

Uniformed Bandits: The Rise and Persistence of Police Criminality in Brazil



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Gabriel Funari
St. Antony's College
University of Oxford
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Abstract

The thesis examines the involvement of police officers in criminal governance in Brazil. Criminal groups run by Brazilian police, including death squads and militias, have been prominent providers of unlawful governance for several decades. Death squads and militias rule over neighbourhoods in the urban margins and participate in a variety of illicit trades, including drug-trafficking, gambling, and protection rackets. Despite their important role in politics and urban violence, police criminality is an understudied phenomenon in Brazil, as scholars prefer to study drug-trafficking organisations run by civilians. The thesis aims to address this lapse by examining the factors that explain the proliferation and persistence of police criminality. I employ a case study approach focused on death squads and militias in the city of Belém.

The study relies on in-depth fieldwork and its data sources include elite interviews, court depositions, media archives and government records. I argue that the proliferation and persistence of death squads and militias in Belém is indelibly tied to Brazil's militaristic public security ecosystem. This ecosystem generates a supply of experts in extreme violence and sustains an institutional setting lacking in accountability mechanisms. Police officers take advantage of this institutional paradigm to disseminate illicit expertise throughout the law-enforcement hierarchy. Police criminality is also able to proliferate because police institutions engage in selective enforcement of illicit activities conducted by law-enforcement. In the process, police involved in death squads and militias are able to cultivate fearsome reputations, through which they can rule over their local turfs and invest in a variety of criminal markets. The study also finds that the infiltration of illicit police interests in electoral institutions and the onset of large and profitable illicit markets, including transnational drug-trafficking and clandestine transport, ensures that successive generations of police officers can continue to establish and lead criminal enterprises.

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Chapter I. Introduction

On the evening of November 4, 2014, a police officer was murdered by six assailants as he was stepping out of his car in the city of Belém, capital of the Brazilian state of Pará. Known as a tough cop with one of the best shooting records in the local police force, corporal Antônio Marcos da Silva Figueiredo (known as Pet) was also one of Belém's most prominent criminals.¹ He led a militia group that ruled over Belém's largest neighbourhood and played an influential role in the city's bustling drug trade (Pará State Legislature, 2015). Pet was killed by members of a rival criminal group amid a long-running dispute between drug-traffickers and police officers for control of local criminal markets. In the hours following the murder, members of his militia and police officers began congregating near Pet's home. They sent out messages via WhatsApp and Facebook declaring a curfew in Belém and calling for a general mobilization of police officers to avenge Pet's killing.² Over 50 police officers heeded the call. During the night of November 4, they summarily executed at least five people (G1.com, 2014d). The victims were innocent bystanders, and several were shot in the back by the police officers and militiamen. Others were seized by the assailants, taken into alleyways, and killed. The killings continued the following day, when at least six more people were killed by Pet's associates (Diário do Pará, 2016). It is likely that the number of victims of the November 2014 massacre exceeded the official figure of 11 victims, potentially rising to 35 people killed (SDDH-PA et al., 2014).

Pet's dual career trajectory as a violent cop and influential criminal entrepreneur exemplifies the social phenomenon of police criminality. Characterized by police officers acquiring coercive expertise in their regular law-enforcement work and then launching criminal enterprises, police criminality has become a prominent feature of Brazilian social life over the last six decades (Alves, 2020; Huggins, 1997). No longer just accepting payoffs from criminal groups, police create and lead illicit organisations like death squads and militias that interfere in a variety of illicit trades

¹ Interview with member of Pará State Legislature Carlos Bordalo, February 23, 2022

² Interview with human rights activist Clara Silveira, February 24, 2022

and govern densely populated neighbourhoods in the margins of major Brazilian cities (Hirata et al, 2022). As demonstrated by the revenge killings of November 2014, illicit groups run by police heavily contribute to Brazil's high rates of violence. These groups are also influencing political dynamics in the country, by engaging in vote-buying, electoral gatekeeping and even launching their own candidates for office.

Despite its relevance to issues of political authority and urban violence, police criminality is an understudied phenomenon. The lack of studies on police-run criminal groups stands in contrast to the avid interest in studying Brazil's drug-trafficking organizations (DTOs), which are made up of convicts and civilians and which have been successful in expanding nation-wide and internationally (Arias, 2006; Penglase, 2014; Manso & Dias, 2018). Meanwhile, the sparse literature on police criminality in Brazil largely views the phenomenon as exclusively relevant to the city of Rio de Janeiro (Arias & Barnes, 2016; Pope, 2022). However, police criminality has spread beyond Rio to various other Brazilian jurisdictions (Rose, 2005; Scheper-Hughes, 2015). The recurring nature of this phenomenon demands explanation. My research explores the ways in which criminal enterprises run by police officers have become a prominent feature of socio-political life through a case study approach focused on Belém. The thesis addresses the following research question: What are the factors that explain the proliferation and persistence of police criminality in Belém?

The data sources of the thesis include interviews with important stakeholders in law-enforcement, the judiciary, the legislative branch and civil society actors in Belém. I also rely on archival material stemming from criminal lawsuits, arrest warrants, police intelligence reports, witness depositions, wiretaps and media coverage. I study the two principal organizational forms that police officers have created to engage in criminal governance: death squads and militias. While death squads and militias are distinct organisational forms, they are nevertheless closely linked as sub-types of police criminality. Death squads and militias engage in a variety of illicit trades, including protection, drug-trafficking, hired killings and gambling (Manso, 2020). At the same time, these groups provide various forms of governance at the local level. They enforce rules of conduct,

settle disputes and control the use of violence in their communities (Cano & Duarte, 2012; Araujo, 2017). Through these activities, death squads and militias become fundamental sources of political authority at the local level. They are therefore essential objects of study to explore the expansion and endurance of police criminality.

As will be covered in greater detail over the course of the study, I maintain that Belém is a representative location to understand the ways in which police involvement in criminal governance has spread and persisted over time. Located in a peninsula connecting the Amazon to transnational shipping lanes, Belém and its surrounding regions are strategically important for a variety of licit and illicit supply chains (Cardoso & Ventura Neto, 2013). Over the last thirty years, Belém has undergone an accelerated and informal process of urbanization, a dramatic increase in violence and a surge in illicit police conduct (Oliveira Neto, 2020; Couto, 2021). These three trends in Belém share parallels with Brazil's major urban centres, where social life has been shaped by the interrelated nature of informal urban settlement, human insecurity, and a militarized approach to everyday forms of policing (Feltran, 2020; Beato, 2019; Beraldo, 2022). Studying police criminality in Belém therefore has the merit of shedding light on the common patterns that impact police criminality on a national level in Brazil. It also brings to the fore the distinctive features of illicit law-enforcement conduct within the context of a research site located at the threshold of intense urbanization, environmental degradation and the territorialization of drug-trafficking.

The police in Brazil are amongst the most lethal in the world, and the police in Belém consistently rank amongst the most lethal law-enforcement agencies in the country (Fórum Brasileiro de Segurança Pública, 2023b). Police killings are recurring manifestations of the racist underpinnings of the Brazilian state (Alves, 2018). The victims of police lethality are overwhelmingly comprised of young black men from the urban margins (Weichert, 2021). The repeated instances of illicit police conduct in Brazil are backed up by institutional support and the electoral popularity of a shoot-to-kill rhetoric towards policing. This rhetoric has propelled Brazilian police officers and members of the armed forces to electoral success in all spheres of

government (Funari, 2022). This trend culminated in the election of the far-right former Army captain Jair Bolsonaro to the presidency in 2018. Studying the role of the police in criminal governance within this high-violence and low-accountability context allows the thesis to theorize the relation between police and crime in a novel way. In developing a theoretical framework of criminal embeddedness, I find that death squads and militias reflect the vast extent to which police are at the forefront of criminal violence.

My study traces the origins of death squads and militias in Brazil to unpack the relationship between illicit police conduct and the structures and functions of law-enforcement. The research is also concerned with understanding why successive generations of police officers have continued to form criminal groups. I therefore focus on two outcomes of interest, one which relates to space and the other to time. The outcome of interest of proliferation revolves around understanding the factors that led to the two subtypes of police criminality being imported into Belém. Through the focus on proliferation, the study considers the factors that led Belém police officers to follow on the footsteps of their peers in Brazil's large urban centres to institute their own versions of death squads and militias. Considering that police-run criminal groups have become increasingly pervasive in Belém, the study also focuses on understanding the expansion of police criminality within the city and its adjoining metropolitan region. The focus on proliferation therefore deals with the factors that led police criminality to spread to Belém, as well as the factors that contributed to the expansive reach of death squads and militias within the city and its metropolitan region.

In tandem, the outcome of interest of persistence pertains to the long-lasting nature of police criminality. Criminal groups run by police officers have been active in Belém since the late 1980s (Oliveira Neto, 2020). Even though death squads and militia groups tend to struggle to last beyond a consecutive multiyear period, new illicit groups are continuously being launched by police officers in the Belém area. This trend also resonates in other Brazilian cities, where death squads and militias have been a feature of urban life for several decades (Rose, 2005; Bicudo, 1988). Hence, along with examining the expansion of police criminality in Belém, the thesis also pays

attention to the regenerative potential of death squads and militias. Through this dual focus, the study is able to generate findings regarding the expansion and endurance of police-led criminal groups across time and space.

The Argument in Brief

I argue that the institutional design of Brazil's public security agencies is of paramount importance to the proliferation and persistence of death squads and militias in Belém. Rather than interpreting officers engaged in death squad and militias as rogue cops or 'bad apples', I argue that the structures and functions of police work facilitates the embedding of illicit interests in law-enforcement. The militaristic hierarchies of police, its attendant internal culture that promotes the extreme use of force and the lack of judicial oversight over law-enforcement activity are essential to the proliferation and persistence of police criminality in Belém. These features of police institutions creates a supply of specialists in unlawful violence. These specialists enjoy multiple layers of protection within the police bureaucracy to accumulate revenue in illicit markets. To study death squads and militias is to reckon with the fact that police officers do not just transgress legal norms when they perpetrate extrajudicial killings in the line of duty. Law-enforcement officers also play a fundamental role in structuring criminal markets and providing irregular forms of political rule.

I situate police criminality within a historical continuum of deviant police conduct shaped by the militarisation of law-enforcement in Brazil. The militarised organisational norms of the police have persisted since the colonial period. Since that time, they have advanced a conception of policing as a form of social cleansing (Garmany & Richmond, 2020). Under this conception, police officers are conditioned to think that their work revolves around confronting and eliminating society's undesirables (Caldeira, 2000; Pinheiro, 1997). As one of the first institutions of state set up by a colonial government that ruled over a plantation economy model reliant on indentured slaves, the police in Brazil has primarily conceived of these 'undesirables' as black people (Vargas, 2011). From the time in which its first public functions included the surveillance

and punishment of slaves, the police's paradigm of social cleansing has continuously directed its capacity for violence towards the extermination of Brazil's black population. Police recruits inherit this *modus operandi* of expressing order through forms of anti-black violence that have minimal concern with legal norms (Alves, 2018).

In this context of persistent police violence and illicit conduct by law-enforcement officers, my study unearths two major policy initiatives that have contributed to the proliferation and persistence of death squads and militias. The first is the launch of rapid-response elite police units. This policy program was first established by the Rio state government in the late 1950s and made its way to Belém 30 years later (Huggins, 1997). These elite units had functions akin to that of military commandos. They had discretionary authority to deploy lethal force throughout the span of metropolitan regions. This policy design empowered elite officers to create death squads, through which they could take advantage of their discretionary authority for extreme violence to accumulate revenue in a variety of illicit trades. The trend of elite officers engaging in criminal activity became a recurring pattern throughout Brazil, as state governments followed on the footsteps of the country's largest states to implement this tough-on-crime approach to public security. In my study this dynamic is exemplified by the PATAM, a rapid-response elite unit that within two years of its establishment was incubating death squads within its ranks.

The creation of these elite units eventually formed an important component of wider iron-fist reforms to law-enforcement implemented by Brazil's military dictatorship, particularly from 1967 onwards. The failure to reform public security institutions during the democratic transition in the late 1980s ensured that the same militaristic dynamics that helped to generate the first instances of police criminality would remain in place in the decades to come. As a result of the entrenchment of the military structures of policing, police-backed criminal groups continued to be formed, particularly following the implementation of the policy program centred around the War on Drugs. Launched in the 1990s, the War on Drugs approach remains in place (Muniz & Cecchetto, 2021). It is centred around intense armed repression of drug-trafficking, which largely

takes the form of large-scale police raids of low-income communities located in the urban margins (Arias, 2006).

I argue that the War on Drugs strategy of policing has facilitated efforts by law-enforcement officers to interfere in illicit markets. The War on Drugs' shoot-to-kill operational directives of policing further incentivized police violence and curbed legal accountability measures. I find that the traits of manifesting authority through extreme levels of coercion that police officers are taught in the line of duty serve them well in their criminal governance efforts. Police officers were able to mobilize the threat of violently repressing drug sales points and distribution centres to obtain bribes from drug-traffickers. Gradually, police made efforts to obtain larger amounts of revenue from the drug trade. In the Belém context during the 2000's, police officers went on to create their own criminal enterprises which could offer protection to DTOs. By the following decade, death squads and militias in Belém were directly taking part in drug-trafficking. In the process, these police-run groups became significant stakeholders in Belém's criminal ecosystem.

Furthermore, I maintain that in structuring police forces around a military hierarchy, Brazilian government agencies foment a climate of institutional impunity that encourages the spread and persistence of police criminality. My study finds that police oversight agencies are reluctant to punish officers for deploying unlawful violence. In addition, officers take advantage of various bureaucratic impediments that protect them from punishment and expulsion from the police. This low-accountability environment encourages police officers to engage in criminal governance, since they retain the confidence that their police status will protect them from judicial scrutiny and from severe disciplinary consequences.

Death squads and militia leaders take advantage of these prerogatives to retain their police affiliations and obtain various forms of support from police agencies. Police agencies provide death squads and militias with weaponry, vehicles, and personnel. Just as importantly, police agencies regularly avoid engaging in investigations or armed repression of death squads and militias. Rather than perceived as criminals that need to be confronted, police officers who engage

in death squad or militia activity are often viewed as peers by a considerable portion of the police bureaucracy. Since these illicit groups are led by and largely comprised of law-enforcement, police institutions prefer to direct their resources towards more conventional criminal enterprises comprised of civilians. These forms of non-enforcement and material assistance serve as competitive advantages for death squads and militias to establish governance provision at the neighbourhood level. Support from police agencies also allows these groups to contend with other illicit entities for market share of profitable criminal trades. Police backing also plays a role in the enduring nature of police criminality. Successive generations of police officers are empowered to engage in criminality, as they know from previous iterations of police criminality that they can rely on various forms of assistance from police institutions to advance their illicit governance goals.

In addition, I argue that the dissemination of illicit expertise amongst police officers facilitates the proliferation and persistence of police criminality. By the 2000's, the repertoires of coercion and illicit entrepreneurialism required to launch death squads and militias were no longer restricted to officers of elite units. Police officers in Belém were in constant dialogue with their colleagues at the local level and with police peers in other jurisdictions. Since the late 1980's, these constant exchanges allowed police officers to incorporate criminal governance strategies developed in other major Brazilian cities, particularly in Rio. This process had its roots in elite training programs, in which members of rapid-response units learned about unlawful coercion and illicit entrepreneurial strategies from their peers based in other jurisdictions. Elite officers then disseminated this expertise throughout the law-enforcement hierarchy. The success of criminal police groups in Rio by the early 2000's also led street-level police officers in Belém to emulate the illicit strategies from these groups. This learning process was done from afar as well as through direct forms of knowledge transfer with police criminals. My study finds that this knowledge transfer largely occurs inside the police bureaucracy and during the on-duty hours of police officers. By constantly exchanging practices of illicit profiteering with their colleagues, death squads and militia operatives are able to refine and advance their criminal governance claims.

The issue of reputation, which has been identified by the existing scholarship as a foundational factor for the rise of criminal groups comprised of non-state agents (Varese, 2011; Volkov, 2016) is also relevant to the proliferation of police criminality. In the militarized structures and functions of police in Brazil, police officers who demonstrate a prowess for extreme coercion in the line of duty are lauded by the police hierarchy and idolized by police troops. As a result, officers with a high degree of specialization in violence accrue formidable reputations. As well as helping them rise in the police ranks, these reputations also empower these officers to engage in criminal activity, since their renown for violence can be used to obtain unlawful revenue. The prevalence of these reputational dynamics within the police aided the expansion of police criminality, as officers that possessed considerable clout were able to establish criminal enterprises in an expedited manner. Reputation has less effect when it comes to the recurring nature of police criminality. This is because recent iterations of death squads and militias are increasingly professionalized, with strict hierarchies and divisions of labour in place. As a result, these groups rely less on personalized forms of authority.

The thesis reveals that police criminality persists primarily because death squads and militias have effectively adapted to changing circumstances in transnational and national criminal markets. The pioneering criminal groups set up by police officers in Belém emerged in the late 1980s and early 1990s. The early stages of the proliferation of this phenomenon in Belém was not driven by large illicit markets. The city had small and fragmented criminal trades during that time, mostly comprised of gambling rings. However, police-backed forms of criminal governance continue to remain active because they reacted to the rise of profitable illicit markets in Belém. This rise was driven by shifts in drug-trafficking routes and enhanced global demand for drugs which turned Belém into an important trafficking hub, particularly for cocaine exports. Opportunities to amass gains from criminal trades with large cash flows like drug-trafficking proved to be seductive for police officers, particularly those in the lower rungs of the law-enforcement hierarchy with low wages. As specialists in violence with meagre salaries and minimal

prospects of career advancement, soldiers and corporals take part in drug-trafficking to increase their income and expand their governance authority at the local level.

My thesis also brings to the fore another crucial but often overlooked illicit market, that of clandestine transport, in driving the persistence of police criminality. As a highly lucrative market that emerged in the wake of vast population increases in major urban centres and inadequate formal transport provision, clandestine transport became an important market for criminal groups run by police. By first charging informal commuter vans for protection and eventually taking over transport cooperatives, death squads and militias harnessed considerable cash flows. Their activities in clandestine transport also brought these groups closer to the dynamics of electoral politics. In fact, officers involved in death squads and militias are increasingly cultivating ties with political operatives, whilst also nurturing their own electoral ambitions.

Electoral interests are therefore also essential to the persistence of police criminality. Death squads and militias perpetrate electoral gatekeeping, vote-buying and provide security to law-and-order candidates. These groups are also regularly hired by politicians for the assassination of political rivals. Meanwhile, contemporary iterations of death squads and militias are being used as launching pads for vigilante police officers to amass localized political power and achieve electoral success. Once in office, vigilante police are able to protect death squads and militias from judicial scrutiny, direct public resources towards these groups' territories and help to increase the standing of police criminals within the law-enforcement hierarchy. Hence, while political-electoral factors did not influence the expansion of death squads and militias in Belém, they contribute to the enduring nature of police criminality. My study therefore reveals that police involvement in criminal governance is constantly evolving. Death squads and militias keep longstanding traditions of police deviance alive whilst also continually innovating their governance arrangements to adapt to shifting dynamics in transnational illicit market chains and electoral disputes.

Key Concepts

My thesis focuses on the social phenomenon of criminal governance. The urban violence scholarship is increasingly interested in studying the political prominence of criminal groups and the ways in which these entities acquire state-like forms of authority to set rules of conduct, adjudicate disputes and control the use of violence (Barnes, 2021a; Lessing, 2021). The long-held conceptual assumption that political power is the exclusive remit of the state lies increasingly in tension with the fact that criminal groups are the main source of authority in a variety of locations around the world (Moncada, 2021; Campana & Varese, 2018; Sanchez de la Sierra, 2020).

Criminal governance is conceptualized in my study as a social phenomenon wherein a criminal group makes simultaneous claims to control illicit markets and establish political authority through the enforcement of rules and the provision of goods and services. Entities that provide criminal governance rule over their own members, non-member criminals and non-criminal civilians (Lessing, 2021). Millions of people around the world live under criminal governance (Arias, 2017; LeBas, 2013). A substantial number of them are residents of Brazil's major cities, where illicit groups, including death squads and militias, are the primary providers of security and adjudicators of communal disputes in the urban margins (Feltran, 2020; Hirata & Grillo, 2019).

This conceptualization of criminal governance takes inspiration from seminal sociological studies into the efforts by illicit entities to control criminal markets. In these pioneering studies, this phenomenon has been termed extra-legal governance (Gambetta, 1996; Varese, 2001; Hamill, 2010). Extra-legal governance refers to the provision of norms and rules by criminal groups through which they regulate the production and exchange of legal and illegal goods (Varese, 2017; Lusthaus, 2018). My conceptual approach aims to build on the insights regarding rule-setting by criminal groups by focusing on criminal entities that are run by police officers. I provide a basic but instructive conceptualization of the two subtypes of police criminality that I study.

The existing literature conflates these two phenomena and sometimes use the term 'death squad' and 'militia' interchangeably (Arias & Barnes, 2016; Couto, 2021; Alves, 2020). This

conflation is aided by the fact that death squads and militias are both led by police and are involved in a variety of illicit activities. However, my study distinguishes between death squads and militias based on three fundamental definitional attributes: the extent of their criminal governance provision, their territorial orientation and the characteristics of their leadership and wider membership contingent. Death squads and militias differ when it comes to all three attributes.

Table I: Definitional Distinctions and Similarities Between Death Squads and Militias

	Death Squads	Militias
Criminal Governance Provision	Sporadic, fragmented	Comprehensive, day-to-day
Territorial Orientation	Operate in several neighbourhoods throughout the urban space	Operate in specific territories (often the community where militia operatives reside in)
Characteristics of its Leadership Contingent	On-duty police officers	Off-duty or retired police officers
Similarities	Created and led by police officers, governance providers at the neighbourhood level, involved in various criminal markets	

I define death squads as criminal groups created, led by, and mostly comprised of on-duty police officers that operate in several territories with the objective of accumulating revenue in illicit markets. While death squads engage in criminal governance in the communities that they are active in, the accumulation of illicit revenue is the primary priority of these groups. As such, death squads function like conventional criminal groups that pursue unlawful revenue streams in any location available to them, whilst also occasionally exerting authority in their local communities.

The death squad terminology (*grupos de extermínio* or *esquadrões da morte* in Brazil) was first used by Brazilian media outlets in the 1950s and 1960s, when elite police units tasked with ‘cleaning

the streets' of supposed criminals and left-wing guerrillas began to engage in mass executions (Bicudo, 1988). Whilst the death squad terminology continues to be used, it can nevertheless be misleading in some ways. It may generate the assumption that these groups are sporadic assemblages geared for the sole purposes of unlawful killings. In contrast, my study finds that death squads are structured criminal organisations created and led by on-duty police officers. Whilst media coverage in the early days of the death squad phenomenon focused on the high-profile murders committed by these groups, death squads were also developing extensive criminal repertoires by charging gambling rings and local business owners of low-income communities for unlawful protection (Rose, 2005). Through these protection offerings, death squads began to provide governance in these neighbourhoods by controlling the use of violence and adjudicating local disputes (Alves, 2020).



Figure I: Coverage of death squads in a national newspaper in the 1960s. Headline's translation: 'Death Squad or Justice Done by their Own Hands'

Source: *Jornal do Brasil*, July 17, 1968; Biblioteca Nacional archives

While the original death squads created out of elite units shared parallels with their standard on-duty hierarchies, my study reveals that contemporary death squads do not follow that approach. Instead, death squads are usually created by a soldier or corporal, who recruits other associates in their police network, usually their patrol colleagues. Some of the police officers recruited by the founder may even be hierarchically above them in the police. However, as in most organizations that deal in illicit trade, a reputation for coercive prowess is of the utmost value to death squads (Gambetta, 1996). Death squads are therefore distinctive organisational forms which nevertheless remain directly connected to police institutions.

