operational battalion and conducted patrols in favelas for close to a decade. On one such patrol, he ended up in a shootout with drug traffickers and took two bullets. He recovered well, but, as he points out, the experience gave him crucial legitimacy to talk about human rights with prospering police officers:

> Because I am a solider, I had the legitimacy to talk to the soldiers; they did not see such a great distance, as I was not an officer coming from the institution. Moreover, as I had participated working in patrolling and been in conflicts, I had been shot, they knew that I understood the problems they went through, and it was easier for me to say that we had to change the way we work.

Sergeant Oliveira represents a "positive peer" approach, where positive peer pressure is exerted to influence officers' ethical decision-making (Zink 2015). He stressed that it was very difficult to teach the subject, particularly when a police officer was killed, but was passionate about his job and impressively optimistic given the daunting task he had been given.

Enduring Warrior Ethos and Practices

Hidden Curriculum

While the training academy may have a positive impact on police recruits' attitudes, research (e.g., Brown 2007; Haarr 2001; Prokos and Padacic 2002) shows that the transition from the police academy to a police unit is challenging. Anastasia Prokos and Irene Padaric (2002) point to a discrepancy between the values taught in the formal training environment and the informal ways through which values and norms are transmitted, what they call a "hidden curriculum." Arriving at a UPP, recruits would be exposed to an already existing unit culture and a hidden curriculum of values and norms. As the commander of a UPP, Lieutenant Morais commented:

> The police officer comes here listening to the officer who entered before him, who tells him stories about what he did and what happened, including how he got rich here by illicit means . . . The police officer, if he goes to a place and comes across a guy with a gun, drugs, and money, he will present the drugs and the weapon, but not the money, he keeps that. "War spoils" is the term the officer uses.

Even after the UPPs "occupied" favelas, armed drug traffickers remained within the territories. While officers were to prioritize proximity policing activities, some still thought that controlling criminals was their most important task. In other words, UPP recruits would face a working environment in which the war-oriented approach continued to shape the police culture (Gripp and Zaluar 2017; Mourão 2013; Musumeci 2015). Stories of "war spoils" and other cultural norms constituted a hidden curriculum that influenced what was seen as legitimate behavior. Lieutenant Morais lamented how hard it was to change this unit culture through a top-down approach, as "there is behavior that transcends the goodwill of a commander-in-chief. You can put all the best people in the world in charge in the state [in the wider Military Police institution], but you have a unit culture. I can change the commander here, but every unit has a culture which is passed on to the officers." Soldier Silva, the patrol officer in Morais's unit, also highlighted how cultural norms would condition officers into certain behaviors:

> It is not written down anywhere, but it is cultural. If you arrest someone they will congratulate you, give you a high five, you will get some time off, they cut you some slack. If you go on a proximity or assistance call, people will even bash you, but if you go on a call where you arrest the bad guy, people respect you. This conditions people into a certain kind of approach.

Occupational cultures serve as techniques of surveillance that sets boundaries for acceptable behavior (Chan 1997; Johnson et al. 2002). Not living up to dominant norms is socially risky,

in particular in a hierarchical institution like the Military Police. This underlines how social positionality shapes officers' room of maneuver to "do" or "undo" gender in terms of adhering to or resisting dominant role expectations (Chan et al. 2010). Officers like Lieutenant Morais and Sergeant Oliveira could "undo" gender by advocating softer police practices as their age, position, and experience ensured their masculinity was not in question. Meanwhile, as Soldier Silva's quote shows, younger, low-ranking officers conducting softer police work would expose them to the risk of being bashed by their colleagues. Recently arrived recruits were therefore not likely to be the protagonists of change (Brown 2007; Haarr 2001; Prokos and Padacic 2002). This parallels what Gripp and Zaluar (2017: 10) describe in their ethnographic study of a UPP, where they point out that police officers displayed "remarkable unity" in defense of traditional understandings of masculinity that served to disempower women and delegitimize alternative masculinities (see also Mourão 2013, 2015).

The "Smurfs" and Anxieties over Masculinity

The UPP police initially wore a light blue uniform that visually set them apart from the rest of the police's gray uniforms. This attire was part of the attempt to soften their image and distinguish the UPPs from the former policing of favelas, and constitutes a concrete example of how "doing" gender is an embodied performance. While the new image was intended, Sergeant Oliveira noted, "The fact that you had those blue clothes . . . people would see a different police. It gave the impression that it was a weak police officer, whereas when you wear the normal uniform, you are a normal police officer." In reference to this distinction, Lieutenant Morais claimed "the favela population called the police Smurfs because the uniforms were blue," and that "even the drug traffickers did not see the UPPs as police officers, because what they were doing was not police work." Morais explained the impact this could have on officers by arguing, "The police officer does not want to be disrespected, because being a police officer is his reason for being. This issue of respect is very important to the police, more so than any concern for the moral content of the law. He wants to be respected, just as the drug trafficker wants to be respected. He does not want to be *eschulachado*."

Favela residents' reference to the UPPs as Smurfs can be interpreted as a disrespect to their authority, and thereby an attack on their masculinity (see also Cooper 2008; Harris 1999; Scott 1970). Whether or not favela residents and drug traffickers did, in fact, perceive the UPPs as a weaker police is beside the point; the central issue here is that officers would notice such an attitude. This was perceived an *esculacho*—a humiliation. Letting such infractions to honor go unanswered would amount to jeopardizing both individual and collective masculinity (Cooper 2008; Harris 1999; Vandello and Cohen 2003). In 2015, the UPP police discarded the light blue uniforms for the gray attire of the rest of the Military Police. Sergeant Oliveira explained that they changed the uniform "in order to end this division, to show that that it was not a weak police, to show that it was the figure of the state."