On the other hand, militias are a more recent form of police criminality. I define Brazilian militias as criminal groups created and led by off-duty and retired police officers that provide comprehensive forms of criminal governance at the neighbourhood level. Militias are territorialized entities that pursue two foundational objectives, that of accumulating unlawful revenue and becoming the primary purveyors of political order in their turf (Cano & Duarte, 2012). Militias took inspiration from death squads when it came to efforts at retaining intimate ties to police institutions whilst also pursuing illicit profiteering. However, militias also went beyond the death squad blueprint. They enacted forms criminal governance that interfere in community life on a day-to-day basis.

As a result, the initiatives aimed at rule-setting and political control by militias is far more intensive than what death squads provide. Militias establish sprawling protection rackets, control population flows in their area and establish strict rules of conduct for residents. Militias also focus on infiltrating government institutions and interfering in the electoral process (Hidalgo & Lessing, 2014). While death squads are mostly comprised of on-duty police that pursue commercial activities in illicit markets without restricting themselves to particular territories, militias are comprised of off-duty or retired police. This difference in the characteristics of its leadership contingent stems from the comprehensive nature of militias' governance initiatives. Seeing as militia governance requires considerable bureaucratic coordination and intensive activities at the

community level on a daily basis, these illicit groups require more time and effort from their police leadership. As a result, the police officers involved in militias are either retired or engage in militia activity outside of their police working hours.

Scholars of violence define militias as irregular armed groups active in conflict zones that provide security at the local level while retaining some degree of proximity to the state (Jentzsch, Kalyvas & Schubiger, 2015; Ahram, 2011; Aliyev, 2016). Brazilian militias share some of those traits, since they are police-backed groups geared towards security provision in social contexts marked by rampant violence (Cano & Iooty, 2008). However, in contrast to militia groups in civil wars, Brazilian militias are not involved as belligerents in conflict zones. Rather, Brazilian militias emerge in the early 1990s in Rio amidst the process of rapid, informal, and violent patterns of urbanization (Burgos, 2002).

Scholars dispute the use of the term ‘militia’ in the Brazilian context (Lessing, 2017; Pope, 2019). This mostly derives from the fact that the term reportedly began to be deployed in an arbitrary fashion in Rio (Manzo, 2020; Cano & Iooty, 2008). Scholars trace the first use of the term ‘militia’ in Rio to an article published by the *O Globo* newspaper in March 2005. The term ‘militia’ was reportedly used by *O Globo* because it was a short word that was easy to include in the newspaper headline (Pope, 2019). Since then, ‘militia’ continued to be used by major news outlets and quickly became part of the lexicon of criminal governance in Rio (Araujo & Cortado, 2020). The adoption of the term ‘militia’ resembles the process through which the Five Families of New York came to be publicly known as the mafia through televised testimonies of Senate hearings on organised crime in the early 1960s, wherein “an external source conferred a recognizable identity on a phenomenon that already existed... mafiosi themselves started to call their organizations by names that they had not quite chosen” (Varese, 2011, 123).

Despite these claims of arbitrariness, I will continue to use ‘militia’ throughout my study because of the longstanding significance of the term to issues of policing in Brazil. This historical significance has been overlooked by criminal governance scholars who challenge the militia

terminology. Militia units were deployed by the colonial government in Brazil's major urban centres as emergency troops during times of civil disturbance (Holloway, 1993). The militias were comprised of local volunteers and army reserves (Holloway, 1993). The functions of militia units gradually evolved. From 1818 to 1831, every police patrol in Brazilian cities was comprised of a police officer, a soldier, and a member of the militia (Holloway, 1993). During the post-independence monarchical period (1822-1889), 'militia' was also colloquially used as a synonym for the National Guard throughout Brazil (Castro, 1977). The popularization of the term 'militia' may have been instigated by an editorial choice for a specific article. In any case, the term did not arise out of a historical vacuum. Instead, 'militia' is a historically significant term that is intimately bound to the shifting structures of law-enforcement in Brazil. The term therefore aids my efforts to examine the proliferation and persistence of death squads and militias as part of the historical continuum of violent police conduct in Brazil.

Contributions

The lack of studies on death squads and militias is facilitated by the fact that, on the surface, criminal governance by police may appear to contradict paradigmatic ideas about the relation between the state and crime. These ideas play an important role in the criminal governance and wider organised crime research. Organised crime scholarship largely advances the notion that there are conceptual and empirical distinctions between a criminal underworld and a legal/formal upperworld (Landesco, 1968; Block, 2017). This underworld-upperworld dichotomy places the police as diametrically opposed to organised crime groups (Katz & Webb, 2006; Kelly, 1999; Schelling, 1984). The underworld-overworld approach generates the assumption that criminal governance cannot be carried out by agents of the state (Lessing, 2022).

My study deploys a theoretical framework of criminal embeddedness that expands the scope conditions of criminal governance by shedding light on the proximity between law-enforcement and criminality. The criminal embeddedness theoretical framework examines everyday policing as functionally bound to extra-legal methods of coercion, through which officers

can determine the functioning of illicit markets. With the aid of this framework, my study unearths empirical evidence that challenges the widely held assumption that criminal governance is a purely non-state phenomenon. Rather than taking it as a given that the relation between state and crime is defined either by armed confrontations or by corrupt dynamics driven by ‘bad apples’ within government institutions, the criminal embeddedness framework exposes the systemic issues within the coercive units of the state that allow police to be at the forefront of criminal governance. In tracing the historical and contemporary linkages between police and crime, my study shows that the internal functions of the state’s law-enforcement apparatus can become intimately connected to criminal governance.

The embeddedness framework also illuminates the ways in which death squads and militias are markedly different phenomena from standard forms of police corruption. Death squads and militias are enterprises made up of police officers who are criminals, rather than assortments of law-enforcement officials that violate departmental regulations on an ad-hoc basis or accept occasional payoffs from criminal groups. The police officers involved in death squads and militias engage in racketeering and drug-trafficking, operate illicit gambling markets, move weapons and perpetrate hired killings. These groups also enforce property rights, punish residents of their turf assumed to deviate from their norms, establish curfews and control population flows. My study therefore unravels the ways in which death squads and militias are immersed in ambiguous assemblages of public authority and private interests, police power and criminal expertise. In the process, I emphasize that criminal governance is wide-ranging not only when it comes to its geographical breadth and market specializations, but also when it comes to the actors involved, including state agents.

As a result, my research generates an emblematic understanding of the various roles that law-enforcement can play in contemporary urban contexts. The activities of death squads and militias challenge the conventional narrative that high levels of insecurity and violence are driven by non-state illicit operatives. The police-backed criminal groups that I study demonstrate that

urban violence and political order are also influenced by the propensity of agents of the state to operate at the margins of the law. My study can therefore instigate innovative ways to explore the relations between law-enforcement, politics and crime that places an analytical focus on illicit police conduct.

Moreover, despite the salience of police criminality throughout Brazil (Costa, 2018), scholars studying the topic mostly limit their inquiries to Rio, the country's epicentre of police violence and organised crime (Zaluar & Conceição, 2007; Mesquita, 2008; Araujo, 2017). This focus is justified to an extent, since death squads and militias originated in Rio and have been resilient providers of illicit governance in that city for decades (Duarte, 2019). However, my empirical focus on Belém reveals that techniques of police criminality devised in Rio are far from being exclusive to that city. In studying Belém whilst also acknowledging the historical backdrop of Rio, my study conceives of police criminality as a phenomenon that resonates beyond Brazil's larger urban centres which are the primary focus of existing scholarship.

The thesis sheds light on the similarities between Belém and the classic case of Rio, including the ways in which militarised policing, accelerated forms of urbanization and the onset of large illicit markets come together to shape police criminality. At the same time, I also disclose the distinctive forms of deviance and illicit profiteering that police officers adopt according to local circumstances. For example, I find that, rather than comprehensively replicating blueprints of police criminality, police in Belém are constantly picking and choosing the repertoires of coercion and illicit entrepreneurialism that were developed in Rio and elsewhere. My study therefore brings to the fore the common patterns and the shared historical legacies that shape police criminality, whilst also acknowledging the distinctive attributes that death squads and militias acquire according to local dynamics.

As briefly mentioned in the previous section of this Introduction, existing scholarship has been unable to rigorously conceptualize police criminality. Instead, the literature has resorted to generalized categorizations. A variety of terms are used to describe police-backed criminal groups,

including militias (Cano & Iooty, 2008), paramilitaries (Pope, 2019; Hidalgo & Lessing, 2014), death squads (Huggins, 1997), extortion rackets (Arias, 2017), *polícia mineira* (mining police) (Mesquita, 2008), vigilante groups (Magaloni, Melo & Robles, 2022) and even mafia (Burgierman, 2019). All these different terms are often used as synonyms of each other, even though they denote distinct organizational forms and activities.

My study's efforts to distinguish between death squads and militias refines the conceptualisation of the varying types of police criminality that are active in Brazil. Crucially, these efforts do not only resonate on a conceptual level. They also facilitate a more holistic empirical understanding of the differing structures and objectives of death squads and militias. Distinguishing between death squads and militias can therefore contribute to efforts to combat these groups. By illustrating their respective organizational structures, their differing priorities when it comes to infiltrating government institutions and their distinct territorial orientations, my study allows investigators and civil society organizers to better understand militias and death squads. This can facilitate targeted and effective reforms, mobilizations, and judicial measures to confront these groups and ultimately bring to an end the longstanding cycles of proliferation and persistence of police criminality.

Thesis Overview

The thesis proceeds as follows: Chapter II situates my study within the literature on criminal governance and urban violence. In that chapter I also delve into the factors that explain the proliferation and persistence of death squads and militias in Belém, followed by the development of the theoretical framework of criminal embeddedness. Chapter III details my research design and methods of data collection. I also explain the case selection process and discuss the ethical issues surrounding my research.

The empirical chapters follow. In Chapter IV, I deploy the embeddedness framework to unpack the historical roots of police criminality in Brazil. Chapter V explores the factors that shaped the first instances of police criminality in Belém through a paired comparison of two of

the first death squads set up by police in the city. I find that the early stages of the proliferation of police criminality in Belém relied heavily on knowledge transfer amongst deviant police, as well as on various forms of support from police agencies. This is followed by Chapter VI's inquiry into the efforts by police in Belém to replicate methods of militia governance devised in Rio. The chapter sheds light on the ways that police are constantly evolving their criminal repertoires into new jurisdictions and implementing new forms of unlawful governance. Chapter VII explores the factors that facilitate the persistence of criminal groups run by police. It finds that recent iterations of police criminality are increasingly connected to elected officials. Chapter VIII concludes the thesis. It summarizes the main findings of the study, reflects on the policy implications of the findings, and considers future directions of research.

Chapter II. Towards an Embedded Criminality Framework

I begin this chapter with a review of the theoretical approaches of state capacity and the underworld-overworld that have been deployed by the existing literature to understand criminal governance. I also examine the empirical insights these approaches have produced. I then go over the explanatory variables of my study and detail how these causal factors come together to explain the proliferation and persistence of police criminality in Belém. In the final section of the chapter, I outline the theoretical framework of criminal embeddedness that I deploy over the course of the thesis.

Existing Explanations for Criminal Governance

When it comes to studies of irregular forms of political order, rebel rule has previously attracted the bulk of scholarly focus (Kalyvas, 2006; Arjona, 2016; Aliyev, 2016). However, criminal governance has become more pervasive than rebel rule around the world over the last two decades (Lessing, 2021). However, compared to rebel rule, criminal governance is harder to unpack conceptually and empirically. The phenomenon is characterized by ambiguous assemblages of political authority in which illicit entities engage in state-like functions without necessarily seeking to overthrow states (Dewey, 2020).

The rising prominence of criminal governance around the world has led to incipient scholarly interest in studying this phenomenon over the last few years (Denyer Willis, 2015; Feltran, 2020; Skarbek, 2024). Criminal governance entities are mostly active in territories that have undergone rapid urbanization, the militarisation of police practices and mass incarceration policies (Davis, 2010; Fontes, 2018; Duran-Martinez, 2018). Criminal governance also arises in countries undergoing civil war or interstate conflict, where illicit groups govern populations in areas that produce and commercialize profitable resources such as opium and gold (Goodhand, 2012;

Sánchez de la Sierra, 2020; García Pinzon & Mantilla, 2020).³ Despite its many variations, criminal governance revolves around mutually reinforcing processes of illicit revenue accumulation and the provision of political authority by criminal groups. It is through illicit revenue that criminal groups acquire the means of coercion through which they can make credible claims to govern a territory (Misse, 2007). This claim refers to governance in its foundational political sense, that of establishing authority over life and death over a circumscribed territory (Denyer Willis, 2015). In turn, consolidated governance authority can generate new revenue streams for criminal groups that can include the taxation of local residents, the sale of basic consumer goods and control over local trafficking routes (Gay, 2021; Blattman et al, 2021).

The theoretical frameworks of state capacity has been widely used to explain contemporary manifestations of criminal governance (Yashar, 2018; Magaloni, Vivanco & Melo, 2020; Duran Martinez, 2018). State capacity is inspired by Weber's {1922} (2019) argument that the successful governance of a territory relies on simultaneous claims to legitimacy and control over the use of force. Weber's {1919} (2004) notion that the state consolidated itself as a relation of domination by claiming the monopoly on the legitimate use of violence has led scholars to interpret non-state forms of governance as symptomatic of weak or non-ideal states (O'Donnell, 2004; Lupsha, 1991). Indeed, the mere existence of governance-oriented criminal entities with significant capacity for violence challenges Weber's {1919} (2004) paradigmatic theory of statist monopoly over the legitimate use of force (Kalyvas, 2015; Denyer Willis, 2018).

O'Donnell (2004) was particularly important in incorporating the Weberian tradition of state capacity to explain the prevalence of criminal governance in Latin America. As per O'Donnell (2004), the simultaneity of democratic transitions and rising crime rates throughout Latin America in the 1980s and 1990s can be explained by states' deficient rule of law. This incapacity of the state

³ It is important to acknowledge that in these conflict settings, it can be hard to distinguish between rebels and criminals. The drug-trafficking activities of rebel groups like the FARC or paramilitary outfits like the Clan del Golfo in Colombia are pertinent examples of this trend (Arjona, 2016; Badillo & Trejos Rosero, 2023).

to enforce the law throughout its territory created ‘brown areas’ in the urban margins, where informal security providers deployed extreme violence to become de facto political authorities (O’Donnell, 2004). Studying criminal governance through this state capacity lens allows scholars to explore the policy implications of militarised repression of organised crime and the variations in public safety when alternative policing efforts are implemented. Magaloni, Vivanco & Melo (2020) note that the deployment of the specialized, human rights-trained Pacifying Police Units in Rio from 2008 to 2016 improved police legitimacy in neighbourhoods that were previously governed by criminal groups that lacked affective ties to the community. Similarly, in interviews with gang leaders and surveys of residents in Medellín, Blattman, et al. (2021) find that, while policy efforts to increase state services in peripheral neighbourhoods aim to ‘crowd out’ criminal governance, such efforts often have the opposite effect. Increased state activity can in fact incentivize criminal groups to increase their protection offerings to retain civilian legitimacy and safeguard their illicit revenue streams (Blattman, et al., 2021). For scholars who followed on O’Donnell’s capacity-centred approach, criminal governance in Brazil is a consequence of the state’s inability to establish civilian control over police institutions (Lessing, 2017; Gonzalez, 2021). They argue that this inability allows rogue cops to develop corrupt ties with criminal organisations (Magaloni, Vivanco & Melo, 2020).

O’Donnell’s (2004) approach neglects to explore the extent to which the rule of law relies on the enactment of unlawful violence by state officials. Indeed, while neighbourhoods dominated by criminal actors may be sites of collusive arrangements between cops and illicit operatives and lack critical infrastructure and formal dispute resolution mechanisms, ethnographic works emphasize that the constitutive features of these neighbourhoods often derive from deliberate actions by state officials, (Das, 2007; Nordstrom, 2000). These practices include unrepresentative electoral systems, restricted access to judicial resources, repression of civic organising, and violent police raids (Denyer Willis, 2017; Richmond, 2019; Garmany, 2009). In addition, these various forms of deliberate abandonment by state institutions contributes to the rise of large and

unregulated real estate markets in urban margins lacking in viable authorities to regulate transactions and enforce contracts (Fischer, 2008; Cavalcanti, 2014). In her study of militias in the westside of Rio, Araujo (2017) details how these criminal groups seek to fill that authoritative void by regulating the partitioning of land and overseeing informal property transactions. This allows militia groups to bolster their claims to legitimately govern the territory while also incorporating an important new revenue stream (Araujo, 2017).

Researchers that abide to state-centred epistemologies of political authority often neglect an essential aspect of Weber's theory of the state. The state has to make a claim on monopolistic violence and the success of that claim is not a given, since political subjects continuously re-examine the legitimacy of organised domination (Weber, {1919} 2004). As a result, it is the claim to the monopoly of violence that is legitimized, not state violence as an end in itself (Weber, {1922} 2019). Criminologists Bottoms & Tankebe (2012) argue that the Weberian monopoly of violence is centred on dialogic legitimacy, defined as the shared expectations between claims made by an authority and political subjects' collective belief in the legitimacy of that authority. The shared expectations vary with the structure of the authority in question but remains bound to the claim-response exchange framework of dialogic legitimacy (Bottoms & Tankebe, 2012).

The shared expectations can collapse under contexts of persistent state violence (Alves, 2018). Claims to legitimacy by a criminal group in that context can generate a duopoly of violence, (Barnes, 2021a; Adorno & Dias, 2014). Scholars examining these kinds of duopoly note that the claims to legitimacy of states and criminal groups are not necessarily mutually exclusive (Lessing, 2021). Indeed, as Lessing (2021, 855) notes, criminal governance is "simultaneously born of, shaped by, in opposition to—but in subtle ways complementing—state power". Criminal governance scholars are increasingly interested in exploring the extent to which claims to legitimacy by different sources of authority, including the state and criminal groups, are in fact capable of mutually reinforcing each other (Denyer Willis, 2018; Blattman et al, 2021). These strands of research note that residents of criminal governance territories still pay taxes to the state,

vote in elections and regularly use public services (Lessing & Denyer Willis, 2019). This strand of scholarship maintains that crime and state are in constant dialogue with each other to jointly manage the use of violence throughout urban space (Feltran, 2020).

Criminal governance providers show remarkable capacity to operate both in criminal markets and in formal legalised spheres of social action. For example, in the Democratic Republic of Congo, criminal groups raise funds by controlling work permits for local gold mining production and in exchange provide protection for mining villages (Sánchez de la Sierra, 2020). In her study of criminal governance in Nairobi and Lagos, LeBas (2013) claims that criminal groups actively seek to increase voter turnout during elections to maintain local patronage networks. Meanwhile, Fontes (2018) argues that extortion on a mass scale by criminal groups has become the most common measure to confront insecurity in Guatemala City. Denyer Willis' (2015) study of criminal governance by the *Primeiro Comando da Capital* (First Command of the Capital, PCC) drug-trafficking outfit in São Paulo explores the group's quasi-judicial tribunals which have contributed to a dramatic decrease in the city's homicide rates over the last 20 years. Seeing as the territorial control of criminal governance entities is rarely holistic (Barnes, 2021a), illicit entities remain in close contact with state agencies. Whereas rebel-held territory is often controlled in full separation from state forces, it is common for police or other government officials to be present in neighbourhoods ruled by criminal groups (Moncada, 2021). As a result, scholars of criminal governance emphasize that criminal groups are political actors that retain intimate relations with the state (Beato, 2019; Villa, Braga & Ferreira, 2021).⁴

Moreover, the existing criminal governance scholarship identifies that these close relations between the state and crime often take the shape of confrontation or collusion (Auyero & Sobering, 2019; Magaloni & Cano, 2016). When it comes to confrontation, scholars often frame

⁴ In their study of the relation between politics and criminal violence in Mexico, Trejo & Ley (2020) take the opposite approach to this vein of the literature by arguing that criminal governance is in fact a competitive form of state-building at the sub-national level. In his attempts to develop the concept of criminal politics, Barnes (2017) also argues that criminal violence should be viewed as a form of competitive state-building.

state-crime relations as wars (Zepeda-Gil, 2022; Manso & Dias, 2018). Explanations that use conflict analogies tend to focus on comparisons (usually consisting of Brazil, Mexico and/or Colombia) where large-scale drug markets have developed in tandem with high rates of violence (Trejo & Ley, 2020; Arias, 2017). In his study of criminal governance in Mexico, Colombia and Brazil, Lessing (2017) argues that criminal groups deploy violence to develop dynamics of conditionality with state institutions. Criminal groups engage in armed conflicts and high-profile forms of coercion to demand concessions from governments. These concessions can range from improved prison conditions to a decreased in armed repression of criminal markets by the state (Lessing, 2017). Meanwhile, Duran-Martinez's (2018) study of drug violence in Mexico and Colombia argues that successful criminal governance in both countries is driven by lax or non-existent law-enforcement repression of drug-trafficking.

When it comes to collusion, research has focused on 'bad apples' within the state apparatus which can empower criminal groups to proliferate and persist (Koivu, 2018). In their important contribution to explain these dynamics of corruption, Snyder & Duran-Martinez (2009) argue that the relationship between illicit markets and violence depends on state-sponsored protection rackets. These rackets are informal institutions in which public officials refrain from enforcing the law or selectively enforce the law in exchange for a portion of illicit profits (Snyder & Duran-Martinez, 2009). Where reciprocal expectations exist between racketeers within the state and criminal groups, then illicit markets have a non-violent character (Snyder & Duran-Martinez, 2009). Flom (2022) and Dewey (2017) also place an analytical emphasis on police corruption as a crucial source of informal regulation which allows illicit markets to thrive.

While discussing collusive arrangements between the state and crime, it is essential to clarify the distinctions between police criminality and police corruption. The direct forms of criminal involvement by police that I study have occurred in parallel to and sometimes in close contact with these more common forms of police corruption and unlawful police violence. Existing approaches usually lump these two dynamics together (Magaloni, Melo & Robles, 2023;

Manso, 2020). In Brazil, the arrangements that resemble state-sponsored protection rackets are widely known as *arrego* (bribe). In this context, DTOs pay off police and in exchange they can move drugs with relative ease and exert governance control of favela communities (Gay, 2021). The *arrego* represents a longstanding form of police corruption and a crucial aspect of the political economy of crime throughout Brazil (Muniz & Cecchetto, 2021; Garmany, 2014).

These corrupt arrangements are occasionally broken when the police engage in selective forms of enforcement, thereby generating conflict-like conditions in residential areas (Zaluar & Conceição, 2007). Selective enforcement mainly consists of occasional and mediatic military raids of favela communities that kill scores of innocent residents (Penglase, 2014). Rather than marking a break with longstanding forms of police corruption, these raids fulfil a performative role in attempting to demonstrate to the public that the police and the state government are taking an active stance in the ‘fight against crime’ (Robb Larkins, 2015). Crucially, these raids in residential areas do not serve any strategic purpose of displacing DTOs from the communities in question. When the raids are concluded, the police merely depart from the favelas and the normal status quo, what some scholars have termed criminal collusion or state-crime symbiosis, resumes (Barnes, 2021a; Lessing, 2021).

Furthermore, in practice, this indiscriminate killing by police of black favela residents violates the Brazilian penal code, which does not account for the death penalty (Alves, 2018). However, law-enforcement officers are rarely punished for unlawful killings, since they are mainly overseen by the military penal code (Bueno & Denyer Willis, 2019). This institutionalized form of impunity and the electoral popularity of shoot-to-kill policing has led the Brazilian police to perpetrate alarming numbers of executions (Cavalcanti, 2022). The Brazilian police killed more than 30,000 people between 2015 and 2020, the vast majority of whom were young black men living in low-income urban communities (Alves, 2021).

The death squads and militias that I study are made up of police officers. Many of these officers specialized in engaging in the forms of unlawful violence and corruption in the line of duty

prior to launching criminal groups. However, in creating death squads and militias, the police officers in question surpass these conventional forms of corruption and excessive violence to directly engage in illicit transactions through structured organizations. Returning to the dynamics of the *arrego*, we see a clear relation of exchange at play, with DTOs on one side making payments and accepting the fulfilment of a service and police officers on the other accepting those payments and providing that service. Established procedures are at play in this relation, with each party agreeing to act in certain ways to achieve satisfactory outcomes for both.

In the context of death squad and militia activity, the relational nexus between deviant police and criminal groups is transformed. No longer just accepting payoffs and occasionally engaging in enforcement, the police officers involved in death squads and militias are now directly involved in criminal activity (Manso, 2020). Their interactions with criminal operatives are no longer restricted to accepting bribes and ensuing dynamics of corruption and unlawful violence. Instead, police officers involved in death squads and militias are leading protection rackets, running drugs, selling weapons, controlling gambling rings, offering hired killings, amongst other forms of criminal activity. Rather than occasionally interacting with criminal operatives in corrupt ways, members of death squads and militias are criminal operatives in their own right.

These forms of criminality by Brazilian police largely reflect what Stinson (2015) calls police crime, the criminal behaviour of sworn law-enforcement officers. Police crime is usually conflated with corruption and misconduct, which not only generates conceptual confusion but also facilitates a reluctance by policymakers and scholars to confront the issue of criminal conduct by law-enforcement head-on (Stinson, 2015). Police crime certainly shares similarities to police corruption, since both are concerned with using public office for private gain (Koivu, 2018). However, death squads and militias forego the mere acceptance of bribes. Their ambitions revolve around the accumulation of governance authority. They not only aim to govern illicit markets, but also seek to unlawfully rule over populations.

The existing scholarship on criminal governance in Brazil largely focuses on the country's large DTOs like the Comando Vermelho (Red Command, CV) and the Primeiro Comando da Capital (First Command of the Capital, PCC) (Villa, Braga & Ferreira, 2021; Richmond, 2019). In these studies, the dynamics of police corruption are evident and conceptual and empirical lines are often (but not always) able to be drawn between crime and state (Penglase, 2014; Hirata & Grillo, 2019). Criminal governance in Brazil is not restricted to the PCC and the CV. Death squads and militias are also prominent providers of criminal governance. In the city of Rio, militia groups run by police officers currently govern more neighbourhoods than all DTOs put together (Hirata et al, 2022). Meanwhile in Belém, death squads and militias have governed neighbourhoods populated by hundreds of thousands of people (Couto, 2021). The scale at which death squads and militias govern populations and criminal markets in Brazil reflects the vast extent to which deviant conduct by police has evolved from the conventional forms of corruption seen in the *arrego*.

Returning to existing explanations for criminal governance, the underworld-overworld framework aligns with the state capacity literature when it comes to focusing on the permanent relational nexus between organised crime and the state (Skaperdas & Syropoulos, 1996; Paoli, 2002). The organised crime literature has illuminated the ways in which the structures and functions of criminal groups are derived from the state's efforts at prohibition and punishment (Reuter, 1983; Decker, Pyrooz & Densley, 2022). Scholars note that in its prerogatives to prohibit and punish, states harness the authority to criminalize entire economic sectors and operatives of those sectors (Lusthaus, 2018). In turn, the emergence of illegal markets generates the demand for extra-legal governance that criminal groups specialize in (Varese, 2017). Criminal groups regularly engage in governance functions, including the violent punishment of transgressors, enforcement of contracts and adjudication of disputes (Anderson, 1996). These governance functions are particularly essential considering the context of criminal markets, in which exchanges are often characterized by low-trust and anonymity between actors (Lusthaus, 2018; Gambetta, 1996).

Organised crime scholarship has mostly studied criminal groups that trace their origins to the criminalization measures imposed by states (Sergi, 2021; Campana, 2016). As a result, studies looking into the governance functions in criminal markets emphasize that a defining feature of criminal groups is that they are non-state entities (Campana & Varese, 2018; Paoli, 2002). The non-state character of criminal groups is explained by the underworld-overworld dichotomy. The organised crime scholarship has identified that criminal markets are generated by two intertwined dynamics: a demand for extra-legal adjudication of disputes and a supply of local experts in violence (Varese, 2001; 2017). This approach advances the notion that in the distinctive social sphere of criminality, organised crime groups are able to assert themselves by fulfilling rule-setting functions that states fulfil in legalised spheres of social life (Schelling, 1984). The underworld-overworld dichotomy helps scholars to identify the distinguishing traits of conventional criminal groups, including their rituals, organizational structures, and the ways in which they organize markets that fall under the state's prohibitive stance (Campana, 2016; Gambetta, 1996).

Trejo & Ley (2020)'s study of the relation between elections, drug wars and criminal violence in Mexico is a pertinent contemporary example of scholarship deploying the underworld-overworld approach to explain criminal governance. They claim that criminal governance occurs when illicit operatives "come out of the criminal underworld to seek to become *de facto* local rulers" (Trejo & Ley, 31). Criminals achieve this by retaining close ties to corrupt state officials, so-called 'rotten-apples' who institute state-sponsored protection rackets that allow criminal groups to exert political clout at the local-level (Trejo & Ley, 2020).

However, it is essential to acknowledge that the figurative-mythical language of the 'underworld' can run the risk of generating sensationalist renderings of organised crime. In his study of the Russian mafia, Volkov (2016) notes that the term organised crime is normative in nature since it divides social reality between a subaltern illicit ecosystem and a legitimate sphere. Volkov (2016) further argues that it is necessary for sociological studies to develop critiques of these normative underpinnings, since states tend to draw divisions within society and create myth-

like images of crime, often for the purposes of justifying the excessive use of force by government officials. In fact, organised crime scholars have long acknowledged that the literature is vulnerable to hyperbolic renderings of illicit activity (Gambetta, 1996). Criminality is frequently associated with anarchic violence and irrationality, and it is often depicted as something entirely foreign to conventional social life (Skaperdas & Syropoulos, 1996). In his study of the Sicilian mafia, Gambetta (1996) observes that criminals often exploit this underworld image to increase their capacity for intimidation.

For the purposes of my study, it is important to highlight that the underworld-overworld dichotomy often prevents scholars from critically examining illicit conduct by state agents. Some efforts have been made to place an analytical lens on state deviance, including Smith's (2021) history of drug cartels in Mexico. Smith (2021) argues that fearmongering and mythmaking around criminality can generate invented panics. These invented panics are sustained by security personnel's manipulation of facts and figures that depicts violence and crime through a 'cops versus robbers' lens. These invented panics in turn incentivize extreme police coercion (Smith, 2021).

In their seminal research on policing and mugging in the UK, Hall et al (2013) similarly reflect on the ways in which the state utilises the fear of crime to justify excessive police violence. They mobilize the concept of moral panic to examine the ways in which security forces take advantage of their ideological and cultural authority to label certain activities as dangerous crimes that can only be confronted with extreme police coercion (Hall et al, 2013). In her ethnography of community life in north-eastern Brazil, Scheper-Hughes (1993) argues that hegemonic discourses around the perils of criminality can serve to justify state violence. This leads to researchers failing to take note of forms of deviance perpetrated by state officials. In Brazil, this discursive frame of criminality makes it difficult to grasp the vast scale of unlawful state violence, what Scheper-Hughes (1993, 219) terms the "contradiction of wartime crimes against ordinary peacetime citizens". My theoretical framework of criminal embeddedness, which is included in a subsequent

section of this chapter, aims to add to these existing efforts by conceptually accounting for the integrated nature of criminal governance within state institutions.

By advancing the notion that criminal activity exists in a separate social sphere from the rest of society, scholars also run the risk of describing gruesome acts of violence by or against criminal operatives as something exotic and entertaining. Assigning irrevocable deviant attributes to people involved in organised crime justifies violent punishment and creates an illusion that the pernicious effects of criminal violence exist *elsewhere*, in a fully distinct social sphere (Denyer Willis, 2018). In such a context, terms like ‘criminal’, ‘gangster’ or ‘bandit’ can acquire ontological significance, wherein the person engaged in criminal acts is fully defined by those acts (Schneider & Schneider, 2003). The ontological status assigned to criminality finds particular resonance in Brazil, where the popular dictum *bandido bom é bandido morto* (a good bandit is a murdered bandit) is widely circulated to justify lethal and illegal police conduct (Misse, 2011). Studying police criminality in the Brazilian context can generate original insights to refine existing approaches to criminal governance. A focus on the police’s direct role in criminality can help scholars develop a greater appreciation of the various ways in which agents of the state are directly involved in crime, all whilst these same agents take advantages of their institutional prerogatives and the sensationalist fearmongering examined previously.

Explanatory Variables

This section details the explanatory variables deployed to interrogate the proliferation and persistence of police criminality. Some of the variables derive from the data, and dialogue with the existing scholarship on illicit police conduct in the Brazilian context (IVs 1-3). Other variables were identified from the wider literature as prominent causal drivers of criminal governance (IVs 4-6). Over the course of my study, I test the relevance of the six explanatory variables to the outcomes of interest of proliferation and persistence. I then inductively examine my findings to identify the mechanisms that connect the independent variables with the outcomes. Over the course of the study, I also examine other potential causal factors that influence police criminality

at various historical junctions, including changes in government that lead to shifts in political control over police forces, the emergence of criminal competitors and high-profile acts of violence by police criminals that trigger judicial scrutiny.

Before outlining the explanatory variables, it is worth acknowledging that they do not aim to generate an exhaustive causal account that explains police criminality in all its forms. As the following chapter covering the Research Design will elaborate, my study is exploratory in nature. It makes room for the fact that the subject matter in question is complex and clandestine in nature. In any case, the empirical analysis confirms that the explanatory variables that I focus on are essential causal drivers of police criminality in Belém. I find that some of the factors are necessary for both outcomes, whilst some help to explain one of proliferation or persistence. While no single explanatory variable is sufficient by itself, they combine with each other in varying ways to shape the two outcomes of interest. I provide a graphic illustration summarizing the ways in which the factors come together to drive the proliferation and persistence of police criminality in Belém at the end of this section.

Hard-line Public Security Policies (IV-1)

The extreme nature of police militarization in Brazil generates restrictive policy options for public security, which primarily revolve around high levels of police coercion (Bueno & Denyer Willis, 2019; Muniz & Cecchetto, 2021). The study finds that police criminality proliferates and endures because of this iron-fist model of policing, particularly in its establishment of rapid-response elite police units and advancement of the War on Drugs. These two public security policies promote police violence, foster an organizational culture of vigilantism within the police and prevent accountability and oversight of police activity. The establishment of elite police units marks the starting point of police criminality, as elite officers were granted discretionary authority to deploy unlawful violence with minimal oversight. These officers took advantage of this paradigm to direct their coercive capacity towards the creation of illicit enterprises that functioned in tandem with their on-duty police work. Following on the footsteps of Brazil's largest states, the state

government of Pará implemented this policy directive in Belém in the late 1980s. This led to the emergence of police criminality in the city, as elite units followed the pattern of instituting criminal networks during their on-duty work. Over the following decades, the state government continued to emulate the policy initiatives of other major urban centres in Brazil, particularly when it came to the War on Drugs, which increased the levels of police violence in the urban margins. This second policy push facilitated the endurance of the police criminality phenomenon, since the institutional incentive to deploy extreme violence during police raids of residential communities encouraged police officers to develop increasingly close connections with drug-traffickers.

Support from Police Agencies (IV-2)

Scholars have begun to reflect on the ways in which death squad and militias retain direct connections to police agencies in Brazil (Manso, 2020; Cano & Iooty, 2008). My study reveals that these persisting links lead to police agencies providing death squads and militias with various forms of logistical support. Police institutions also engage in selective enforcement and non-enforcement of police criminality. These forms of assistance from police institutions are essential to the proliferation of death squads and militias, as police officers pursue criminal governance ambitions with the confidence that they will receive police support to achieve their illicit goals. With the various forms of assistance from police agencies, death squads and militias are able to stake their governance claims and compete against DTOs and other criminal entities. However, institutional support has limited value in explaining the persistence of police criminality. Whilst recent police-run criminal groups continue to enjoy some forms of assistance from police institutions, they are more concerned with infiltrating political institutions and other government agencies beyond law-enforcement to advance their criminal governance objectives.

Knowledge Transfer (IV-3)

My historical analysis of police criminality in Brazil (included in Chapter IV) identifies that the organizational culture of the Brazilian police is shaped by violent mores and militaristic forms of socialization that encourages officers to violate legal parameters in the line of duty. I argue that

this organizational culture and sustained historical patterns of illegality allows police officers to disseminate criminal governance expertise throughout the law-enforcement hierarchy. The exchange of illicit expertise amongst police officers is a novel and important factor in the proliferation and persistence of death squads and militias. This dissemination was allowed to take place thanks to the institutionalised forms of impunity in Brazilian police agencies. Police involved in death squads and militias were allowed to remain employed by the police. These criminal operatives took advantage of their impunity to circulate criminal governance expertise within law-enforcement agencies, thereby recruiting new generations of police deviants.

The process of knowledge transfer that drove the spread of police criminality was led by elite police officers, who shared their criminal governance expertise with their elite peers in other jurisdictions. In the late 1980s, Belém elite police officers learned strategies of extreme coercion and criminality from their peers in Rio and São Paulo. They implemented the strategies of racketeering whilst on-duty and the use of police equipment for criminal activity, leading to the first instances of police criminality in Belém. These techniques were then disseminated throughout the law-enforcement hierarchy in the city. As a result, street-level patrol cops learned the essential traits for establishing criminal groups. Successive generations of police continued to exchange illicit expertise during their on-duty hours over the following years, leading to the continuous resurgence of police criminality. By the 2010s, the extensive precedents set by deviant police meant that new generations of police criminals did not need to undergo the same direct process of learning as their predecessors. However, they continued to be inspired by the many examples of illicit profiteering that their police predecessors engaged in.

Large Illicit Market (IV-4)

The organised crime literature emphasizes the role of newly established and profitable illicit markets to explain the rise and endurance of criminal groups (Volkov, 2016; García-Pinzon & Mantilla, 2020). The sudden expansion of large illicit trades generates a demand for criminal protection (Varese, 2011). Considering the existence of large-scale criminal market chains in Brazil

including transnational drug-trafficking (Hirata & Grillo, 2019), it is pertinent to consider the effects of expansive illicit trades on the proliferation and persistence of police-backed criminal governance. In contrast to these prior findings, the proliferation of police criminality in Belém did not rely on an exogenous shock of a large and profitable illicit market. Police established criminal enterprises in the city prior to the emergence of the large-scale drug trade that would arrive in Belém during the 2000's. This indicates that death squads and militias are able to spread to jurisdictions that lack a sophisticated criminal ecosystem, or a demand for extra-legal adjudication for large-scale criminal transitions. Instead, law-enforcement officers are able to abuse the various lawyers of bureaucratic protection that insulate police from oversight to supplement their police income with illicit gains even in contexts that are not hotspots of criminality.

However, I find that expansive illicit market chains contribute to the endurance of police criminality. The consolidation of Belém as an essential node for transnational drug-trafficking and a profitable retail spot for drugs has incentivised police to continuously engage in criminal activity over the last decades. Encouraged by the prospects of obtaining a share of the drug trade's large profits, police officers initially offered to protect DTOs, before eventually taking over drug sales and distribution points. Clandestine transport also constitutes a substantial illicit revenue stream for successive generations of death squads and militias. Participating in these large illicit markets allows police officers to develop diversified criminal enterprises, in which the profits from large criminal markets can be reinvested into other commercial ventures. The emergence of these diversified and profitable police-run enterprises serves as inspirations for subsequent generations of police officers, thereby ensuring that new death squads and militias are constantly launched.

Reputation (IV-5)

Reputation is also an important factor examined by the organised crime literature (Mandic, 2020; Moncada, 2021). An ample supply of specialists in violence is identified as a necessary condition for the emergence of criminal groups (Varese, 2001; Reuter, 1983). Criminal operatives and local civilians are more likely to comply with orders imposed by people who are recognized as experts

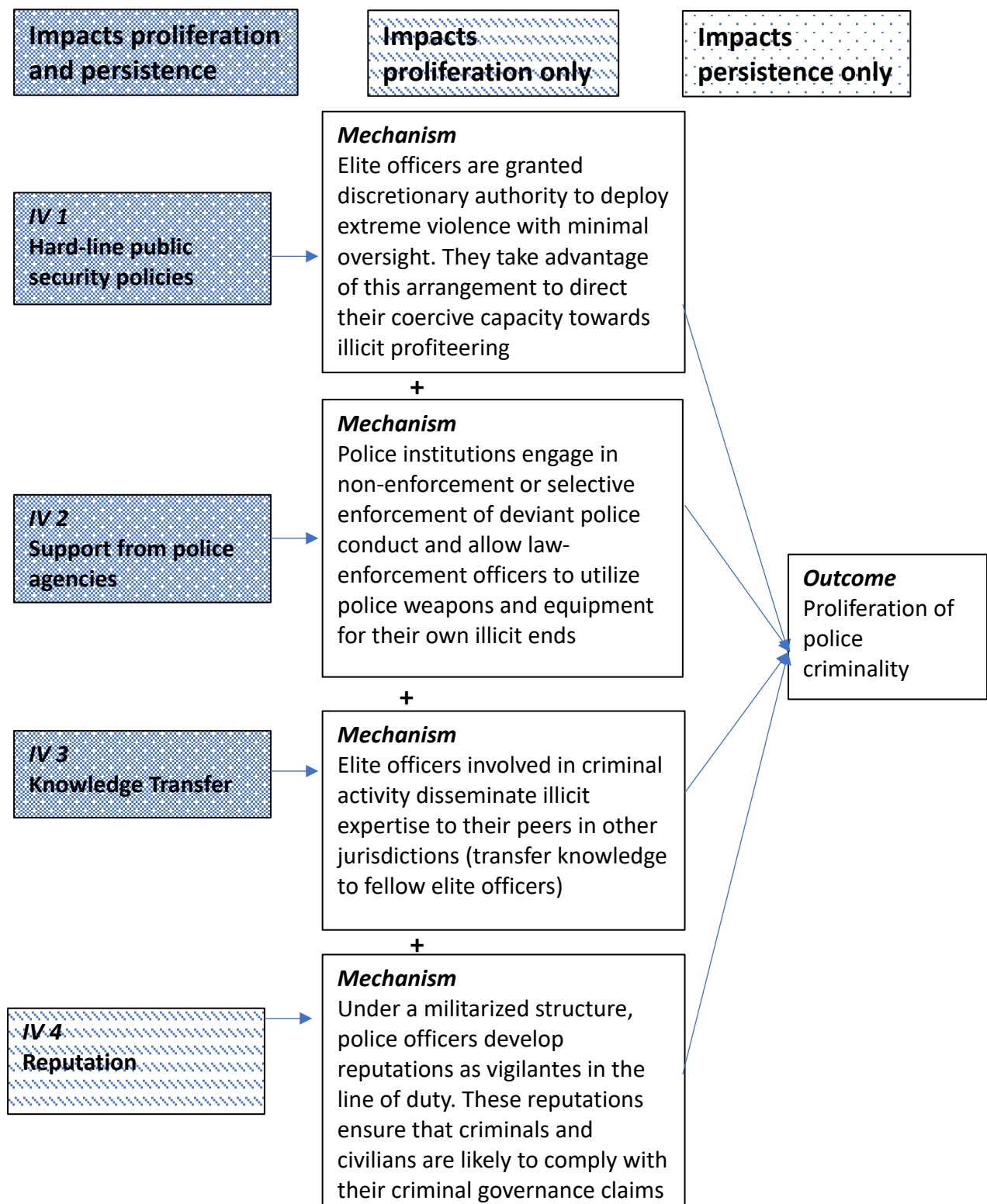
in unlawful violence (Mesquita, 2008). My study reveals that these dynamics that resonate for conventional criminal organisations also impact police criminality, particularly when it comes to its proliferation. Operating under shoot-to-kill operational directives, police officers are able to cultivate fearsome reputations for extreme violence in the line of duty. The lack of oversight within the police empowers these officers to nurture these reputations on a long-term basis at the local level and in the process thrive as illicit governance providers in their turf. However, I find that, over time, criminal police groups in Belém have relied less on personalised forms of authority. Newer generations of police officers can tap into longstanding experts of police criminality or take advantage of political connections to engage in criminal governance. Reputation therefore does not help to explain the persisting nature of police criminality in Belém.

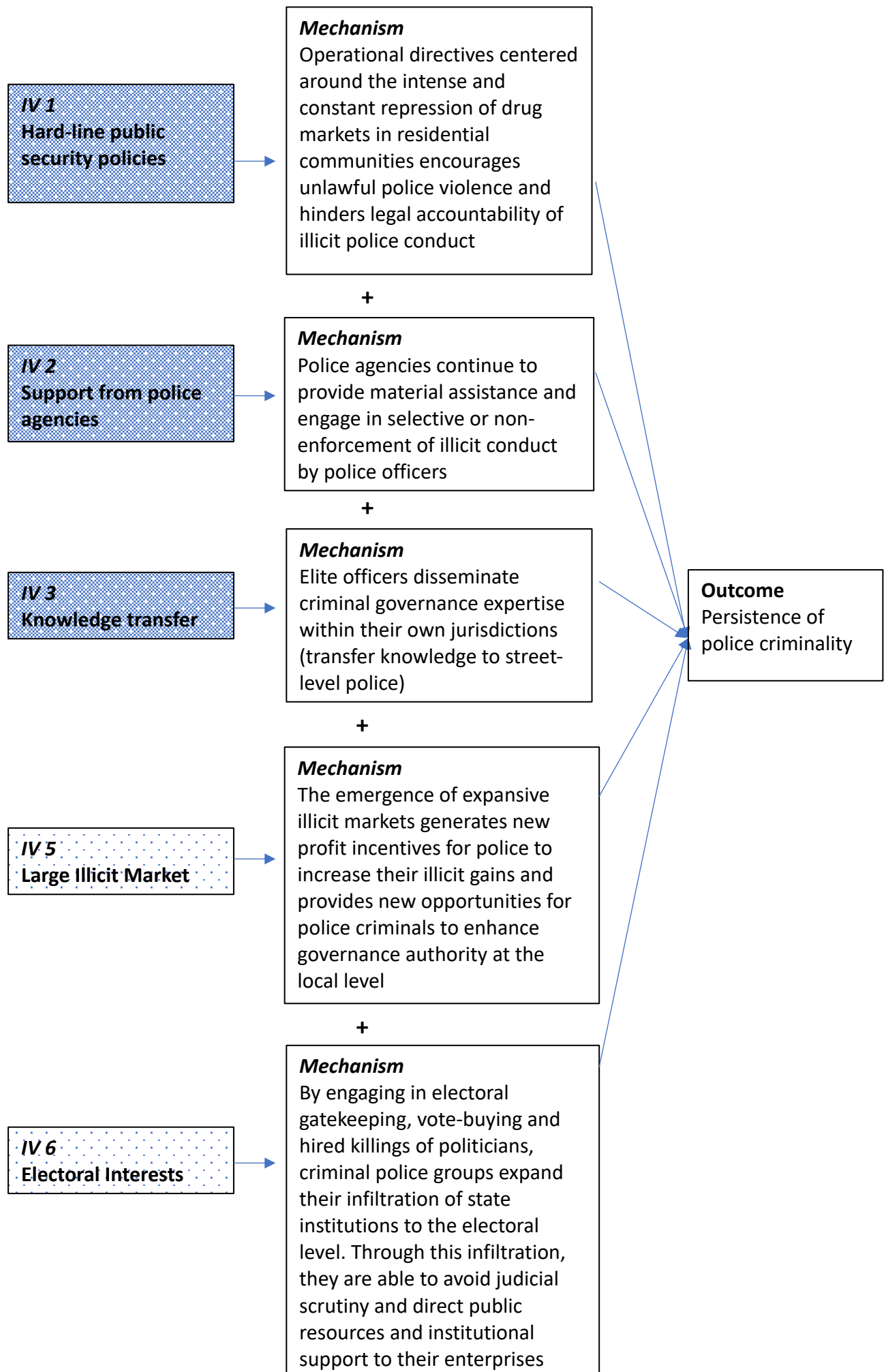
Electoral Interests (IV-6)

The relational nexus between crime and state identified by the literature also resonates in political-electoral spheres. Seminal work on organised crime identifies that the interests of criminal groups and the state occasionally converge (Gambetta, 1996). Indeed, as noted previously in this chapter, criminal entities in distinct contexts engage in armed electioneering to advance their governance claims (Hidalgo & Lessing, 2014; LeBas, 2013). The election of Jair Bolsonaro for president in 2018 evinced those alliances between politician and police officers involved in criminal activity had reached the highest echelons of public life in Brazil (Funari, 2022). Bolsonaro nurtured his political career inside the law-and-order caucus (locally known as the *bancada da bala*) which advances a political agenda focused on increased access to guns and the defence of lethal police conduct (Cavalcanti, 2022). I argue that the original police-run criminal groups that drove the expansion of police criminality made little to no effort to associate with politicians. Their efforts to infiltrate law-enforcement institutions were sufficient in ensuring that police criminality was able to spread across and within jurisdictions. However, I argue that the consolidation of Brazil's law-and-order caucus has generated various affinities between politicians who defend police violence and deviant police operatives. Since they share a political agenda that favours police violence, law-and-order

politicians and police-run criminal groups are increasingly likely able to help each other. As a result, recent generations of police criminals engage in electoral gatekeeping, vote-buying and hired killings of politicians. Through these activities, death squads and militias provide important services to law-and-order politicians. Politicians are then able to direct public resources towards the territories of death squads and militias. Electoral interests are therefore essential to the persistence of police criminality.