"Masculinization" of the Program

The UPPs' legitimacy and image as a softer policing program has progressively weakened in later years. Coronel Lima explained this by reference to the context of the "Olympic exception" in Rio de Janeiro (Ystanes and Salem, this issue) and the political pressure to expand the program faster than the police had capacity for. By rapidly expanding to new areas rather than focusing on a few selected favelas, he argued that the leadership had lost control and oversight and that the police had returned to old sins: "The police started to arm themselves as if it were

the BOPE [the notoriously violent police special forces], the UPPs were transforming into a BOPE, which was not the intension . . . Everyone was becoming just like Rambo."

Comparing surveys with UPP officers conducted in 2010, 2012, and 2014, Leonarda Musumeci (2015: 7–10) reveals a progressive weakening of activities that can be characterized as proximity policing. In 2014, police officers reported doing less community outreach work than before, while there was a sharp increase in activities that resemble the traditional policing of favelas, such as "hunting down" drugs and drug traffickers. Musumeci argues that "proper" proximity policing has been delegated to a group of specialists, while most UPP officers understand proximity merely as the continuous and ostensive presence within favelas (8). Interestingly, she finds that while the number of UPP officers who would have preferred to work outside the UPPs remained at a steady 60 percent between the 2012 and 2014 surveys, officers' justification for wanting to leave differed (28–30). There was a sharp decline in officers whose motivation for wanting to work elsewhere was to do "real" police work or receive more respect.

This illustrates that as the UPPs increasingly resemble regular police battalions, their perception as a feminine police force has faded (Mourão 2015: 13). This "masculinization" of the program furthermore points to the ingrained masculinity culture of the police as a fundamental barrier for police reform.

Final Reflections

After I had my talks with Lieutenant Morais and Soldier Silva at their UPP, Morais offered me a ride to the Metro station at the bottom of the favela. I had lived in this particular favela previously and knew it well, but accepted the ride. We got into the back of a patrol car with two uniformed officers in the front. As we slowly navigated our way through the crowded streets, the change in perspective from the anecdote in the introduction struck me. Looking out on the favela through the car windows—as opposed to looking *in* on police officers on patrol—made me see the community in a different light, through the eyes of the officers I had spent the day with. When walking the streets, I knew this as a community populated by friends and former neighbors. From inside the patrol car I suddenly saw the favela as crowded by potential threats. As people looked at us with suspicion, I intimately connected with the police officers' fear of retaliation from drug traffickers. Such simple shifts in perspective illuminate the "us versus them" and "good versus bad" dichotomies at stake in security politics.

As Jaime Amparo Alves (2018) notes, police brutality is not random; it follows the vectors of power established in the wider society. The different contributions to this special section show that these vectors, deeply embedded in Brazil's social and political history, are configured around colonial structures of inequality and traditional gender norms. Analyses of security politics in Rio de Janeiro have focused on how the police, as an expression of these interests, enact a form of necropolitics on the "other" of the favela. This article shows that it is also worth paying attention to the subjects that have to exercise this violent work. The police that most kill are also the ones that most die: young, black patrol officers are overrepresented in the statistics over police killed in service. As such, the Brazilian state involves the population that it targets with necropolitics in its very execution, a central yet at times overlooked dimension of gendered and racialized urban (in)security in Rio de Janeiro.

This article has argued that the warrior-oriented ethos and practices of the police can be seen as a masculine performance, as a way of "doing gender" according to dominant and normative gender role expectations. As a more "feminine" police program, the UPPs challenged hegemonic masculinity within the police. Despite the formal change toward softer policing func-

tions, the article has shown that "male" capacities for violence continued to be deemed critical elements of police work and important features of the construction of police officer's identity. In understanding the pervasiveness of the masculine warrior ethos, I have foregrounded the social dynamic of the *esculacho* and how social positionality shaped officers' capacity to "undo" normatively gendered role expectations or risk being bashed as weak and feminine. This gender perspective on the police culture provides important insights into how and why police ethos and practices have remained permeated with logics of violence. The ingrained masculinity culture—reproduced through dynamics in the organizational, occupational and street working environment of the police—appear as a fundamental barrier for police reform.

Although my analysis has shown the pervasiveness of a warrior ethos within the police, it is important to note that not all patrol officers perform or support this masculinity. While the article emphasized that role expectations and performances vary along lines such as social class, rank, age, gender, and career time, more longitudinal research is needed on how such differences shape police performances. Furthermore, the article has concentrated only on the reproduction of the warrior ethos in male officers and more research is needed on the gender performances of policewomen and how and whether they reproduce the warrior ethos of their male colleagues.

Finally, although the qualitative evidence analyzed in this article points to a hegemony of a warrior-type masculinity, how police officers perform this masculinity and how it varies across different contexts and situations are central points of further research. While much remains partially unknown regarding how the warrior ethos manifests itself in practice, the article has shown the fruitfulness of focusing on gender dynamics in police culture to understand police and urban violence in Rio de Janeiro. The article is further a contribution to the wider policing literature by broadening our understanding of how police culture works and what consequences it produces in unequal and violent societies such as Brazil.

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NOTES

1. The police culture literature has been criticized for being overwhelmingly Anglo-Saxon in focus, but Megan O'Neill and colleagues (2007), for example, argue that it has value also for scholars working in different countries and contexts.
2. Whereas the grand majority of police abuse of power is conducted with impunity, the Amarildo case resulted in 25 officers accused and 12 officers, including the UPP commander, being convicted for torture followed by death. They were, however, not exonerated by the institution and continued to receive salaries.
3. As critical literature on the UPPs has shown, the program prioritized favelas located close to touristic areas or sports arenas for the 2014 FIFA World Cup and the 2016 Olympics. The program has been criticized for being about the security of these areas, rather than that of favela residents (Freeman 2014).

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