Figure III & IV: The Factors that Shape Proliferation and Persistence of Police Criminality





The Criminal Embeddedness Framework

My thesis deploys a theoretical framework of criminal embeddedness in order to come to grips with empirical realities in which state institutions and state agents are directly involved in crime. Considering the deficit of theoretical reflections and empirical studies into the ways in which police-backed criminal groups spread and expand, a new theoretical lens can serve an important purpose in refining our understanding of the relation between state and crime. As noted previously, state capacity and underworld-overworld explanations largely frame the relations between state and crime as either confrontations or collusions. My focus on the establishment of criminal enterprises by law-enforcement agents calls for novel theoretical approaches that go beyond depictions of state-crime wars or bad apples interpretations.

The criminal embeddedness framework aids my study's efforts to understand the integrated nature of death squads and militias within both police agencies and criminal ecosystems in Brazil. It is particularly important in helping me to identify the mechanisms that contribute to the expansion and endurance of police-run criminal groups. As well as being inspired by the findings of my study, the embeddedness framework also brings together insights from historical sociology and critical theory to examine the proximities between state and crime.

In thinking of criminal governance as a phenomenon that can become integrated into the structures and functions of the state, the framework places an analytical gaze on the extra-legal dynamics that make up a significant portion of police work. Over the course of my study, I trace the ways in which police officers are constantly taking advantage of their prerogative to engage in legally sanctioned violence to not just confront criminals or accept pay-offs from them, but to directly take part in illicit trade. These forms of criminal conduct by police are rooted in longstanding historical patterns. The embeddedness framework serves an important purpose to trace these historical patterns and its current manifestations. It helps to shed light on the fact that state agents are often at the forefront of driving trends of criminality and violence.

While my thesis focuses specifically on the role that Brazilian police play in providing criminal governance, the theoretical framework of criminal embeddedness can be applicable to police in many jurisdictions around the world. Brazil is a fruitful locus of study to study this topic because dynamics of police criminality play out on an expansive scale and with a sustained historical precedent. In that sense, Brazil may be considered an extreme case, where police have directly interfered in criminal governance to a startling degree. However, extreme cases can be highly illustrative (Gerring, 2017) since they can elicit comparative insights with similar but potentially less explicit phenomena that manifest in other parts of the world.⁵

Whilst I defend the merits of developing new theoretical approaches to understand state-backed criminal governance, I also acknowledge that segments of the scholarship resist the idea that state agents can even be involved in criminal governance in the first place. In his important contributions to conceptualize the criminal governance phenomenon, Lessing (2022) argues that criminal governance is not carried out by state agents. However, he also acknowledges that “the study of criminal governance is still in its youth. The phenomenon is hard to observe and characterize, not only because it is illegal, and thus often concealed, but also because state officials have incentives to downplay or deny its existence” (Lessing, 2022, 6). As mentioned, this notion that excludes state agents largely stems from the fact that criminal governance scholarship has mostly studied illicit groups that trace their roots to neighbourhood youth groupings, ethnic kinship networks, trafficking cartel arrangements and self-defence prison collectives (Fontes, 2018; Moncada 2021). The scholarship has mostly avoided grappling with units of analysis like Brazilian death squads and militias. These consist of criminal governance entities that emerge within the state apparatus and continue to receive varied and continuous institutional support from state agencies.

⁵ It is beyond the scope of my thesis to determine whether all police systems have some degree of criminal embeddedness, or whether it applies to some police systems in certain contexts. However, this theoretical framework can serve to inspire future research into the wider world of police criminality around the world.

Whilst criminal governance by police may contradict much of the traditional analytical framing around criminality and state power, I maintain that it is an understudied and pertinent social phenomenon that must be incorporated into ongoing efforts to understand criminal governance in all its varying forms. In this way, my study aims to contribute to one of sociology's defining tasks: to not take long-held categorizations as universally applicable to every case but to critique and continuously redefine first-order concepts that shape social life (Weber, 2019; Abrams, 1982; Gerring, 1999).

Other criminal governance scholars have made strides in thinking beyond traditional analytical framings. Arias (2017) notes that to study criminal governance is to study the heterogenous nature of state power and the ways in which political order at the local level is enacted by ambiguous assemblages of different political actors. In a similar vein, Dewey, Miguez & Sain (2017) argue that criminal governance sheds light on the ways in which interactions between legal and illegal entities create hybrid forms of social domination in which formal and informal rules of governance permeate each other. Denyer Willis (2018) mobilizes the concept of *intreccio* to jointly examine state institutions and criminal actors as catalysts of criminal governance in Brazil.

In fact, the issue of concealment of criminal governance by state officials identified by Lessing (2022) is even more pronounced in the case of police-led criminal groups. Government officials have an extensive history of denying police involvement in criminal activity to try to prevent reputational embarrassment to institutions of police (Cano & Duarte, 2012). This contributes to a willingness to accept a bad apples explanation for police criminality, and little effort to acknowledge the systemic issues within government institutions that help shape death squads and militias. As attested by my interview outreach efforts, which will be detailed in greater detail in the following chapter, a significant amount of public security experts and practitioners are also reluctant to discuss police criminality.

Despite this predilection towards concealment and obfuscation, police criminality has been brought into public spotlight over the last 15 years in both Rio and Belém. The issue has been

directly investigated by state legislatures and prosecutors. These investigative efforts openly acknowledge that groups created by police are actively involved in criminal governance (Rio de Janeiro State Legislature, 2008; Pará State Legislature, 2015). In addition, a rising strand of scholarship on death squads and militias has no qualms about grappling with these groups as illicit entities that are closely linked to the state (Hirata et al, 2022; Alves, 2020; Misse, 2018).

The reluctance by scholars to account for the fact that the police are at the forefront of intimate ties between legality and illegality largely stems from the assumption that law-enforcement agencies are primarily associated with the provision of security and order (Auyero & Sobering, 2019). In contrast, my approach takes inspiration from critical theorists' critiques of this association of the police with order and security. These theorists seek to understand the ways in which law-enforcement leverage their sanction to use violence to operate at the margins of the law (Aretxaga, 2003; Benjamin, 1986). These efforts by critical theorists are therefore useful to come to grips with the ways in which state-backed forms of criminality can emerge and endure.

In one of his seminal essays, Walter Benjamin (1986, 286) calls the police “a kind of spectral mixture” because its ability to incorporate the legalised use of force allows it to engage in law-making and law-preserving violence on a permanent and often concealed basis. This prerogative to deploy violence in law-making and law-preserving forms allows the police to arbitrarily deploy coercion without concern for limits imposed by existing legal frameworks. Benjamin (1986, 287) provides further insight into the relation between police violence and legality:

The assertion that the ends of police violence are always identical or even connected to those of general law is entirely untrue. Rather, the “law” of the police really marks the point at which the state, whether from impotence or because of the immanent connections within any legal system, can no longer guarantee through the legal system the empirical ends that it desires at any price to attain.

The force of law personified by the police therefore relies on the premise that it can constantly be violated in order to preserve itself (Derrida, 1992). It is this kind of police power that allows law-enforcement officers to justify their unlawful acts by evoking ‘the law’ (Das, 2004). This conceptualization of the role of police in society is highly relevant to my efforts to understand

police criminality. Taking the fact that the lawfulness of state power materialized in law-making and law-preserving police violence is constantly capable of operating in contravention of legal parameters (Benjamin, 1986), I am able to situate death squads and militias as illicit entities that are directly connected to police agencies. Exposing the relation between the enforcement of the law and the infiltration of illicit interests in police conduct also challenges bad apple explanations which argue that police deviance only occurs at the level of individual rogue cops. The police largely benefit from these bad apple explanations, as they can avoid confronting the systemic problems within their institutions which escalate unlawful violence and criminality. By justifying its embedded unlawfulness as necessary to confront pernicious criminal operatives, the police are able to shift public opinion and scholarly analysis away from its own deviant functions.

This justification also strengthens the notion of conventional criminals as ‘threatening Others’. As per Aretxaga (2003, 402), extra-legal acts of violence by agents of the state are best understood as “fields in which the state and its enemies are created and recreated as powerful fictional realities”. It is worth reiterating that whether it is bandits, cartels or organised crime groups, this threatening other is constantly associated with violence and unruliness, thereby justifying unlawful transgressions against them by state agents (Zavala, 2017).

The underworld-overworld approach assumes that police who operate illegally are deviating from the norm. Inspired by the ways in which critical theorists have approached the police, the criminal embeddedness approach that I pursue maintains that the norm, that is the rule of law devised by the institutional form of the state, is capable in and of itself of sustaining deviant functions. This conception of the interrelated nature of legality and unlawful violence finds resonance in historical research regarding the relation between colonialism and policing. In her extensive historical study of the British Empire, Elkins (2022) deploys the term ‘legalized lawlessness’. The term describes the widespread use of shifting legal codes by British authorities to deploy state-sanctioned forms of extreme violence in its colonies. In these contexts, political

order by the colonial state relied on the permanent exercise of extra-legal coercion, and the constant reworking of legal statutes to justify these forms of state violence (Elkins, 2022).

The criminal embeddedness framework aims to further reflect on the relation between law-enforcement and extra-legality by interpreting the police's prerogative to deploy unlawful violence as an essential feature of illicit markets. In examining the impact of iron-first public security policies on the proliferation and endurance of death squads and militias and the various forms through which police institutions assist police-backed criminal groups, my study demonstrates that persistent forms of extra-legal violence by state agents can lead to the infiltration of illicit interests in the everyday work of policing. In the process of examining the links between policy directives, police institutions and police criminality, my study affirms that state and crime are able to come together in perplexing but salient ways.

As a result, this theoretical approach contextualizes police criminality as part of the continuum of state repression and officially sanctioned forms of extra-legal violence that percolate Brazilian history. The violent mores of police culture, the forms of socialization within law-enforcement that incentivizes officers to value the use of extreme coercion and the various forms of bureaucratic protections that insulate deviant police from judicial scrutiny are prominent features of police agencies. These features help to drive police involvement in criminal governance in Brazil. The embeddedness framework therefore exposes the complementary nature of police work and police criminality. In the process, it buttresses efforts by historians, sociologists, and criminologists to critique the long-held assumptions that police work is primarily tasked with peace-keeping and public safety (Vitale, 2017; Alves, 2018; Holloway, 1993).⁶

Moreover, the embeddedness framework acknowledges that extra-legal actions are fundamental to state power. Tilly's (1985) depiction of the state and criminal groups co-existing

⁶ Indeed, Seigel (2018) argues that policing is one of the least theorized and most neglected concepts in the social sciences, precisely because these assumptions have held out despite empirical evidence around the world that the police are often at the forefront of structuring and amplifying violence and crime.

in a continuum of violence provides useful insights regarding the connections between illicit conduct and political rule. Rather than idealising the state as the vessel of political rationality, Tilly (1985) views the state as a political unit that arose out of specific historical circumstances, all of which were tied to violent acts that superseded established norms and laws. In arguing that the state emerged as a dominant political entity by gradually monopolizing the ability to wage war and police territories, both of which constitute “quintessential protection rackets with the advantage of legitimacy”, Tilly (1985, 169) advanced an understanding of extra-legality as a phenomenon intrinsically tied to political order.

According to Tilly (1985), the state’s governance arrangements were consolidated through four interdependent categories of violence: war-making (combatting external enemies), extraction (taxation), state-making (combatting internal enemies), and protection (eliminating the enemies of their clients). In yielding these four forms of violence that fuse coercion-intensive functions with capital-intensive functions, states were able to establish durable governance authority (Tilly, 1992). While Tilly (1985) claims that state violence became legitimate due to its vast scale and effectiveness, he acknowledged that criminal groups had the operational capacity to engage in the four categories of violence. Any coercive authority that dominates the marketplace of violence is therefore able to effectively offer security as a public good and generate revenue from a variety of sources (Tilly, 1992).

It is important to note that Tilly (1992) claimed that his argument approximating the state and organised crime served solely as a conceptual analogy. According to him, this analogy was helpful to understand the experience of state formation in Europe and elucidate state-making efforts that were ongoing at the time by newly independent countries in the Global South and in former Soviet republics (Tilly, 1992). Nonetheless, I maintain that Tilly’s continuum of violence retains empirical significance in studies of criminal governance, particularly since this social phenomenon generates urgent questions regarding the ways in which criminal groups engage in functions traditionally attributed to the state. The criminal embeddedness framework interprets

Tilly's (1992) insights regarding the continuum of violence in which crime and state coexist as useful beyond an analogy. The blurred lines between state and crime are not only figurative or provocative metaphors that allows scholars to challenge conventional depictions of violence and order. In fact, state-backed criminal groups are longstanding and persist around the world, even if they are less common than conventional criminal groups. In Mexico, units of the Federal Security Directorate (DFS) political police were amongst the country's most prominent drug-trafficking groups and ran international stolen car rings from the 1940s until the mid-1980s (Lupsha, 1991). Mandić's (2020) study of the relationship between criminal groups, separatist movements and war-torn states identifies several countries, including Nigeria, Serbia, Turkey, Georgia, and Azerbaijan, in which security agencies created criminal groups that engaged in transnational smuggling transactions to help fund armed struggles against insurgents.

Additionally, whilst a substantial portion of the literature assumes that organised crime coincides with deficient state capacity (Schneider & Schneider, 2003; Magaloni, Vivanco & Melo, 2020), forms of criminality that are intimately tied to the state apparatus are also capable of emerging in states generally deemed to have strong capacity. Investigative commissions have found that groups of law-enforcement officers were directly involved in running drugs in New York from the 1970s until at least the 1990s (Stinson, 2015; Armstrong, 2012). Meanwhile, death squad-like groups (known as gangs in common US parlance) made up of police are considered longstanding features of law-enforcement agencies in Chicago and Los Angeles (Kalven, 2016; Kennedy, 2021). Further examples of state-backed criminality include paramilitary groups that emerged in Colombia in the 1990s. These groups went on to profit from the drug trade whilst retaining direct ties to the armed forces (Kalyvas & Arjona, 2005; Taussig, 2005).

Meanwhile, following the disintegration of the Soviet Union, units of the Russian military and police departments created protection rackets that played a central role in the country's transition to a market economy (Varese, 2001). In his study of these Russian mafias, Volkov (2016, x) notes that the state officials and civilian handlers that made up these groups "looked and spoke

alike, though some occasionally wore state uniforms”. These equivalences also resonate over the course of my study. I find that many of the factors that the literature has consistently attributed as essential to the rise and expansion of conventional criminal groups can also be relevant for state-backed forms of criminality. I argue that the cultivation of fearsome reputations by police officers has been integral to the expansion of death squads and militias, just as it is for civilian criminals. Interactions and codes of conduct that have been conceptualized as distinctive features of organised crime are therefore also relevant to instances in which criminality becomes embedded in state institutions.

In emphasizing the equivalences between state and crime, the embeddedness framework allows me to reflect on the fact that it is not just gang members or members of DTOs who constantly exchange expertise to advance their illicit interests (Duran-Martinez, 2018). Police officers are also constantly exchanging repertoires of criminality and unlawful coercion. Through this process of knowledge transfer, death squads and militias adopt longstanding strategies of police criminality and combine it with distinctive attributes that suit their own jurisdictions. Police criminals pick and choose segments of police criminality that they want to import to their own turfs. In the process, police-backed criminal groups are able to rule over members of their criminal networks, set rules of conduct for non-member criminals and in some cases, unlawfully rule over entire populations, just like conventional criminal governance entities (Lessing, 2021). Dynamics surrounding knowledge transfer and the governance capacities of police confirm that, in many ways, police criminality follows similar patterns of emergence, evolution, and consolidation as conventional criminal enterprises.

Crucially, the state institutions that can become connected to illicit interests are not just restricted to coercive units. I find that police criminality persists in Belém in large part because death squads and militias have developed various ties to electoral institutions and political operatives. As an analytical frame that seeks to constantly identify the parallels between official institutions and criminality, the embeddedness framework allows me to interpret these electoral

connections as the result of converging interests between politicians and police criminals. Hirata et al (2022) reflect on these varied institutional links and call into question the suitability of the state-crime dichotomy in studying criminal governance. They argue that state institutions and criminal organizations are intimately interconnected, to the point where state-crime relations are characterized by:

“folds and connections [that] are materialized in the governance structure of cities and have great impacts on everyday life in grassroots territories. Local private protection schemes, control over access and the provision of urban services, police, and military operations, *milícias* and drug trafficking interrelate to make up explosive and unstable arrangements that are in permanent reconfiguration. In this context, legal and illegal, formal, and informal binarisms are inadequate to explain this process, as it is manifested in Rio de Janeiro and in other cities in Brazil.”
(Hirata et al, 2022, 260).

In sum, criminal embeddedness in state institutions is not necessarily new, nor is it only applicable to Brazil. It has merely been largely overlooked by existing scholarship on crime and violence. This neglect is likely perpetuated by the fact that state-backed criminal governance is vexing and difficult to grasp under existing conceptual frameworks that abide to state capacity and underworld-upperworld explanations. Hence, binary concepts delineating formal and informal, legal and illegal can obstruct efforts to understand illicit conduct by agents of the state. An embeddedness framework can overcome these issues and provide the analytical tools to examine the ways in which illicit interests can become directly connected to formal institutions. The framework acknowledges that the institutional design and operational conduct of state power can generate convergences between law-enforcement operatives, politicians and criminal actors. It therefore aids my inquiry by highlighting the systemic issues within state institutions which help to drive law-enforcement involvement in criminal activity.

Conclusion

The chapter has summarized the explanatory frameworks of state capacity and the underworld-overworld dichotomy that have been used by the existing scholarship on criminal governance. This was followed by a summary of the explanatory variables and a discussion of the theoretical

framework of criminal embeddedness, which seeks to bring the extra-legal forms and functions of state power into the analysis of criminal activity. Having delineated my conceptual approach, following chapter covers the research design of the thesis.

Chapter III. Research Design

This chapter presents and defends the methods of inquiry that I employed to carry out the research. The chapter begins with a discussion of my overall research design and methods, followed by an explanation of the case selection process. I then discuss data collection and my fieldwork experiences. The fieldwork section reflects on the ethical considerations that comes with studying death squads and militias in the Brazilian context and discusses positionality issues.

Methods Overview

The thesis employs a qualitative comparative case design based on fieldwork to examine the ways in which death squads and militias proliferate and persist in Belém. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the thesis is exploratory in nature. It attempts to advance scholarly understanding of a subject area that is violent and difficult to reach. The study acknowledges that the world is a messy place, in which social action is a convoluted process that often diverges from deductive depictions of coherence and predictability (Flyvbjerg, 2011). Rather than designing a study under experiment-like conditions of hypothesis testing and ensuing attempts to generate predictive insights, I pursue inductive explorations of police criminality. This approach is particularly conducive to studies like mine which involve novel theories and variables (George & Bennett, 2005).

My qualitative fieldwork-based design falls in line with the consensus reached by scholars of violence and crime, who maintain that this is the best approach to conduct research in contexts where data sources are sensitive in nature and are often fragmented or missing (Kalyvas, 2006; Jones & Rodgers, 2019). Studying clandestine groups that engage in unlawful coercion requires researchers to acquire deep immersive knowledge of their subject area and their field site (Varese, 2022). With that in mind, the insights that I acquired in the field fed my inductive attempts to theorize criminal governance by police in a novel way. This inductive approach of using analytic frames that are able to be modified in accordance with knowledge acquired allows qualitative

researchers to construct viable social scientific representations using available evidence (Ragin, 1997).

Having begun the thesis during the peak of the pandemic, this necessity for fieldwork posed challenges. Since I was unable to conduct fieldwork at the onset of the project, I engaged in extensive analysis of government documents, litigation records and scholarly output regarding policing and crime in Belém (Pará State Legislature, 2015; Couto, 2018; Oliveira Neto, 2020). Through this preliminary analysis I became familiarised with the subject and mapped out the primary and secondary data sources that were available. Once the pandemic subsided in 2022, I was able to plan fieldwork in accordance with the information I had previously acquired. In addition, my initial analysis of the data and literature had clarified to me that death squads and militias were a prominent feature of social life in Belém, but that research and investigations into the topic had only generated limited knowledge regarding the origins of these groups and their evolution over time. It therefore became clear that my research was situated within a “context of discovery” (Goldthorpe, 1997, 14), in which my study could shed light on previously understudied units of analysis. Within this context of discovery, my study can play a heuristic role in shedding light on common patterns and varying characteristics of hitherto understudied phenomena (George & Bennett, 2005).

I also incorporate comparative historical analysis into my research design in order to understand the origins and development of police criminality in Brazil. Studies that utilise comparative historical analysis usually have a macroscopic orientation, as units of analyses tend to be states (Kiser & Hechter, 1991). However, comparative historical analysis can also be integrated to studies like mine that focus only on a few small cases (Thelen & Mahoney, 2015). This mode of comparative analysis provides important additional historical context to my inquiry, which is essential for studies that require deep qualitative knowledge of the subject area (Lieberman, 2015). Furthermore, comparative historical analysis acknowledges that the organisational features of institutions play a key causal role in shaping long-term historical outcomes (Thelen & Mahoney,

2015). This perspective aids my efforts to understand the interplay between the institutional design of police agencies in Brazil and the development of police-backed criminal governance.

Moreover, seeing as this is a small-N study into a complex phenomenon with sociohistorical data of an uneven quality, the comparative historical approach allows me to engage in a narrative account that relies on temporality. Each empirical chapter contains a narrative account, which details the trajectory of the death squads and militias under study and unravels the ways in which they pursued criminal governance. This narrative account and its attention to temporality aids my efforts to tease out the relevant historical and contemporary causal factors that can explain the proliferation and persistence of police criminality. Considering that the vast amount of death squads and militias active throughout Brazil make it practically impossible for all the cases to be studied individually, the integrated approach of case studies and comparative historical analysis allows me to engage in a viable, historically oriented and thorough comparative analysis of a few cases in Belém that can uncover general patterns that affect death squads and militias in Brazil as a whole (Lieberman, 2015).

Bennett & Elman (2006) note that the case study approach is conducive to thinking of causality as a process involving mechanisms and capacities that lead from a cause to an effect, rather than the more quantitative and deductive focus on effect of causes. The causes of effects approach relies on an ontological supposition that a causal pathway can only be delineated after the fact (Bennet & Elman, 2006). It therefore calls for detailed empirical analysis which can then feed into theory. This is done by first engaging in discovery and validation of causal mechanisms within-case, before comparing cases (Bennet & Elman, 2006).

Case Selection

Belém was selected as the locus of my inquiry because it is a paradigmatic case to understand issues of violent policing, illicit market flows and urbanization in Brazil. The city is a crucial exemplar of the ways in which dynamics of urban violence in the country have contributed to the direct involvement of police in criminal governance. According to Flybjerg (2011, 308), a paradigmatic

case “highlights more general characteristics of the societies in question”. Belém can be considered a paradigmatic case that reveals the strategies adopted by law-enforcement officers to expand and refine techniques of police criminality.

Belém is the capital of the northern Brazilian state of Pará, located in the Amazon region. With a population of over 2 million people, the Belém metropolitan region is strategic for contemporary trade routes and carries historical weight as an important colonial frontier that contributed to the expansion and consolidation of the Brazilian state (Loureiro, 2022). The ports surrounding the Belém metropolitan region are used to export essential commodities that help shape the Brazilian economy, including soya and beef. They are also the primary smuggling hub for the proceeds of the illegal deforestation of the Amazon, thereby making Belém a crucial node to understand the ecological crisis engulfing the rainforest (Abreu & Toledo, 2022).



Figure V: Belém’s geographic location at the entryway to the Amazon basin
Source: <https://www.openstreetmap.org/note/3920346#map=4/-12.68/-34.63>

Belém's status as a paradigmatic case to understand police criminality is shaped by the city's history and its contemporary socio-political features. Settled by the Portuguese in the early 17th century, Belém's first police force was established by the colonial government in 1818 (Cruz, 1962). It was designed as a military force in the moulds of the *Guarda Real de Polícia* (Royal Guard of Police), the first Brazilian police force that had been launched in the colonial capital of Rio during the previous decade. Belém was located at the margins of the empire, where the Portuguese constantly feared the invasion of Spanish, English and French troops from neighbouring colonies near the Amazon basin (Sternberg, 1987). As a result, maintaining internal order in Belém was of particular strategic concern to the colonial regime.

Independence from Portugal in 1822 was followed by enhanced global demand for rubber, which turned Belém into a quintessential boom town (Cruz, 1962). The port area of Belém became the main transit zone for Amazonian rubber to be shipped overseas. The rubber boom led to a considerable increase in the local population and the enhanced circulation of capital in the local economy (Cruz, 1962). Belém's population stagnated following the end of the rubber boom in 1912. Nevertheless, the city's port ensured that it remained an important outpost facilitating the flow of primary goods from the Amazon to global markets (Ventura & Cardoso Neto, 2013). National developmentalist policies by the federal government during the latter half of the 20th century, which included the building of highways and dams, aimed to integrate the Amazon region to the rest of the national economy (Loureiro, 2022). These initiatives led to an increase in migration to Belém, particularly from the 1980s onwards (Cardoso, 2007). Most migrants were black and traced their origins to maroon communities (Couto, 2021).

By the 1990s, Belém was in the midst of an informal and accelerated process of urbanisation. The city was also experiencing elevated levels of violence (Deluchey, 2019). These intertwined dynamics were also manifesting themselves throughout Brazil's urban centres during that time (Caldeira, 2000; Pinheiro, 1997). Local homicide rates have increased even further during the early 2000's, making Belém one of the most violent cities in Brazil (Fórum Brasileiro de

Segurança Pública, 2023a). In 2004, Belém had a homicide rate of 22.6, which made the city the 17th most violent of Brazil's 27 state capitals (Secretariat for Municipal Planning, 2020). By 2016, Belém was the most violent state capital in Brazil with a homicide rate of 60.1, a rate of violent death comparable to a warzone (IPEA & Fórum Brasileiro de Segurança Pública, 2017). The increase in violence in Belém during that time was linked to the rapid expansion of the wholesale and retail market for illicit drugs. Large DTOs and their local allies competed amongst themselves and with police to obtain profitable locations for drug sales and control trafficking corridors. Police lethality also increased during the 2000's. In fact, Belém's police force consistently ranks amongst the most lethal in Brazil. Over the last ten years, police killings have accounted for 30 to 40 percent of homicides in the city, keeping Belém amongst the 10 state capitals with the most police killings nationwide (Fórum Brasileiro de Segurança Pública, 2023b).⁷

Furthermore, Belém shares important historical and socio-political traits with Rio, the principal locus of organised crime and violent policing in Brazil. As Brazil's second largest city located near strategic maritime routes for transnational criminal markets, Rio has naturally been a focus for scholars aiming to understand violent policing, organised crime and urban settlement (Araujo, 2015; Mesquita, 2008; Robb Larkins, 2015; Penglase, 2014; Misse, 2011). As noted in the Introduction of the thesis, this focus has generated assumptions that Rio's dynamics of violence, particular those related to police criminality, are endogenous and exclusive to the city (Lessing, 2017; Manso, 2020; Alves, 2020).

However, I argue that important parallels exist between Rio and Belém that allow for the latter city to shed light on the nation-wide salience of police criminality in Brazil. Rio and Belém are strategic commercial outposts and important nuclei of political power in Brazil. They were both established as coastal citadels at the forefront of the colonial plantation economy

⁷ I use official homicide data with caution, considering the difficulties that state institutions have in tracking and classifying police killings, and the widespread use of disappearance as a technique of control by police officers (Denyer Willis, 2022).

(Holloway, 1993; Cruz, 1962). Both cities were strategic hubs for expanding the territorial reach of the state and were amongst the first locations where the state experimented with institutions of police (Carvalho, 1987; Maxwell, 2001). Rio and Belém contain large ports that have been central to Brazil's export-oriented economy and, as mentioned above, continue to serve as essential nodes in transnational supply chains for licit and illicit merchandise (Magaloni, Vivanco & Melo, 2020; Cardoso & Ventura Neto, 2013). In turn, the extra-legal conduct of law-enforcement and the rapid processes of urbanization in both cities has been conditioned by the economic opportunities borne of the strategic significance of both ports.

In addition, like in Rio, the process of urbanization in Belém over the last three decades has been influenced by transformations in local criminal markets, particularly in the rising profitability of drug-trafficking (Cardoso, 2007). The police in Belém responded to urbanization and the onset of the drug trade by engaging in forms of abandonment and extra-legal violence that were initially trialled in Rio. Law-enforcement neglected to install police stations in the newly established communities. Instead, they resorted to occasional violent raids, ostensibly to combat drug-trafficking but which also serve to establish corrupt relations with DTOs. The following empirical chapters of the thesis trace the ways in which these corrupt relations eventually evolved into direct involvement by police in criminal trade.

The most important parallel between Belém and Rio when it comes to issues of police criminality is the fact that state legislatures in both cities were the principal government institutions of their kind in Brazil to launch investigative commissions looking into the activities of death squads and militias. The Rio commission was in session from June 2008-November 2008 (Rio State Legislature, 2008). The Pará commission was in place from December 2014-February 2015 (Pará State Legislature, 2015). The two investigative commissions produced substantial data regarding criminal police groups. Their installation is also illustrative of the fact that, while police criminality may be a salient feature of at least 15 states in Brazil (Costa, 2018), it is a particularly acute issue in jurisdictions like Rio and Belém, which retain the dual features of being strategic

sites for transnational drug exports as well as large local consumer markets for various criminal markets.

Despite these similarities with Rio and the fact that it shares similar dynamics of urban violence to Brazil's other major cities, Belém remains mostly understudied. The scholars of violence and criminal governance that do extend their analytical gaze beyond Rio usually do so to conduct research in São Paulo, Brazil's largest city and the headquarters of the country's largest drug-trafficking outfit, the PCC (Denyer Willis, 2015; Gonzalez, 2021; Flom, 2022). Despite its strategic location for national and transnational drug-trafficking, Belém has mostly been the exclusive focus of attention of locally based scholars, who study police violence and criminal governance by the CV drug-trafficking outfit in the city's urban margins (Deluchey, 2019; Oliveira Neto, 2020; Couto, 2021). My research aims to build on these existing efforts by placing an analytical focus on criminal groups run by police.

Studying Belém therefore allows for important parallels to be drawn with the historical roots of police criminality, whilst also generating original insights into the particular features of police-backed criminal governance in a new jurisdiction. This comparability and the scale of police involvement in the city affords Belém illustrative potential into the dynamics of police criminality in Brazil as a whole. My study therefore does not just expand the scope of criminal governance studies by acknowledging and reflecting on the police's role. It also expands the geographical reach of research on police criminality, bringing to the fore the ways in which death squads and militias expanded and transformed in the context of an important and understudied location.

The units of analysis to understand the case of Belém consist of death squads and militia groups that have been active in the Belém metropolitan region over the last 30 years. I employed a typological strategy to select the death squads and militia groups in question. This strategy aligns with Ragin's (1997) and George & Bennet's (2005) insights into selecting cases by first identifying the universe of which a group of cases belong. The typological approach allows me to map out both the type of cases that are required and the correspondent units that have come about

empirically (George & Bennett, 2005). I therefore define the features of each type of police criminality (both of which are summarized in the Introduction of the thesis) and identify groups that correspond to each type. The typological strategy therefore generates most-similar comparisons between units of analysis that fall under either the death squad or militia type.

The typological approach has been implemented in prior work studying dynamics between state institutions and crime (Koivu, 2018). It can be useful to shed light on the specific conjunction of variables that characterize distinct types (Bennett & Elman, 2006). Moreover, it is important to acknowledge that, seeing as I study death squads and militias that managed to come into being and engaged in criminal transactions and unlawful governance, the case selection in some ways resemble Mill's method of agreement. In the method of agreement, only positive cases that contribute to the outcomes of interest (proliferation and persistence of police criminality) are studied (Ragin, 1997). Social scientists have extensively critiqued the potential pitfalls that come with selecting cases based on the dependent variable (Geddes, 1990; King, Keohane & Verba, 1994). They claim such an approach constitutes biased sampling that can lead to misleading insights into the impact of explanatory variables and potentially render results untestable, ungeneralizable, and only relevant to the particular outcome (Kiser & Hechter, 1991; Geddes, 1990).

However, under a typological strategy, selected cases are representative in ways that do not just reference the dependent variable but also encompass the independent variables (Gerring, 2017). In any case, research topics that have minimal or convoluted insights into how important aspects of social life come into being require an analytical emphasis on outcomes (Ragin, 1997). Selecting cases with reference to the outcome is therefore not problematic for my research design, particularly since, as previously stated, my study aims to understand an outcome that has not been adequately acknowledged and unpacked by existing scholarship. In such a context, even the staunchest critics of selecting on the dependent variable acknowledge that such an approach has

merit when it comes to “digging into the details of how phenomena come about” (Geddes, 1990, 149).

The research also focused on obtaining a longitudinal understanding of the police criminality phenomenon. This is because criminal groups run by police officers have been active in Brazil for several decades, with Belém seeing its first death squad emerge in the late 1980s. With that in mind, the timeframe of my study ranges from 1988 to 2019. This 30-year temporal frame encompasses the first manifestations of police criminality in Belém. Its starting point also marks the first year in which the newly ratified democratic constitution was in place in Brazil. The inability of the new constitution to alter the militarised public security regime installed during the prior dictatorial period illustrates the historical interplay between the institutional designs of policing and the expansion of criminal law-enforcement conduct in Brazil. Meanwhile, the end of the temporal frame of the study encompasses more recent iterations of criminal police groups in Belém. It also marks the onset of the federal administration of Jair Bolsonaro, in which a virulent law-and-order rhetoric combined with the president’s personal links to vigilante police officers illustrates the prominent position that police criminality reached during the first decades of Brazil’s democratic regime (Funari, 2022).

Case researchers see cases as meaningful and complex configurations of social phenomena (Ragin, 1997). Cases are purposefully selected because of their historical or socio-political significance. My process of identifying death squads and militias to compare followed this approach of focusing on units of analysis that were important exemplars of police criminality in Belém. Returning to the context of discovery in which my study is situated, I selected death squads and militias that could elicit representative insights regarding the ways in which police criminality emerged, evolved, and endured in Belém across the study’s 30-year time frame. Each empirical chapter of the thesis therefore involves a paired comparison of two police-run criminal groups that share organizational features and were active in contiguous or approximate time periods. This approach abides by the case comparison logic, which maintains that social phenomena that emerge

in the same setting may be similar enough to each other to elicit joint examination (Ragin, 1997). The paired comparison approach moves away from the single case strategy, which only deal with the before and after analysis of the same case (Tarrow, 2010). Paired comparisons are useful in an exploratory study like mine, since it allows for additional units of analysis to serve the purpose of confirming or denying a tentative finding from an original unit (Tarrow, 2010). According to Tarrow (2010, 243), these kinds of paired comparisons are useful for “working through complex empirical and historical materials using the leverage afforded by the differences and similarities of comparable cases”. The following tables detail the units of analysis that were selected for the comparisons. They also provide further information on the reasons why they were selected, particularly in regard to their representative nature for explaining dynamics of police criminality in Belém.

Table II: Chapter V Case Studies (Comparative Cluster A)

Name: PATAM police patrols	Name: Icoaraci Group
Type: Death squad	Type: Death Squad
Years of activity: 1988- 1992	Years of activity: 2005- 2008

I begin by analysing the embryonic model for death squads in Belém, consisting of the *Patrulha Tática Metropolitana* (Tactical Metropolitan Patrol, PATAM) police unit, active from 1988 to 1992. The PATAM patrols were selected because they mark the first time that police officers engaged in structured forms of criminality in Belém. Within two years of its establishment, the patrols had begun to operate as death squads that charged for unlawful protection and engaged in hired killings throughout the city’s urban margins (Oliveira Neto, 2020; O Liberal, 1992b). I also study the death squad of the neighbourhood of Icoaraci. The establishment of the Icoaraci death squad constitutes the rise of the second generation of police criminality in Belém, in which officers who joined the police at the turn of the century learned strategies of criminality from their older colleagues. Comparing the PATAM with the Icoaraci outfit provides an understanding of how the police

criminality phenomenon spread at the hands of consecutive generations of law-enforcement officers who made efforts to engage in criminal governance.

Table III: Chapter VI Case Studies (Comparative Cluster B)

Name: <i>Irmãos da Farda</i> (Uniformed Brothers)	Name: <i>Liga da Justiça</i> (Justice League)
Type: Militia	Type: Militia
Years of activity: 2011- 2015	Years of activity: 2010- 2011

The following chapter moves on to examine the ways in which police criminality evolved in Belém. My preliminary data analysis identified two criminal groups set up by police officers during the late 2000's and early 2010's in the city that attempted to replicate the methods of criminal governance developed by Rio's militias. These attempts consisted of going to Rio to learn directly from the original militia operatives, replicating the vigilante aesthetic of Rio's most famous militia group as well as engaging in coercive strategies and market transactions that Rio's militias had pioneered, including intensive control of population flows on a daily basis, setting strict rules of community conduct and forcing residents to purchase essential consumer items from militia providers. These attempts by the two groups in question were markedly different from the more common death squad form of police criminality that had manifested itself in Belém up until then. Comparing these groups allows me to examine the transformations in illicit law-enforcement conduct which shaped the proliferation and endurance of police criminality in Belém.

Table IV: Chapter VII Case Studies (Comparative Cluster C)

Name: M da Pedreira	Name: Ananindeua Group
Type: Death squad	Type: Death Squad
Years of activity: 2015-2018	Years of activity: 2018-2019

My final empirical chapter focuses on the factors that contribute to the persistence of police criminality in Belém. I selected two police-backed criminal groups that have emerged following

the conclusion of the 2014-15 investigative commission set up by the Pará State Legislature. The commission was an impactful political event that marked the first large-scale attempt by public authorities to hold police criminals to account (Couto, 2018). This chapter compares two of the most prominent death squads to have emerged post-2014 to explore the reasons why police criminality continues to manifest itself in Belém, even after significant investigative scrutiny and public backlash.

The summary of the comparative clusters discloses that the six groups that are studied over the course of the empirical chapters capture the variations in police criminality when it comes to organizational structures, temporality, strategies of coercion, forms of illicit profiteering and institutional longevity. They also bring to the fore varying degrees of regulatory and investigatory efforts to combat police criminality over time. The paired comparisons therefore shed light on the relevant features that impact the proliferation and persistence of death squads and militias in Belém.

Data Overview

The thesis draws on four primary sources of data: interviews, litigation records, government documents and media archives. In regard to the first, interviews with purposefully sampled participants were an essential source of data. Considering that my study deals with violent organisations that have enduring connections to law-enforcement agencies, the ethical guidelines prevented me from conducting ethnography in neighbourhoods where militias and death squads were based (I delve into the way I designed my fieldwork based on ethical issues in the following section).⁸ I was therefore unable to interview residents of neighbourhoods where militias and death squads have focused their operations. I overcame these potential challenges to data collection by focusing on elite interviews with interlocutors who have had first-hand experience dealing with

⁸ My research received ethical approval from the Social Sciences and Humanities Interdivisional Research Ethics Committee (SSH IDREC) at the University of Oxford (Reference: R76604/RE001).

criminal police groups in investigatory, regulatory, activist, and legal roles. I interviewed public prosecutors, criminal attorneys, elected officials, civil servants, government officials, police officers, local scholars, social workers, and NGO personnel. Amongst the police officers interviewed were four commanders of the Military Police internal inspector's unit (*Corregedoria*), responsible for investigating law-enforcement deviance.⁹ In addition, two of the police officers interviewed worked at the PATAM police unit, one of my case studies in Chapter V.

The sensitivity of my research subject, particularly when it came to its connections to the police, made it difficult to find interlocutors willing to be interviewed. I had a 30 percent response rate to interview requests. Most people that I reached out to both during in-person fieldwork and online outreach refused to speak with me. This reluctance was particularly pertinent for interlocutors who remain employed in law-enforcement and government agencies. For police officers and government officials, the existence of death squads and militias can represent a source of institutional embarrassment. As is the case in Rio (Cano & Duarte, 2012), the general approach to the issue by government institutions in Belém has been to either ignore or deny the existence of police criminality. Meanwhile, for interlocutors outside of the government sphere, speaking about death squads and militias involves the very real risk of reprisals. Many police officers who have been involved in these groups remain at large, while Brazil has a long history of journalists, researchers and human rights campaigners suffering retributive violence from police (Abreu, 2019; Alves, 2018; Scheper-Hughes, 2015). The onset of the Bolsonaro government further empowered these long-standing forms of police retribution (Cavalcanti, 2022).

Indeed, the fact that my fieldwork was conducted under a violent political climate propagated by Bolsonaro's far-right movement influenced the research. During this period, high-profile murders took place of people who spoke out against extra-legal violence by police officers

⁹ It is important to note that the structure of career progression within the Brazilian Military Police entails extensive rotation in different leadership posts for those in the officer class. As a result, all of the police officers that I interviewed who led the inspector's unit also had command experience in operational roles, including as commanders of elite and anti-riot units.

and their criminal associates. Prominent amongst these cases were the assassination of City Councilwoman Marielle Franco in Rio in 2018 and the murders of activist and researcher of indigenous causes Bruno Pereira and *Guardian* journalist Dom Phillips in the Amazon region in 2022. These cases heightened my concerns for the wellbeing of my interlocutors and made me consider issues around my own safety whilst I was in the field more seriously.

Under this socio-political context, I was tentative initially about using the very terms ‘death squads’, ‘militias’ or ‘police criminality’ during fieldwork, particularly when interviewing police officers. These terms became politically loaded during the Bolsonaro government, as they became increasingly associated with the then-president’s far-right caucus, which includes police vigilantes and adherents of a shoot-to-kill approach to public security (Alves, 2021). After discussing my research in broad terms and facilitating a more informal conversations with the officers, I would feel more comfortable in dealing with the main concepts of my study in a direct way.

These dynamics contributed to the study’s relatively small number of interviews (21 in total, involving 18 interviewees). Nevertheless, the interviews were able to generate a considerable amount of quality data. I initially relied on purposive sampling, directly reaching out via email to experts in my research area who I wanted to interview. I also benefitted from snowball sampling, as one of the scholars and one of the police officers who were amongst my first interviews were able to refer me to other law-enforcement officials, civil servants and criminal attorneys, who in turn referred me to political officials and activists. The interviews lasted between 30 minutes to 2 hours and several interlocutors were interviewed twice to obtain additional data. At the start of every interview, I obtained verbal consent from the interlocutors and asked them whether they preferred to be pseudonymized in the thesis. A full list of the interviewees is included in the References section of the thesis, and an appendix showing the distribution of the interviewees in terms of their career roles is also included.

Only one of the interviews was recorded, at the request of the interviewee. In addition, during the interviews, I took notes by hand, and later transcribed them to my laptop. This decision

to not record the interviews and to only have a notebook with me was inspired by the work of urban violence and organised crime scholars, who note that sensitive interview topics demand that the researcher attempt to make the interlocutor feel as much at ease as possible (Varese, 2001; Lusthaus, 2018). Arriving with a recorder and transcribing with a laptop could run the risk of making the interview seem like an interrogation, or at the very least create a formalistic environment that could leave the interviewee uncomfortable. Even though we were discussing issues of violence and policing, I attempted to make the interviews as informal as possible, with the goal of offsetting potential tensions arising from the sensitive subject area. This informal approach was also facilitated by my background as a native Brazilian. With the knowledge that a degree of intimacy and comradery were necessary cultural cues, I aimed to structure the interviews as friendly exchanges in which fruitful information could be exchanged between the participants.

I therefore employed a semi-structured approach to the interviews. I had a distinct set of question for every interview, depending on the experience of the interlocutor in question. I followed the approach adopted by other scholars of violence and crime (Lusthaus, 2018; Flom, 2022) of not following a structured script. I began the interviews explaining my research interests in broad terms, before initiating a conversation asking the interlocutor to tell me about their professional trajectory. During the course of the conversation, I would ask my prepared questions in an interspersed way throughout the conversation. I also took cues from the interlocutors' answers to ask unprepared follow-up questions. I ended every interview providing the interlocutors with my contact details and telling them that they could let me know at any time if they did not want to be included in the research.

I also relied on litigation documents as important sources of data. I analysed Pará State Prosecutor documents and criminal lawsuits filed in the Pará Justice Tribunal that involved police officers involved in death squad and militia activity. The documents and lawsuit records included indictment statements, which provide background into how criminal police groups were formed and the illicit markets they were active in. Legal records are a common source of data for crime

and violence scholarship (Campana & Varese, 2020; Lusthaus, 2018). They contain crucial information on the organisational structure of criminal groups. They also provide details on the forms of violence perpetrated by these groups and can include witness statements and depositions that recount the impact that these groups have in social life.

Many of the legal documents that I utilise in the thesis are publicly accessible, either through court websites or specialist third-party databases. I also obtained access to previously undisclosed criminal lawsuits from the Pará Justice Tribunal by filing information requests with the court. Amongst the records that I was able to secure through these legal requests was a Civil Police dossier into armed disputes between criminal police groups and drug-trafficking outfits in Belém during the late 2000's and early 2010s. The dossier spans over 800 pages. My study is the first scholarly work to access this dossier, which includes coroner reports, police intelligence findings, search warrants, phone logs of communications between criminal operatives, charge sheets, transcripts of police interrogations and court proceedings.

The thesis also draws on findings from government records. The bulk of the government records that I collected stemmed from the 2014-15 state-level parliamentary commission that investigated criminal police groups run in Belém. The parliamentary commission had subpoena power and produced final reports of over 200 pages as well as supplementary materials that include depositions, phone logs, police intelligence reports and hot-line complaints regarding death squad activity. The final report of the commission is publicly available online. I also engaged in archival work of the commission's findings with authorization from the Human Rights Commission of the Pará State Legislature. In addition, I obtained intelligence reports and arrest warrants of joint operations against death squads and militias launched by the Civil and Military police forces in Belém. These sources provide useful information into the repressive measures that law-enforcement agencies have taken to combat police criminality in the city.

In addition, I scraped media clippings from a variety of sources, including Belém's two major daily newspapers (*O Liberal* and *Diário do Pará*) and national-level online news portal *G1*.

The *G1* articles were available online, while the *O Liberal* and *Diário do Pará* sources were accessed in the media archives of the Arthur Vianna Library in Belém. I also searched newspaper archives from national publications like the *Jornal do Brasil* that covered the early years of the police criminality phenomenon in the country from the 1950s to the 1980s. I obtained access to this media archive through the *Biblioteca Nacional* (National Library) in Rio. As with legal records and interviews, media sources are also regularly used by criminal governance scholars (Pope, 2022; Lessing, 2017). They provide important insights into the ways in which illicit entities impact public life.

I also drew on my observational fieldnotes as a supplementary data source. The fieldnotes provide my study with insights related to my immersive experience in Belém. I took fieldnotes at the end of every working day that I spent in the field. The uneven and fragmented nature of my fieldwork meant that my notes were not as extensive as those by researchers conducting traditional forms of ethnography. Nevertheless, they help to provide context to my inquiry. I described my activities that day, detailed the theoretical and empirical implications of the data that I gathered and reflected on my interactions with research interlocutors. The notes were particularly helpful for me to reflect on my dealings with the police officers that I interviewed. Some of these interviews took place in old colonial mansions that serve as offices of police agencies in Belém. In these spaces, I caught glimpses of the hierarchical and military nature of police work. These included seeing police officers stopping their work on the spot to salute commanders who were walking by, and noticing that, even inside their headquarters, the officers that I interviewed wore bulletproof vests and fatigue boots.¹⁰ Discussing criminal and violent police conduct with high-ranking officers carrying guns was jarring at first. I surpassed this reaction when it quickly became clear that my interlocutors were generally forthcoming and keen to discuss criminal behaviour within the police.

¹⁰ Fieldnotes from September 16, 2022

In terms of analysing the data, I continued to follow the logic of qualitative comparative analysis (Ragin, 1997; Goldthorpe, 1997). I initially derived themes, topics and issues from the data that I then used as coding categories. The codes were initially descriptive in nature. They focused on the organisational structure of death squads and militias, their market specializations, acts of violence and the ways in which they attempted to govern community life. I then sought to interpret the data in a more analytical form to find recurring patterns in the various data sources. I coded the recurrent and important issues that emerged across the cases, including the ways in which these groups interacted with police agencies, internal reputational dynamics within the criminal police groups and the coercive strategy of death squads and militias vis-à-vis their criminal competitors.

I then used the embeddedness framework to search for distinctions and commonalities across the units of analysis to highlight the causal forces at play (Tarrow, 2010). This approach has the merit of allowing case researchers to construct arguments that are conjunctural, since the effect of any particular causal condition depends on the presence and absence of other conditions (Ragin, 1997). When it came to the comparative clusters, I assessed the extent to which the two units that made up each cluster were affected by the causal factors. Each of the comparative clusters therefore concludes with a summary table outlining the extent to which each variable impacted the two units under comparison, followed by a discussion of these results. As a result, I was able to confront the complex causal patterns that manifest themselves in my research and shed light on how the various factors interact with each other across the cases.

Fieldwork & Ethics

The thesis abides by recent scholarly efforts to acknowledge the ethical pitfalls and safety risks that come with conducting research on violent topics and in violent field sites (Jones & Rodgers, 2019; Krause, 2021). From the start of the research, I was cognizant that I was studying a sensitive topic involving police in a context in which deviant law-enforcement conduct was rampant during the period of Bolsonaro's presidency. As mentioned in the previous section, my research was conducted in the wake of high-profile killings of politicians, activists and journalists who had been

researching and combatting criminality and deviant policing. I knew that it would be necessary to interview police, who would have inside knowledge of the ways in which officers go on to form death squads and militias. However, without fully knowing who knew who in Belém's small ecosystem of public security practitioners and specialists, I had to be cognizant of the possibility that my research and my presence in Belém could be divulged to death squad and militia operatives.

I therefore designed the fieldwork to be limited and uneven in nature. This has also been termed 'rapid ethnography' (Baines & Cunningham, 2011). The limited and uneven approach gave me some reassurance that I could offset the risks to research participants and myself. I conducted two rounds of fieldwork in Belém, with each lasting approximately two months (January-March 2022 and August-October 2022). Scholars who advocate for an uneven immersive strategy to fieldwork defend taking large breaks between fieldwork rounds to ensure that risks to personal safety and research participants can diminish over time (Krause, 2021). Whilst I intended to conduct my second round of fieldwork in Belém in 2023, issues around the October 2022 national elections in Brazil generated the possibility that my access to some data sources would be restricted by 2023. The possibility of President Bolsonaro refusing to acknowledge the results of the elections and the ensuing democratic breakdown that would have followed could have prevented me from accessing police intelligence reports, litigation records and documents belonging to the State Legislature's investigative commission into militias and death squads. As it turns out this concern was not exaggerated, as evidenced by the January 8 storming of Brasília by Bolsonaro's supporters and ongoing investigations into Bolsonaro's plans to launch a coup both in the run-up to the 2022 elections and following his electoral defeat (Nicas, 2024). I therefore decided to alter my plans and conduct the second round of fieldwork prior to the elections taking place.

The limited time I had in Belém meant that every working day involved both archival work and interviews whilst I was there. Clearly, the strategy of limited immersion prevented me from conducting an ethnography in its traditional sense, since I chose not to remain in the field for a long period of time observing participants. In reflecting on the ethics of ethnography in conflict

zones (insights which are also applicable to studies of violence and crime), Krause (2021) argues that the deep immersion that comes with long research stays can also exacerbate ethical concerns around the researcher's impact on the local environment. Deep immersion can also increase physical and emotional dangers (Krause, 2021). In fact, scholars are beginning to reflect on the extent to which ideas of the 'intrepid ethnographer' with a neutral gaze embedding themselves seamlessly in sensitive field contexts is an illusory notion (Denyer Willis, 2017; Malejacq & Mukhopadhyay, 2016). While carrying out limited and uneven immersion was an appropriate strategy for my research, this approach also has its limitations. It diminishes the researchers' access to potential participants and hinders efforts to interpret how people in the field site make meaning of the research topic (Krause, 2021).

Ethnographies of long durations are particularly good at capturing how criminal violence impacts community life (Barnes, 2021a; Feltran, 2011; Denyer Willis, 2017). In contrast, Varese (2022) notes that ethnographic work is less adept at capturing the internal workings of criminal organisations. This is a particularly important point for my study. The thesis aims to shed light on the organisational characteristics of death squads and militias and explores how these groups established themselves in Belém. Limited and uneven fieldwork for this kind of research is able to provide a degree of immersion that helped me familiarize myself with the local context. At the same time, this fieldwork approach also empowered me to focus primarily on the institutional dimensions of illicit organisations, rather than attempting to grasp how communities experience and respond to criminal governance (Varese, 2022).

Issues surrounding the immersive dynamics of traditional ethnographies are particularly relevant when it comes to studies of violence and crime in the Brazilian context, where debates around 'ethnographic tourism' abound (Robb Larkins, 2015; Pope, 2019). Brazil's greater global profile during the 2000's, which was particularly reinforced with the hosting of the 2014 World Cup and the 2016 Olympics, was followed by enhanced international scholarly interest in the country, particularly in Rio (Richmond, 2019; Penglase, 2014; Barnes, 2021a; Magaloni, Vivanco

& Melo, 2020). In this context of heightened interest, it has become increasingly common for foreign researchers to embed themselves in low-income favela communities.

Pope (2019, 85) aptly identifies this dynamic as a political economy of research that has developed where “brokers, fixers and translators... participate and benefit economically from a thriving information economy”, to the point where “One of the standing jokes in these favelas describes the archetypal favela family composed of the father, mother, three children and the ethnographer”. This has led to many favelas, particularly in Rio, being saturated with *gringo* researchers. In any case, the bulk of these scholars have reflected extensively on their privileged position when it comes to this political economy of research (Barnes, 2021a; Pope, 2019; Denyer Willis, 2015). They also acknowledge that their foreign nationality empowers them to take some risky choices in terms of data collection, since the targeting of a foreign national by a violence-yielding entity would harness considerable local and international scrutiny (Denyer Willis, 2015; Pope, 2019). Their foreignness therefore granted them a degree of protection. This was something which as a native Brazilian I could not tap into, and which further contributed to the risk-averse nature of my research.

It is well established that a researchers’ positionality shapes all aspects of a study (Malejacq & Mukhopadhyay, 2016), including access to data and analytical frames. My background as a native Brazilian posed some challenges and some advantages to the data collection process. The residents of the neighbourhoods where criminal police groups are active in and the victims of police violence throughout Brazil are overwhelming black (Alves, 2020). Issues around violence and unlawful governance are tied to structural forms of racism that have plagued Brazil since the colonial period (Vargas, 2011; Alves, 2018). 77 percent of the over 47,000 victims of homicide in Brazil in 2022 were black, the vast majority consisting of young men who reside in urban peripheries (Fórum Brasileiro de Segurança Pública, 2023b).

As a white middle class researcher lacking the protective lawyer of foreignness, I could not adequately explore the dynamics of police criminality from the context of the lived experience of

black residents of the urban margins. Despite my positionality preventing me from holistically grasping anti-black violence, my research made efforts to bear witness to the persistent forms of racism that are manifested in police work. Part of the data collection process, whether it was pouring through coroners' reports into mass executions by militia operatives or going through archival newspaper coverage of death squad violence, involved witnessing extreme acts of anti-black violence.¹¹ I tried to avoid treating these acts of violence in a sensationalist form, as some segments of organised scholarship run the risk of doing. I avoid describing acts of criminal violence as if they were murder mysteries or evidence of the supposed anarchic nature of the life of criminals. Instead, I highlight the historical legacies that underpin these forms of coercion and reflect on the social impact of these forms of violence by police criminals.

Despite my positionality restricting some aspects of the research, being from the same country as my field site also had its advantages. I was able to deal with fieldwork dynamics around sociohistorical context, language, and cultural cues in a seamless manner. This familiarity facilitated the rapid nature of my fieldwork, as related issues usually take up a considerable amount of time and effort from foreign scholars. Nevertheless, conducting research by myself in a city in which I have no personal links, I had to constantly reflect on the fact that I had a limited local support network to fall back on in case I found myself or my interlocutors in danger.

In fact, there were many times during the fieldwork where I stood out as someone from outside of Belém. During the interviews, I had to deal with the fact that by my accent and demeanour, my interlocutors instantly identified me as a *paulista* (a native of São Paulo). Whereas foreign scholars, particularly those who are fluent in Portuguese, can often generate instant sympathy and rapport with their interlocutors, I frequently had to surpass expressions of suspicion, usually along the lines of 'why would *you* (someone from São Paulo) be interested in police criminality in Belém?' at the start of interviews. My affiliation to an elite foreign university at times

¹¹ Fieldnotes from February 3, 2022

also made interviewees unclear about my intentions and puzzled by my presence in Belém. It is difficult to determine the extent to which these dynamics impacted the data I obtained. In any case, my positionality granted me a useful dual perspective as both an insider and an outsider to my field site.

Conclusion

This chapter detailed my qualitative research design. It discussed the structure of the research based on in-depth cases that were selected typologically and compared with each other. I also detail the inductive and interpretivist approach to analyse a variety of data stemming from interviews, litigation sources and media and government archives. The chapter also paid attention to the fact that my data collection was impacted by pandemic conditions and the ethical and security pitfalls that were inherent to the subject matter of police criminality.

Looking forward, the thesis proceeds to its empirical section. The following chapter consists of the historical analysis of police criminality in the Brazilian context, followed by the comparisons of the death squads and militias that have marked the proliferation and persistence of police criminality in Belém.

Chapter IV. The Historical Roots of Police Criminality in Brazil

This chapter engages in a comparative historical analysis of police institutions and criminality over the course of Brazilian history. It deploys the criminal embeddedness theoretical framework to situate police-backed criminal groups within a continuum of extra-legal state violence that stretches back to the establishment of the first police forces in Brazil. With the aid of archival data, this chapter shows that longstanding forms of unlawful police conduct have paved the way for the proliferation and persistence of death squad and militias. The chapter begins by discussing the origins of police institutions, before examining the intertwined historical evolution of law-enforcement and criminal markets in Brazil.

The Extra-Legal Underpinnings of Police

My study seeks to understand both the contemporary manifestations of police criminality and the historical legacies that underpin this phenomenon. Through the embeddedness framework's simultaneous analytical focus on police and crime, I seek to understand how these two spheres of social life have interacted with each other over time. In tracing the historical continuum between the establishment of police institutions and police criminality, I follow on recent efforts by historians and sociologists to critically examine the origins of policing (Seigel, 2018; Go, 2023). As mentioned previously, these efforts aim to unpack the various ways in which police forces impact societies.

Reflecting on the origins of policing is an essential component of these efforts. Vitale (2017) argues that the creation of the first police forces by the UK, France and the US during the early to mid-19th century marked a new form of domination by the state, in which order was enacted by permanent and professional coercive units. Tilly (1992) notes that this time period also marked the consolidation of the state as a viable political unit. This consolidation was driven by the establishment of officially recognized borders amongst states and the creation of professional bureaucracies able to regulate the lives of political subjects (Tilly, 1992). The replacement of

auxiliary forces such as citizen militias with institutions of police made public security an essential feature of the newly formed governance arrangements of states (Go, 2023). According to Vitale (2017, 52), “The transition from the use of militias and military troops to civilian police was a process of engineering greater public acceptance of the social-control functions of the state”. Equally important was the partitioning of coercive responsibilities between a police force tasked with internal order and a military responsible for foreign wars (Tilly, 1992).

Police in Europe and North America were created within the colonial context of the metropole (Go, 2023). In contrast to this historical pattern, Brazil’s first police force was established when the country was still a colony of the Portuguese empire. As mentioned in the previous chapter, Rio’s Royal Guard of Police was created in 1809 under a military structure. The Royal Guard was designed to protect private property and safeguard the lives of the Portuguese royal family who had arrived in Rio during the previous year (Holloway, 1993). The militaristic structure of police in Brazil remains in place (Soares, 2019). The embeddedness framework helps to unpack the implications of this longstanding militarism. Many contemporary aspects of the conduct of Brazilian police, including its criminal dynamics, emerge out of extreme and unaccountable militaristic police violence that have persisted since the colonial period.

Militarised policing has also been accompanied by a bifurcation of police functions in Brazil. Following independence in 1822, the central government created the Civil Police, which was tasked with administrative and judicial duties. Up to 1967, the Civil Police shared in street-level patrol responsibilities alongside the Military Police (Caldeira, 2000). Furthermore, Brazil’s bipartite police institutions remain bound by strict hierarchies, as street-level soldiers in the Military Police and entry-level Civil Police clerks are commanded by an officer class to which it is virtually impossible for them to be promoted into (Cubas, Alves & Oliveira, 2020). This stringent hierarchy is also reflected in income distribution. Soldiers and clerks receive salaries close to the minimum wage (Magaloni & Cano, 2016).

Within the colonial slaveholding context, the institutional exercise of power through these incipient police forces supported the logics of private violence of the plantation economy in Brazil (Chazkel, 2020). During the colonial (1809-1822) and monarchical period (1822-1889), slaveowners outsourced the punishment of their slaves to the police, while police officers carried lashes with them during patrols to summarily whip anyone engaging in anti-social behaviour (Schwartz, 1992). While transatlantic slave trafficking was outlawed in 1831, it continued in a clandestine form until the 1850s, with the connivance of the police institutions (Holloway, 1993). In addition, throughout the 19th century, bush hunters were authorized by police forces to capture runaway slaves and claim rewards from slave owners (Schwartz, 1992).

Irregular linkages between police and private and illicit actors remain in place. A pertinent example of this dynamic consists of police officers being informally hired to work as vigilantes and security guards (Durão, Robb Larkins & Argentin, 2023; Brito, Souza & Lima, 2011). In her important study of policing and shifts in the use of urban space in São Paulo, Caldeira (2000, p. 206) argues that the recurrence of private violence by public agents in Brazil reflects the “complex interpenetration of legal and illegal activities” that has historically sustained institutions of police in the country. It is this persisting link between legal and illegal conduct that is manifested in police criminality phenomenon. There are extensive complementarity between police work and criminal activity in Brazil. The expression of authority through quotidian and lethal forms of coercion is a defining feature of police conduct in the country. This same feature also manifests when law-enforcement engage in criminal governance. As a result, the Brazilian police encapsulates the “essential continuity of power relations in Brazil from colonial times to the modern era” (Holloway, 1993, 13). These power relations revolve around the ingrained forms of impunity that drive unlawful conduct within institutions of law-enforcement, the banality and normalization of extreme forms of violence, particularly targeting black Brazilians, and the fusion of private and public interests in expressing coercive authority.

The military coup that ended the monarchical regime and established the Republic in 1889 granted states the right to oversee police forces in their own jurisdictions (Cubas, Alves & Oliveira, 2020). No longer tasked with hunting down or punishing slaves, Brazilian police forces nonetheless remained bound to racist codes of order. Abolition in 1888 led thousands of former slaves to leave plantations and migrate to urban centres, creating informal housing settlements now widely known as favelas (Fischer, 2014). The police responded by invading and razing these informal settlements under a logic of social cleansing that sought to rid cities of residents who were undesired by the white elite (Garmany & Richmond, 2020; Carvalho, 1987). In addition, the end of slavery led to a heightened concern with maintaining internal order. Police forces were at the forefront of these efforts. They intensified surveillance and punishment of black Brazilians who migrated to urban centres (Chazkel, 2011).

Police also began to repress ubiquitous popular practices, like the *jogo do bicho* clandestine lottery. The *jogo do bicho* began in Rio in 1892 and was made illegal nation-wide the following year (Chazkel, 2011). Its daily lotteries, cheap entrance fees and reasonable odds quickly caused it to spread throughout Brazil (Vaz, 2011). The *jogo do bicho* continues to be a thriving illicit industry. From its inception to the present day, police forces have remained in the forefront of these gambling rings (Jupiara & Otavio, 2015). They receive bribes from the families that run the gambling outfits to allow the lotteries to take place. In addition, police officers work as security guards for the families that manage the *jogo do bicho*, and some of these officers go on to take over the gambling outfits and become prominent criminal entrepreneurs (Manso, 2020).

The establishment of the Estado Novo dictatorship under President Getúlio Vargas in 1937 led to a renewed effort to centralize policing under the auspices of the federal government (Caldeira, 2000). All police forces became subordinated to Filinto Muller, the Chief of Police of the Federal District in Rio, who was nominated by Vargas (Rose, 2005). With the help of the military, Muller and his police force tortured and imprisoned thousands of suspected Communists and anti-Vargas politicians. The end of the dictatorship and the ratification of a democratic

constitution in 1946 once again made states responsible for the police. By that time, both military and civil police officers had acquired experience in torturing dissidents and operating with minimal accountability (Rose, 2005).

Elite Units and the Emergence of Death Squads

It was within this historical context of rising insecurity borne of urbanization and the accumulation of wide-ranging coercive and clandestine repertoires by law-enforcement that the first forms of police criminality took root in Brazil. The first death squad in the country was created in Rio in 1958 by Amaury Kruel, Army General and the head of public security in the city (Bicudo, 1988). It was originally established as a rapid-response elite police unit (Jornal do Brasil, 1968a). The unit was launched by Kruel following pressure from Rio's Chamber of Commerce, whose members were worried about the perceived rise in robbery and theft in what was then the capital of Brazil (Huggins, 1997). The specialized unit was comprised of 10 Civil Police officers with reputations for violence (Jornal do Brasil, 1968a). The officers were handpicked by the Chief Civil Police Sheriff Cecil Borer and were led by Sheriff Milton Le Cocq. Throughout his police career, Le Cocq cultivated a reputation for extreme violence (Jornal do Brasil, 1968b). He began his career in the 1940s as a Military Police soldier stationed with the *Polícia Especial* secret police established by the Estado Novo dictatorship (Jornal do Brasil, 1988). Le Cocq moved to the Civil Police in the 1950s, where he cultivated ties with the leaders of the *jogo do bicho* gambling rings (Jornal do Brasil, 1968b).

Despite being comprised of Civil Police officers, the new unit had attributions that resembled that of military commandos. It was granted discretionary authority to roam throughout the city and summarily execute suspected criminals (Jornal do Brasil, 1968a). Le Cocq's unit functioned as a motorized patrol that had a skull-and-bones as the logo in its patrol cars (Jornal do Brasil, 1988). The unit was known by its acronym 'E.M.'. Officially, the acronym spelled out '*Equipe Motorizada*' (Motorized Patrol). However, the acronym was popularly known as '*Esquadrão da Morte*' (Death Squad) because of the vast extent to which Le Cocq and his colleagues deployed lethal force (Jornal do Brasil, 1968b). The death squad implemented a policy that for every police

officer who was killed in the line of duty, 10 ‘bandits’ had to be murdered in retaliation (Jornal do Brasil, 1964). Alongside large-scale revenge killings, Le Cocq integrated the pursuit of criminal governance alongside the everyday work of the Motorized Patrol. Le Cocq’s unit began to offer murder-for-hire services and established protection rackets¹² in the urban margins involving local commerce and operatives of the gambling rings (Rose, 2005). Bodies of those who refused to pay for the group’s protection were found with signs of torture and branded with the ‘E.M.’ acronym and the skull and bones logo (Jornal do Brasil, 1968a).

The Motorized Patrol exemplifies the intensification of the close links between state and crime during that historical period which helped to drive the emergence of police criminality in Brazil. The establishment of protection rackets organised at the level of an elite unit was an unprecedented and largely effective way for police officers to utilize existing hierarchical structures of law-enforcement to suit their objectives to accumulate illicit revenue. In obtaining proceeds from unlawful protection during their daily patrols, Le Cocq’s contingent found a way to utilize their fearsome reputation for lethal violence to enrich themselves illicitly while on police duty. Hence, Le Cocq’s crew developed a profitable model for police to create criminal networks during their working hours. This model fit seamlessly with the organizational structure and discretionary authority for extreme violence that is inherent to police work in Brazil.

Le Cocq was murdered in 1964 by a criminal rival (Jornal do Brasil, 1964). Despite his well-known criminal career, Le Cocq was hailed as an exemplary cop by Rio’s police agencies. In 1966, the Civil Police created an order of merit named after the death squad leader (Jornal do Brasil, 1966). The following year, a bust of Le Cocq was installed in the lobby of the police headquarters

¹² In his study of how individuals and businesses resist extortion in Colombia, Mexico and El Salvador, Moncada (2019, 321) offers a useful definition of protection rackets as a “sustained institutional arrangement through which dominant actors extract regular tribute from other actors in return for providing protection from both themselves and other threats”. Moncada (2019) also aptly notes that protection rackets are the purest expression of criminal governance, because it is the criminal practice that most resembles state-building.

in downtown Rio (Jornal do Brasil, 1967).¹³ These homages to Le Cocq demonstrate that unlawful conduct by police was not only tolerated by state agencies in Brazil but was also increasingly framed as necessary measures to address security concerns. It is through this persistent institutional encouragement of unlawful violence that police criminality was able to spread throughout Brazil.

In fact, the illicit activities of Le Cocq and his colleagues did not prevent public security specialists from seeing the Motorized Patrol's extensive use of lethal coercion as an inspiration. During the 1960s, police agencies throughout Brazil began to create rapid-response elite units comprised of officers with hard-line reputations (Bicudo, 1988). The push to create specialized police units nation-wide was a product of two factors, the first being increasing concern with a perceived rise in violent crime that followed rapid processes of urbanization (Caldeira, 2000). Secondly, these elite police units were tasked to work alongside the military in hunting down, torturing and executing leftist insurgents that pursued armed resistance against the military dictatorship (Gaspari, 2002). With institutional impunity to leverage their violent expertise at any opportunity, the officers recruited into the new elite units would model Le Cocq's approach to institute death squad networks that complemented their on-duty work. In the process, hard-line public security policy became indelibly tied to criminal governance by police, particularly since this trend of elite unit officers creating death squads would replicate itself throughout Brazil from the 1960s to the 1980s.

Inside their battalions and during their militaristic patrols of urban communities, elite officers taught each other how to establish criminal enterprises while on-duty. It is important to acknowledge that many of the members of these first death squads were also commanders of the

¹³ Following the assassination of Le Cocq, his subordinates in the Motorized Patrol established an organization called Scuderie Le Cocq (Jornal do Brasil, 1968b). The organization ostensibly functioned as a charity organization to raise funds for the families of dead police officers. In fact, the Scuderie Le Cocq functioned as a sprawling illicit enterprise and criminal brotherhood. It was comprised of police and civilians that adhered to the cult of lethal violence initiated by Le Cocq's original network (Jornal do Brasil, 1988). The Scuderie harnessed a mass following of associated members within Rio's law-enforcement agencies and in other Brazilian states. It remained an influential entity in Rio's criminal markets, particularly contraband, for the following two decades (Jupiara & Otavio, 2015).

dictatorial regime's torture chambers. Most prominent amongst these was Sérgio Paranhos Fleury, a Civil Police investigator and death squad leader who was also one of the commanders of the DOPS political police unit in São Paulo, one of the country's largest torture chambers (Bicudo, 1988). In 1969, Fleury led a police operation that killed Carlos Marighella, a guerrilla leader and the regime's foremost public enemy (Gaspari, 2002). Between 1968-73, Fleury's death squad, comprised of 40 Civil Police officers, summarily executed between 1,000-2,000 people in the metropolitan region of São Paulo (Bicudo, 1988). The victims of the death squad had no relation to political opposition to the dictatorship. They were mostly involved in illicit markets that the death squad charged protection from, especially gambling (Gaspari, 2002).

In a similar vein to what occurred with Le Cocq, the military dictatorship continuously promoted Fleury as a law-and-order hero. At the same time, Fleury's death squad gradually began to infiltrate illicit drugs markets (Bicudo, 1988). Various homicide charges were eventually brought against Fleury, who was protected from legal prosecution by the dictatorship and continued to be hailed as a hero by the media (Bicudo, 1988). As the following chapters of the thesis will disclose, this pattern of public security agencies promoting and protecting deviant police officers involved in profitable criminal enterprises is another feature of the historical continuum of extra-legal policing which continues to manifest itself in Brazil. In being allowed to engage in extreme and unlawful coercion in the line of duty, police officers are able to seamlessly integrate themselves in criminal transactions.

The nationwide expansion of death squads during the dictatorial period was also facilitated by important legislative changes made to the institutions of police by the military regime in 1967. These legislative changes once again highlight the connections between public security policies and criminal conduct by police. A new constitution enacted in 1967 and framed around the dictatorship's newly established National Security doctrine abolished civilian responsibility for patrolling the streets (Soares, 2019). These changes were driven by the same dual concern with rising crime and armed political opposition against the dictatorship. For the first time in Brazilian

history, only the Military Police was allowed to patrol the streets, while the Civil Police was limited to judicial and administrative duties.

In addition, the 1967 constitution largely abolished the authority of civilian courts to oversee police by subordinating the Military Police to the military penal code (Gonzalez, 2021). The same constitutional provision that granted the Military Police the monopoly in active policing also stipulated that anytime a Military Police officer fired a gun during patrols, that patrol counted as a military operation (Gonzalez, 2021). Consequently, Military Police officers could only be tried by a military court. With no civilian oversight, police officers were empowered to file police reports claiming that those who were killed by the police were responsible for their own deaths while the officers who killed civilians were listed as the victims of an attack (Barcellos, 1992).

The primacy of the Military Police over the main components of law-enforcement within the context of a dictatorial regime altered the dynamics of public security in Brazil. Policing became structured around a war-like mentality of subjugating internal enemies, be they perpetrators of common crimes or armed political opponents of the state (Pineiro, 1997). Under this warlike mentality, lethal violence became an important recourse of everyday policing. The leeway granted to police officers to engage in violence generated a practice that quickly spread amongst the Brazilian police of summarily executing suspects and claiming that they had been resisting arrest (a practice known as *resistência seguida de morte*, resistance followed by death) (Denyer Willis, 2015). During these alleged resistances, Military Police are empowered to remove the body of the victim from the crime scene, under the auspices of trying to save their lives by bringing them to the hospital, while also making it impossible for forensic inspections to take place to determine what actually happened (Barcellos, 1992).

Victims of *resistência* killings usually have bullet wounds in their backs and back of their heads, indicating that they were summarily executed from behind (Denyer Willis, 2015). Altering murder scenes to prevent judicial scrutiny of police illegality remains a common practice amongst

Brazilian law-enforcement, yet another example of the fact that historical patterns of unlawful violence and deviance continue to shape police work in the country.

In 1970, the dictatorship continued to advance the militarisation of law-enforcement by establishing a new elite police unit in São Paulo called the Rondas Ostensivas Tobias de Aguiar (ROTA) (Barcellos, 1992). ROTA was the first elite unit in the country to be solely comprised of Military Police. Its officers were trained under US counterinsurgency doctrine (Gonzalez, 2021). ROTA operated under complete autonomy from the rest of the police (Barcellos, 1992). The elite force would go on to serve as the blueprint for other elite units set up throughout the country during the following years. Officers from other parts of Brazil were sent to São Paulo for immersive training with ROTA soldiers (Oliveira Neto, 2020). Moreover, the rigorous training process required to join the ROTA installed a radical cult of violence and enforced illusions of grandeur amongst its officers that they represented the untouchable elite of law-enforcement.¹⁴ This cult of violence and illusions of grandeur spread to members of the other elite units operate throughout Brazil. In the process, regular police officers began to idolize the violent and extra-legal repertoires of elite police, thereby creating what one of my police interviewees termed as a “a negative *esprit de corps*” that spread throughout the police hierarchy.¹⁵ The emergence of this particular feature of police culture would allow elite officers to disseminate criminal expertise to their law-enforcement colleagues.

Investigative journalist Barcellos (1992) tracked the intensifying lethality of police forces throughout the 1970s and 1980s which followed on the footsteps of the establishment of these militaristic elite units. According to Barcellos (1992), prior to the institutional dominance of the Military Police and the rise of the ROTA, three people had been killed by the police in São Paulo, Brazil’s largest city, between 1960-65. By 1980, the São Paulo Military Police was killing over 1,000

¹⁴ Interview with Military Police Coronel Sandoval Bittencourt de Oliveira Neto, April 5, 2022

¹⁵ Interview with Military Police Coronel José Vicente Braga da Silva, January 26, 2022

people every year, a trend of increased killings that was shared by police forces throughout the country (Barcellos, 1992).

The most prominent Military Police elite unit in Brazil that has spawned death squads in Brazil consists of Rio's Batalhão de Operações Policiais Especiais (BOPE). Created in 1978, the unit has always ascribed to a cult of death, having picked the same skull and bones logo previously used by Le Cocq's death squad as its logo (Robb Larkins, 2015). The use of the skull and bones logo further confirms the proximities between illicit police conduct and police institutions. It also magnifies the importance of the development of vigilante aesthetics in driving elevated levels of police lethality and police criminality in Brazil. The BOPE provides further examples of this aesthetic, as its officers invade neighbourhoods inside an armoured tank known as the *Caveirão* (Big Skull). The use of the *Caveirão* speaks to the unit's proclivity for killing innocent by-standers during their raids (Robb Larkins, 2015). Furthermore, BOPE's officers regularly work as bodyguards or hired killers for members of Rio's gambling rings and drug-trafficking organizations (DTOs) (Jupiara & Otavio, 2015). Many BOPE officers have gone on to create criminal enterprises that are influential operators of both the drug and gambling markets in the city (Manso, 2020).

Devoid of any urban guerrilla and with a strong military presence due to its strategic location at the gateway to the Amazon, the city of Belém did not suffer the same pressure to institute elite police units during the period of the military dictatorship as other major urban centres in Brazil. Nevertheless, the militarization of law-enforcement, the institutionalized impunity afforded to police officers and the war-like doctrine to issues of public security implemented during the dictatorial period still made its way into Belém's police institutions (Silva & Souza, 2016).

Moreover, whilst the process of industrialization that instigated accelerated urbanization took off in the 1950s in the large cities of the Brazilian Southeast, it was only during the 1980s that Belém became a focus of significant rural to urban migration (Cardoso, 2007). The process of urbanization in Belém therefore shared parallels with that of other metropolitan regions in Brazil,

where the state did not provide sanitation, housing, schooling, and transport in newly settled and densely populated neighbourhoods.¹⁶ Racist sanitation discourses prevailed, and the police was mobilized to prevent the settlement of migrants in white-majority neighbourhoods (Couto, 2021). As in other Brazilian cities, ‘the talk of crime’ became a recurring theme of daily life (Caldeira, 2000), as Belém residents became increasingly concerned with a perceived rise in insecurity.¹⁷

The War on Drugs and the Emergence of Militias

The end of the military dictatorship in 1985 and the ratification of the democratic constitution in 1988 did little to alter the dynamics of policing in Brazil. After intense lobbying by police officers and the military, the new constitution retained the monopoly of the Military Police, with the Civil Police continuing to serve as an administrative and judicial force (Soares, 2019). The only significant change enacted during the democratic transition was the federalization of the two police forces, with state governors once again becoming responsible for policing (Cubas, Alves & Oliveira, 2020). Nonetheless, Military Police forces retained their status as reserve forces of the Brazilian Army (Soares, 2019). As a result, while the new constitution heralded a democratisation of Brazil’s political institutions, the country’s police agencies retained the dictatorship’s hierarchical and militarised character.

Whilst the democratic transition was ongoing in Brazil in the late 1980s and early 1990s, drug-trafficking replaced illicit gambling as the dominant illicit market in the country (Duarte, 2019). Cities with maritime links like Rio and Belém became essential nodes in drug-trafficking routes as well as major consumer hubs for drugs. The scale and nation-wide reach of drug-trafficking made it an unprecedentedly large illicit market in Brazil (Arias & Grisaffi, 2021). Inevitably, this large illicit market would be influenced by forms of police criminality that had already been active in Brazil over the previous thirty years.

¹⁶ Interview with Prof. Jean-François Yves Deluchey, February 3, 2022

¹⁷ Interview with Prof. Jean-François Yves Deluchey, February 3, 2022

Furthermore, by 2014, Brazil became the second largest consumer market for cocaine in the world after the US, with over 3.3 million consumers (Arias & Grisaffi, 2021). By then, the drug trade entrenched itself in the urban margins, as traffickers began to manage the distribution and sale of drugs in neighbourhoods that were strategically located near trafficking corridors and major consumer hubs (Alves, 2018). From the start of this large-scale drug-trafficking market, police officers set up bribery schemes with DTOs, whilst simultaneously advancing the narrative that ‘urban violence’ had reached unprecedented heights and therefore demanded enhanced police repression (Magaloni & Cano, 2016). Police officers also became the primary smugglers of guns into the country during the 1980s and 1990s (Manso, 2020).

With the onset of the War on Drugs in the 1990s, state governors throughout Brazil increased the number of Military Police troops and purchased new weaponry to confront drug-trafficking (Beato & Zilli, 2012). This new paradigm that prized police violence led to a host of massacres by the police in the 1990s. In 1992, the São Paulo Military Police murdered 111 prisoners in the Carandiru prison, an unprecedented massacre that would eventually lead prisoners in São Paulo state to form the PCC (Denyer Willis, 2015). In 1990, Rio police officers killed 11 people in a clandestine operation in the district of Acari, while eight homeless minors were murdered by the Rio police in what became known as the Candelária Massacre in July 1993. A month later, in August 1993, the Rio police summarily executed 21 people in the Vigário Geral favela in retaliation for the death of four police officers by the local trafficking group (Manso, 2020).

While these extreme forms of law-enforcement violence were criticised by the media and NGOs, the police continued to defend its personnel, claiming that the mass killings were necessary to combat criminality (Pinheiros, 1997). These justifications by the police were largely accepted by the public, despite the fact that the ‘cops versus robbers’ narrative was increasingly in tension with the exponential rise of police-backed criminal groups like death squads and militias during that time. Nevertheless, the rubric that bandits deserve to be killed by the police gained traction and continues to hold sway in a social context where the killing of marginalised subjects, particularly

young black men, is normalised by its reoccurrence (Weichert, 2021). While the narrative of urban violence posits insecurity as the outcome of crime, the comparisons of death squads and militias in the following chapters reveal that the conduct of law-enforcement played an integral, if not defining role in shaping the violence of contemporary urban life in Brazil.

These forms of illicit law-enforcement conduct would enhance dramatically over the course of the 1990s, especially since state governments throughout Brazil established incentive systems for police to increase the armed repression of drug-trafficking (Beato & Zilli, 2012). The most glaring example of this policy was implemented in Rio, where Governor Marcelo Alencar established the ‘Wild West bonus’ in 1995. The bonus allowed police officers to augment their income by up to 150 percent if they killed someone during an armed confrontation (Magaloni & Cano, 2016). The added financial incentive not only vastly increased killings by the police, but also caused police officers to alter crime scenes to pretend that summary executions had in fact been armed disputes against drug traffickers (Manso, 2020). The extreme lethality of law-enforcement officers persists to this day. High levels of police violence often contribute to residents of urban peripheries perceiving law-enforcement as a more menacing force than criminal groups (Mesquita, 2008).

Persistent institutional incentives for police to operate at the margins of the law ensured that death squads continued to be a prominent feature of social life in Brazil’s major urban centres. These incentives would also contribute to the emergence of a new form of police criminality. Militias emerged during this heyday of the War on Drugs and record levels of violence of the 1990s. Like death squads, militias also trace their origins to the dynamics of police violence and urbanization in Rio. With the onset of the War on Drugs, police in Rio began to engage in large-scale and extremely violent military expeditions in the residential areas where DTOs were based in, mostly in the hillside favelas of northern and southern Rio (Mesquita, 2008). The neighbourhoods of Rio’s westside acquired a reputation as ‘tranquil areas’ to live in, since the lack of armed combat there was in stark contrast to the warzone levels of violence in the other parts

of the city (Zaluar & Conceição, 2007). As a result, hundreds of thousands of people consisting both of migrants from other parts of Brazil seeking economic opportunities as well as residents of other parts of Rio seeking more peaceful living conditions settled in the westside during the 1990s (Araujo & Cortado, 2020).

In response to this population boom, off-duty and retired police created militias to engage in criminal governance provision at the local level in western Rio (Manso, 2020). They implemented a prohibitive stance towards drug-trafficking (which most militia in Rio have since dropped) and took advantage of increase demand for dispute settlements in western property markets and for public goods provision, both of which were neglected by state agencies (Araujo & Cortado, 2020). In exchange for adjudicating disputes and providing public goods like security, militias began to charge local merchants for protection, much like death squads had historically specialized in in the region (Arias & Barnes, 2016). Crucially, militias in Rio expanded their governance repertoire by also requiring residents of their turf to pay weekly protection fees (Cano & Duarte, 2012). Militias also developed a blueprint for rule-setting and policing in their turfs. Along with prohibiting the consumption of drugs in public, militias punish petty criminals through arbitrary sentences of house arrest, banish transgressors from entering the neighbourhood, execute anyone who is an alleged member of a rival criminal group, demand that people only buy consumer goods like water and cooking gas from their monopolistic sources and most importantly, demand weekly protection payments (Cano & Iooty, 2008; Manso, 2020). In exchange for obedience of their rules, militia maintain armed patrols and control population flows that can contribute to secure living conditions in their neighbourhoods (Mesquita, 2008).

Militia personnel would go on to infiltrate residents' associations, which are extremely influential in local power brokerage in Rio's urban margins (Araujo & Petti, 2022). Through residents' associations, militias are able to notarize property deeds, obtain funds for local infrastructure projects and control essential features of community life like the provision of sewage and water systems (Pope, 2022). Furthermore, militias are characterized by the diversity of their

revenue streams. While protection fees from residents and businesses are their main source of revenue, militias also engage in informal commuter van services, provide clandestine satellite TV and internet, loan sharking, clandestine real estate development in unregulated land and even engage in sand-trafficking in environmental protection areas (Araujo, 2017; Cano & Duarte, 2012; Manso, 2020).

Along with taking over the local resident's association, militias were also able to extend their governance capabilities by interfering in electoral politics. Their control over large swathes of community life allowed militias to engage in electoral gatekeeping and, in some cases, launch their own candidates to municipal and state-level legislatures (Hidalgo & Lessing, 2014). Rio's militias focused on allying with right-wing political parties that shared their pro-police, law-and-order ideology. These parties obtained exclusive access to campaign in many militia neighbourhoods (Arias, 2017). These electoral ties have allowed militias to infiltrate various government institutions, through which they are able to direct public funds for infrastructure and welfare projects in their communities (Hirata et al, 2022).

As mentioned in Chapter III, militias' political connections were propelled to the public spotlight during the period of Bolsonaro's presidency. Bolsonaro and his family had publicly defended violent conduct by militias and criminal investigations revealed that their links to militias were not limited to rhetorical support. The Bolsonaros hired family members of criminal police operatives to work in their legislative offices and allegedly engaged in real estate speculation in militia-held territories (Funari, 2022). These electoral connections by militias were ground-breaking for police criminality. Whereas previously, death squads concerned themselves with infiltrating law-enforcement agencies and judiciary institutions, the electoral initiatives of militias increased the reach of police criminals to the point where these groups became capable of influencing the distribution of political power in Brazil. My study shows that militias' political connections would serve as an enduring template for police criminality over the following decades, to the point where death squads would also begin to focus on developing affinities with electoral operatives.

Hence, by the 1990s, high levels of police violence were accompanied by the expansion of police criminality. Death squads and militias were able to embed themselves in police institutions, whilst also engaging in unlawful forms of governance throughout the urban margins. Dynamics of law-enforcement violence and illicit police conduct therefore became enduring challenges for the process of democratisation in Brazil (Pineiro, 1997). The end of the military dictatorship created the expectation that new relations between policing and society could be established (Soares, 2019). However, the country remained bound to an iron-fist model of policing that traces its roots to the colonial period. The new democratic institutions therefore had to co-exist, and in many contexts were undermined, by the militaristic structures and functions of policing. It is at this historical junction, during which the democratic transition was advancing in tandem with increased police violence and evolving forms of police criminality, that the timeframe of analysis of this study begins.

Conclusion

With the aid of the criminal embeddedness framework, this chapter examines the historical roots of police criminality in the Brazilian context. It finds that the historical legacy of militarised policing and various forms of law-enforcement impunity resonates nation-wide and has empowered police officers to establish and lead criminal enterprises. The chapter has also revealed striking parallels between standard police work and the activities of criminal operatives. Brazilian law-enforcement have normalized the extreme use of violence to resolve disputes and express their authority (Soares, 2019). The subsequent chapters of the thesis will shed further light on these parallels between police work and illicit activity by analysing the efforts of death squads and militias to proliferate and persist in Belém.

Chapter V. The Proliferation of Police Criminality in Belém

Introduction

Having reflected on the historical roots of police criminality in Brazil in the previous chapter, this chapter considers the ways in which this phenomenon spread to Belém. I compare two of the first iterations of police-led criminal groups that were set up in the city. These consist of the PATAM elite unit patrols and the Icoaraci death squad. I argue that the proliferation of police criminality in Belém was driven by the establishment of rapid-response elite units with discretionary authority to operate at the margins of the law throughout the urban space. These elite police in Belém mirrored the likes of Sheriff Le Cocq in Rio by incubating death squads within their on-duty patrol responsibilities. Like Le Cocq and his colleagues, PATAM officers and members of the Icoaraci death squad were able to utilize their regular deployment of extra-legal coercion in the pursuit of illicit gains. Belém's pioneering death squads therefore directly benefited from the police's shoot-to-kill policy directive, as well as from its cultivation of a violent organizational culture and the institutionalised impunity afforded to law-enforcement.

I also find that support from police institutions allowed police criminality to spread in Belém. From the use of weaponry and equipment to various forms of non-enforcement, the incipient death squads in the city relied on the assistance of law-enforcement agencies to become important stakeholders in the city's political economy of crime. In addition, I claim that large illicit markets did not contribute to the rise of police-backed criminal groups in Belém. Police criminality was able to spread in the city even though its criminal markets were fragmented and limited in scale. Rather than relying on expansive illicit profit chains, the first manifestations of police criminality in Belém were able to take advantage of the lack of other unlawful protectors in the city's criminal markets to effectively stake their governance claims. The subsequent rise of the drug trade in Belém during the early 2000's increased death squads' revenues and empowered these groups to invest in various other illicit markets.

In line with previous findings regarding the police officers who first established death squads in Brazil's largest urban centres, reputation was also crucial to Belém's pioneering death squads. The entrenchment of militaristic structures and functions of policing during the democratic transition was also felt in Belém. Police officers who cultivated reputations for vigilantism and unlawful conduct continued to be prized by public security authorities. These officers took advantage of their elevated status to emulate the likes of Sheriff LeCocq and Detective Fleury in establishing criminal enterprises that fit their on-duty patrol responsibilities.

Moreover, local police in Belém were able to incorporate and disseminate techniques of criminal governance developed in other major Brazilian cities, thereby contributing to the first manifestations of police criminality in the city. The criminal expertise required to launch death squads was first absorbed by elite officers, who subsequently disseminated their knowledge to the lower rungs of the law-enforcement hierarchy. This knowledge transfer regarding criminal activity was facilitated by the failure of police institutions to hold police involved in criminal activity to account. The failure to expel these officers from the force allowed elite operatives who set up pioneering death squads to inspire their colleagues within the police hierarchy. This dissemination was also successful because, within the militarized nature of Brazilian law-enforcement, low-level police idolize elite troops. Trained and institutionally empowered to deploy extreme violence in quotidian policing, Brazilian police can mobilize their coercive expertise and law-enforcement status in their efforts at pursuing criminal governance authority.

The remainder of this chapter consists of the case comparisons, followed by a discussion of the findings and a brief conclusion.

Case Studies

The PATAM Patrols

In an effort to address popular concern with rising violence, the Pará State Government established the PATAM in 1988. As with General Krueel's approach in Rio in 1958, the PATAM was set up as a specialized police unit with discretionary authority to roam throughout the Belém

metropolitan region.¹⁸ Unlike the rest of the Belém Military Police, that worked with outdated pistols and drove Volkswagen Beetles during patrol (or more commonly conducted patrols on foot), the state government equipped the PATAM with modern submachine guns and 16 new Chevrolet D-20 vehicles (O Liberal, 1992b). The new unit also replicated the BOPE elite squad in Rio and Le Cocq's death squad in adopting a skull and bones as its logo (Oliveira Neto, 2020).

The democratic transition in Brazil was completed in the same year that the PATAM was founded. As noted previously, the 1988 Constitution failed to reform the public security policies established by the dictatorship. Issues of public security continue to be addressed with extreme and unaccountable forms of law-enforcement violence. (Gonzalez, 2021). The establishment of the PATAM is illustrative of this persisting structure of violent and unaccountable policing. Even though Belém never had left-wing guerrilla activity and the democratic transition was firmly consolidated by its inception, the PATAM's was set up as a combat unit to fight against urban guerrillas.¹⁹ Two coronels and two sergeants who had been put in charge of setting up the PATAM were sent to São Paulo to receive counterinsurgency and SWAT training from the ROTA elite unit.²⁰ When the four police officers returned to Belém, they devised a training program for the PATAM that, like the ROTA's, included intense physical tests, martial rituals and instances of humiliation with the ostensible goal of developing bonds of violent brotherhood between the unit's personnel.²¹

Most of the officers and soldiers that passed the training program and joined the PATAM had long track records of violence within the police.²² Rather than diminishing their admission prospects, a violent track record in their police work strengthened the credentials of the officers. The background of its contingent and the dynamics of the admission process therefore helped to

¹⁸ Interview with Military Police Coronel Albernando Monteiro da Silva, February 17, 2022

¹⁹ Interview with Military Police Coronel Sandoval Bittencourt de Oliveira Neto, April 5, 2022

²⁰ Interview with Military Police Coronel Albernando Monteiro da Silva, February 17, 2022

²¹ Interview with Military Police Coronel José Vicente Braga da Silva, March 22, 2022

²² Interview with Military Police Coronel José Vicente Braga da Silva, March 22, 2022

nurture an organizational culture of extreme violence within the PATAM.²³ While the new unit was based inside the 6th Battalion headquarters in downtown Belém, it operated with minimal oversight from the rest of the police.²⁴ This autonomy was a direct replication of the modus operandi of Le Cocq's Motorized Patrol. Like their Rio predecessors, the PATAM officers believed that their mission was to 'clean the streets' of criminals.²⁵ The PATAM therefore deployed the same racist discursive frame that conceives of police coercion as a tool to sanitise the urban space adopted by law-enforcement in other parts of Brazil (Garmany & Richmond, 2020). In this way, their coercive prowess at the margin of the law during street-level policing would prove to be more important than standard operational procedures. A police officer who briefly served in the PATAM during the start of his law-enforcement career recalled that:

The PATAM was heavily armed, its officers were very motivated and only partially trained... The 'training' of the PATAM was in everyday practice. They would go out into the streets to do ordinary patrols. But the point was that the *patanzeiros* (the PATAM officers) did not want to be like standard beat cops. So, their approach to policing was outside of the norm²⁶

From its onset, the PATAM garnered a fearsome reputation for violence in Belém, starting with the conduct of its officers in the port area of the city. Scores of homeless boys who lived in the port area had been accused of petty thefts by residents. The PATAM's patrols of the area led to the disappearances of several of the boys, as well as an infamous incident in which a PATAM soldier shot one of the boys in the foot, then extracted the bullet and forced the boy to swallow the projectile.²⁷ The soldier in question was subsequently absolved of any wrongdoing in a military tribunal.²⁸ Following the PATAM's conduct in the port area, the unit was nicknamed *Mata-Pivete* (Boy-Killers) (Oliveira Neto, 2020). Members of the unit embraced the nickname, appreciating the

²³ Interview with Military Police Coronel José Vicente Braga da Silva, March 22, 2022

²⁴ Interview with Military Police Coronel Sandoval Bittencourt de Oliveira Neto, April 5, 2022

²⁵ Interview with criminal attorney Laura Guimarães, February 8, 2022

²⁶ Interview with Military Police Coronel Sandoval Bittencourt de Oliveira Neto, April 5, 2022

²⁷ Interview with criminal attorney Laura Guimarães, February 8, 2022

²⁸ Interview with criminal attorney Laura Guimarães, February 8, 2022

development of a lethal aesthetic that could rival the likes of the BOPE and ROTA elite units in Rio and São Paulo.²⁹

By 1990, the members of the PATAM began to leverage their violent reputation for the purposes of unlawful protection. At the time, Belém's criminal markets were limited in scale. Its criminal ecosystem was comprised of bands of thieves and mainly of the *jogo do bicho* gambling networks.³⁰ The gambling outfits in the city were nowhere near as expansive as their peers in Rio which were mentioned in Chapter IV. Without the existence of profitable illicit trades to interfere in, the PATAM patrol units focused its unlawful protection offerings on local storefront merchants in the urban margins.³¹ During the day, members of the unit would station their cars in front of the businesses that were under its protection while PATAM officers offered to patrol the surrounding area at night (O Liberal, 1992b). The members of the PATAM protection rackets also began to engage in robberies on a regular basis.³²

In this process of developing protection rackets, the PATAM produced the embryonic manifestations of the death squad form in Belém. Previously, individual police officers in Belém had offered unlawful protection to commercial establishments.³³ With the PATAM, these forms of racketeering were conducted while on-duty and were organised by patrol units.³⁴ This profitable racketeering system structured at the level of on-duty work would become popular with Belém police in the following decades. Another police officer who also spent part of their early law-enforcement career with the PATAM notes that:

Every PATAM officer was full of themselves, and it was a close-knit unit, they thought of themselves as the elite... In units like that every soldier has a lot of independence, they can do what they want amongst themselves, and their superiors can't do anything about it. The PATAM and the use of violence became an end in and of itself for the officers... It became a business (*balcão de negócios*) and local merchants began to hire that business.³⁵

²⁹ Interview with Military Police Coronel Sandoval Bittencourt de Oliveira Neto, April 5, 2022

³⁰ Interview with Military Police Coronel Fábio Lobo, September 16, 2022

³¹ Interview with Military Police Coronel José Vicente Braga da Silva, March 22, 2022

³² Interview with Military Police Coronel Sandoval Bittencourt de Oliveira Neto, April 5, 2022

³³ Interview with Military Police Coronel Sandoval Bittencourt de Oliveira Neto, April 5, 2022

³⁴ Interview with Military Police Coronel José Vicente Braga da Silva, March 22, 2022

³⁵ Interview with Military Police Coronel José Vicente Braga da Silva, March 22, 2022

From 1988 to 1992, 40 members of the PATAM were expelled from the Military Police over accusations that they were offering murder-for-hire services (O Liberal, 1992b). This led local media to regularly refer to the PATAM as a *grupo de extermínio* (death squad) in its coverage of urban violence in Belém (O Liberal, 1992b). Residents of the urban margins would flee at the sight of the unit's infamous Chevrolet patrol cars (Oliveira Neto, 2020). This widespread fear of the PATAM reflects the terror-based form of governance that the PATAM was providing, particularly in Belém's urban margins. By responding to any minor incident of crime, the most common being petty theft of commercial establishments, with unlawful lethal violence, the PATAM rackets established strict rules of conduct for communities that were at the forefront of informal urban settlement.

By 1991, the PATAM was comprised of 365 men (O Liberal, 1992b). By that year, the PATAM's regular deployment of extreme violence culminated in a series of high-profile events. In September 1991, a PATAM soldier called Raimundo Nonato Silva dos Santos sent a letter to Belém's main newspaper *O Liberal* denouncing the summary execution of a 19-year-old man called Edmilson Teixeira Bastos by three members of his patrol unit (O Liberal, 1992a). According to the letter, the assailants killed the victim in a secluded forest area through a necklacing technique, forcing a rubber tire around the victim's body, drenching it in petrol and setting it on fire (O Liberal, 1992a). One of the assailants named by Silva was Sergeant José Pinheiro dos Santos Silva, whose nickname within the PATAM was Charles Bronson.³⁶ Silva's letter led to the first bouts of public outrage towards the PATAM, and the officers involved were arrested (O Liberal, 1992a).

In March 1992, PATAM Sergeant Leonardo Freitas da Cruz and three of his patrol subordinates responded to a call from a local taxi driver, who claimed that four suspicious men were walking on the side of the Coqueiro highway in the outskirts of Belém (O Liberal, 1992c). After spotting the four men on the side of the highway, Sergeant Cruz and the soldiers immediately

³⁶ Interview with Military Police Coronel José Vicente Braga da Silva, March 22, 2022

began firing their submachine guns. The four suspects included a Civil Police sheriff and a sailor of the Brazilian Navy (O Liberal, 1992c). The sheriff was killed immediately during the first wave of gunfire, while the remaining three were captured by the members of the PATAM and shot (O Liberal, 1992b). Two of them were killed, but the Navy sailor survived and identified Sergeant Cruz and his men as the culprits of what became known as the Coqueiro Massacre.³⁷

The massacre became frontpage news in Belém and around Brazil the following day (Oliveira Neto, 2020). Notably, Sergeant Cruz, the patrol's leader, was one of the officials sent to São Paulo to be trained by the ROTA during the early days of the PATAM (O Liberal, 1992b). The PATAM's training with the ROTA was shrouded in technical law-enforcement language at the time and was justified as a necessary step to tackle rising insecurity in Belém.³⁸ The Coqueiro massacre evinced the full extent of the knowledge transfer that the PATAM officers brought back to Belém. This included the aggressive shoot-to-kill tactics modelled by the ROTA that remains the *modus operandi* of elite police units and their associated death squads.

Whilst Belém newspapers would report on the killings of young black men by the PATAM on a regular basis in their Police sections (often accompanied by gruesome pictures of cadavers and loose body parts floating in rivers)³⁹, it was the murder of a fellow police officer by the elite unit that proved to be a step too far for local authorities. The embarrassment caused to the reputation of the Military Police and the accumulation of cases of extreme violence by the unit led Governor Jader Barbalho to announce the abolition of the PATAM two days after the Coqueiro Massacre (O Liberal, 1992b). However, rather than expelling the commanders of the unit from the police, the state government transferred PATAM's commanding officers to other tactical units of the Military Police. Many of the former PATAM commanders joined the anti-riot squad, which was established a month after the dissolution of the PATAM (Oliveira Neto, 2020). In the

³⁷ Interview with Military Police Coronel Albernando Monteiro da Silva, February 17, 2022

³⁸ Interview with Military Police Coronel Albernando Monteiro da Silva, February 17, 2022

³⁹ Fieldnotes from February 3, 2022

meantime, PATAM soldiers were distributed amongst other units of the 6th battalion to conduct standard patrols on foot (O Liberal, 1992b).

Analysis

The successful efforts by PATAM patrols to install protection rackets and hired killings offerings marked the first instance in which police officers in Belém engaged in unlawful conduct in an organised form while on duty. The criminal conduct within the PATAM therefore marked the onset of police criminality in Belém. The PATAM patrols operated in accordance with the defining features of the death squad phenomenon: police officers coming together in an organised network while on-duty to obtain illicit gains. Nevertheless, it is important to note that the attempts at criminal governance by PATAM officers were taking root in a gradual form, and that process was halted with the abolition of the police unit. Despite its short-lived existence, the PATAM created an enduring example for subsequent generations of Belém police to create criminal groups. The factors that facilitated the proliferation of police criminality in Belém by the PATAM are discussed below.

Hard-line Public Security Policies

It is worth reiterating that the creation of the PATAM mirrored the rise of the original Brazilian death squad, Le Cocq's Motorized Patrol in Rio, when it came to its direct relation to public security policy. An accelerated and informal process of urbanization led to widespread concern with rising crime and violence in Belém. Like in the rest of Brazil's major urban centres, the main policy directive to respond to insecurity was the creation of motorized, rapid-response police unit comprised of police with extensive capabilities for extreme violence. As with Le Cocq's Motorized Patrol, this policy push towards unaccountable and violent elite units encouraged the PATAM members to deploy their violent expertise in the service of illicit trade. Militaristic policy responses aimed at addressing insecurity therefore served to empower violent officers to enact the institutional model of death squads.

As with Le Cocq's death squad in Rio, the PATAM units thought of themselves as the untouchable elite of law-enforcement in Belém. This sense of superiority led members of the PATAM to complement their regular wages with illicit gains borne of death squad activity. This complementarity was achieved by the PATAM officers organizing their rackets to fit the area of patrol units. As a result, the PATAM racketeers were able to reach a larger client base than previous efforts by individual police to supply unlawful protection. The patrol-based death squad networks were also able to make more convincing protection claims than individual police officers, since the members of the patrol could mobilize their unit's cars, weaponry, and extensive contingent of officers who were specialists in unlawful coercion.

Even within this tough-on-crime public security ecosystem, some efforts were made by state institutions to combat the PATAM. The February 1992 arrest of Sergeant 'Charles Bronson' and two other PATAM soldiers for the necklacing murder was the first significant measure to combat the unrestrained nature of the elite unit. The pressure for further repressive measures against the PATAM escalated following the Coqueiro massacre a month later, which culminated in the state government shutting the unit down. The abolition of a police unit was an unprecedented measure not only in the state of Pará but in Brazil as a whole. At the time, popular support for lethal policing was growing throughout the country (Pinheiro, 1997). Nevertheless, in choosing to transfer the PATAM members to other units rather than expelling them from the police, the Pará State Government reinforced the sense of institutional impunity within the police.

Support from Police Agencies

The Pará state government created the PATAM as a highly specialized unit equipped with weapons and vehicles that were dramatically superior to anything that local law-enforcement had previously. They also established minimal oversight mechanisms over the PATAM, allowing the unit's officers to utilise their state-of-the-art equipment to engage in unlawful protection and hired killings. The PATAM patrols therefore relied on direct forms of assistance from the police to institute the first iterations of police criminality in Belém.

Knowledge Transfer

There are striking parallels between the PATAM and the original elite-unit death squads established in the late 1950s and 1960s in other parts of Brazil. These include the recruitment of hard-line officers, the development of a *esprit de corps* through a stringent admission process, the blatant deployment of a lethal aesthetic with the use of a skull and bones logo and the cultivation of criminal repertoires from the early days of the elite unit's launch. The PATAM's criminality also incorporated the murder-for-hire and racketeering strategies of other death squads that originated in elite units throughout Brazil. I argue that these parallels evince significant forms of knowledge transfer underpinning police criminality in Brazil. The PATAM not only imported the counterinsurgency strategies of the rapid response police units of São Paulo and Rio, but also nurtured the same links between militarised policing and criminality that had developed in other major urban centres in Brazil.

Reputation

The PATAM's officers had long track records within the local police force as experts in unlawful violence. As evinced by the work of 'Charles Bronson' and the 'Boy-Killers' in the port area, some PATAM officers had acquired nicknames that expressed their proclivity towards using extreme force. The development of these kinds of nicknames often suggests that burgeoning criminal reputations are being developed (Lusthaus, 2018; Volkov, 2016). PATAM officers leveraged their local reputations for the constant use of force to develop the first instance of police criminality in Belém.

Large Illicit Market

It is worth considering once again the fact that the death squad activities perpetrated by PATAM officers took place during a time period in which Belém's criminal ecosystem was limited in scale. As a result, the presence of a large illicit market does not explain the proliferation of police criminality in Belém.. The organised crime literature notes that criminal entities are more likely to emerge in contexts where there is an unmet demand for extra-legal adjudication (Varese, 2006;

Moncada, 2021). The informal and accelerated nature of urbanization that was ongoing in Belém during the period in which the PATAM emerged created new forms of social tensions and conflict. Issues surrounding the lack of dispute settlement mechanisms in these new communities and the irregular nature of local property markets were exacerbated by inadequate or inexistent policies by the state. This situation in Belém's urban margins in the late 1980s and early 1990s generated demand for a governing entity, be it legal or illegal. In some ways the PATAM death squads addressed these demands, as they provided unlawful security, instituted rules of conduct in community life and enforced property rights, albeit in brutal and lethal forms.

Electoral Interests

Contrary to prior insights from the criminal governance literature, PATAM patrols did not rely on ties to political figures to come into being. Whilst the creation of the rapid-response unit was framed by the state government as a necessary measure to tackle insecurity, the members of the PATAM who engaged in death squad activity did not take advantage of political-electoral links..

The Icoaraci Death Squad

Police interference in criminality in the years following the dissolution of the PATAM expanded because of Belém's increased importance as a hub for transnational drug-trafficking at the turn of the century.⁴⁰ Affiliates of large Brazilian DTOs like the CV and the PCC began to ship increasing amounts of cocaine through Belém and its nearby ports, instead of transporting the merchandise through longer and more heavily surveyed routes that led to the ports of the northeast and southeast regions of Brazil.⁴¹ Belém proved to be a valuable location for drug trafficking, as the city provided direct fluvial links through the Amazon to cocaine producing countries Peru and Colombia (Cohen, 2019).

The Amazonian route through Belém turned out to be particularly beneficial for DTOs. The sheer length of the Amazonian rivers and navigational difficulties within the rainforest means

⁴⁰ Interview with Military Police Coronel Sandoval Bittencourt de Oliveira Neto, April 5, 2022

⁴¹ Interview with Military Police Coronel Sandoval Bittencourt de Oliveira Neto, April 5, 2022

that law-enforcement repression of drug-trafficking is minimal, while the port infrastructure in the Belém region allows for large drug shipments to be made on a regular basis.⁴² Like in other major trafficking hubs like Rio, the onset of large-scale drug exports borne out of the city's strategic location led to an increased supply of drugs in the local retail market in Belém. The PCC and CV affiliates set up profitable retail spots (known as *bocas de fumo* in Brazil) for local drug sales.⁴³ DTOs moved to push local drug sales in Belém to finance the logistics for setting up the Amazonian trafficking routes, which required buying boats, fuel and setting up riverside outposts to monitor the routes.⁴⁴

As covered in Chapter III of the thesis, the onset of large-scale drug-trafficking in the early 2000's led to a rapid increase in violence in Belém. The increase in violence in the city was driven by armed disputes between DTOs and increased police lethality (Oliveira Neto, 2020). Like during the time of the PATAM, when the state government framed the unit's heavy-handed approach as a necessary measure to tackle insecurity, increased police killings during the 2000's were justified under the official narrative of urban warfare, wherein drug-trafficking could only be tackled through elevated levels of police violence.⁴⁵

Recurring instances of killings by police were also driven by the participation of law-enforcement officers in drug-trafficking disputes. Police interference in Belém's new drug market originated out of the racketeering practices modelled by the PATAM in the early 1990s. Since that time, police officers replicated the PATAM by leveraging the generalised sense of insecurity in Belém to convince local businesses to pay for unlawful protection:

The modus operandi of death squads originates in their relation to local merchants. This relation revolves around providing private protection during the on-duty hours of the police officers involved. These officers would leave their phone number with the merchants and tell them 'If you need anything I'll show up anytime'⁴⁶

⁴² Interview with Military Police Coronel Albernando Monteiro da Silva, February 17, 2022

⁴³ Interview with criminal attorney Laura Guimarães, February 8, 2022

⁴⁴ Interview with Military Police Coronel Sandoval Bittencourt de Oliveira Neto, April 5, 2022

⁴⁵ Interview with Military Police Sergeant Renato, September 15, 2022

⁴⁶ Interview with criminal attorney Laura Guimarães, February 8, 2022

When the local drug market in Belém began to increase in size and profitability during the early 2000's, the officers involved in unlawful protection of local commerce saw an opportunity to implement the same racketeering logic to the drug trade.⁴⁷ Amongst these hard-line officers were Military Police soldier Rosevan Moraes de Almeida. Rosevan resided in Icoaraci, a low-income neighbourhood located in Belém's northernmost fringes.⁴⁸ In the early 2000's, Rosevan acquired a reputation as a violent officer, primarily through his activities in providing unlawful security to supermarkets alongside other police officers in the neighbourhood of Guamá.⁴⁹

By the time he established his death squad in 2005, Rosevan was stationed in the 10th Military Police Battalion in his home district of Icoaraci (Pará State Legislature, 2015).⁵⁰ Rosevan recruited 13 Military Police officers to take part in his death squad (O Liberal, 2008a). 12 of the police officers involved in the death squad worked alongside Rosevan in the 10th battalion and a major called José Djalma Ferreira Lima was an adjunct in the State Government's Secretariat of Public Security (O Liberal, 2008a). Ferreira Lima provided the death squad with intelligence on ongoing investigations targeting criminal groups run by police (Pará State Government, 2008). He also provided the death squad with pistols, ammunition, and a Honda motorcycle (Pará State Government, 2008). Even though Ferreira Lima was hierarchically above Rosevan within the Military Police, it was the latter who led the death squad because of his credentials as a violent street-level officer and longstanding racketeer.

Ten civilians from Icoaraci were also recruited to work alongside the police officers in the death squad, including Rosevan's girlfriend Camila Vila Nova da Silva (Pará State Legislature, 2015). The organizational structure of the Icoaraci death squad was therefore considerably more complex than the patrol-based rackets that the PATAM officers had devised. The Icoaraci death

⁴⁷ Interview with Military Prosecutor Armando Brasil, September 16, 202

⁴⁸ Interview with civil servant Antonio Cruz, March 9, 2022

⁴⁹ Interview with criminal attorney Laura Guimarães, February 8, 2022

⁵⁰ Interview with civil servant Antonio Cruz, March 9, 2022

squad was not limited to patrol colleagues, and it also incorporated civilians into its network. In addition, the death squad had an organizational structure that was distinct from police hierarchies.

Rosevan's death squad established itself in Icoaraci by replicating the PATAM when it came to engaging in acts of social cleansing. The death squad began by roaming the neighbourhood every weekend and summarily executing suspected thieves (Pará State Legislature, 2015). Through these executions, the death squad convinced local commerce that they could provide security against property crimes. Rosevan and his Military Police colleagues frequently made use of their police uniforms and patrol cars when they were engaged in death squad activity (O Liberal, 2008a). Rosevan was suspended from the Military Police in 2006 because of disciplinary issues. However, he was reinstated after appealing against the suspension in court (O Liberal, 2008b). Following his legally mandated return, Rosevan went on to receive a promotion within the police, rising from soldier to corporal (Pará State Legislature, 2015).

Meanwhile, by the end of 2006, Rosevan's death squad had established an ample protection racket involving several local businesses in Icoaraci (Pará State Legislature, 2015). Rosevan acquired a reputation as a vigilante of the community and was seen by local merchants as more efficient and responsive than the commanders of the 10th battalion when it came to security provision.⁵¹ Simultaneously, Rosevan began to be widely feared by residents, who sought to avoid getting caught in the death squad's weekend killing sprees. By that time, "Rosevan established the rules of the community. People didn't call the police for anything. It was Rosevan who would order the *bandidos* (bandits, thieves) to not leave their house if they were caught stealing".⁵²

Around that same time period, Rosevan included drug traffickers who wanted to sell in Icoaraci into the death squad's protection racket. The price of the protection payments for the drug traffickers ranged from BRL\$5,000 to BRL\$20,000 (£800 to £3,000) per week (O Liberal, 2008c). The death squad's protection offerings for the DTOs included the granting of exclusive

⁵¹ Interview with criminal attorney Paulo André, February 8, 2022

⁵² Interview with criminal attorney Laura Guimarães, February 8, 2022

access to sale points in Icoaraci. The death squad also offered to station security guards in the sale points (O Liberal, 2008b). Protecting the lucrative drug market vastly increased the death squad's working capital and allowed it to expand its activities beyond Icoaraci. By June 2007, state-level prosecutors had begun to investigate the death squad for weapons trafficking, robberies and hired killings perpetrated throughout the Belém metropolitan region (Pará State Prosecutor, 2018). Prosecutors tapped into phone records and found that the Icoaraci death squad was also interfering in the illicit gambling market by managing *jogo do bicho* informal lottery selling points and controlling clandestine slot machines in bars (Pará State Prosecutor, 2018).

The death squad reportedly killed at least 160 people as part of its murder-for-hire services between 2006 and 2008 (Pará State Prosecutor, 2018). That number does not include the victims of the death squad's weekend killing rampages in Icoaraci. Hired killings constituted one of the death squad's most prominent area of operation and only lost out to the drug-trafficking protection racket in terms of profitability. A Civil Police dossier subpoenaed by the 2014-15 parliamentary commission revealed that the death squad had a wide portfolio of offerings for its hired killings. The group charged between BRL\$ 200 to BRL\$ 15,000 (approximately £30 to £2,400), depending on the prominence of the proposed victim and the logistical difficulties involved in carrying out the assassination (Pará State Legislature, 2015). The death squad's hired killings had a consistent method and were conducted with the Honda motorcycle provided by Major Ferreira Lima (O Liberal, 2008c). Two death squad members participated, with one driving and the other responsible for shooting the victim in the chest and the head (O Liberal, 2008c). The technical difficulty of the murders, which took place with the assailant in a moving motorcycle hitting the victim's head and chest, suggests that highly trained Military Police were the ones to fire the shots.

In February 2008, state prosecutors and the Civil Police launched a joint operation against the Icoaraci death squad called 'Navalha na Carne' (Razor on the Meat) (Pará State Prosecutor, 2008). The name of the joint operation was chosen as a deliberate signal that prosecutors and Civil

Police were looking to remove organised forms of criminality from police institutions.⁵³ 22 death squad members including Rosevan's girlfriend were arrested during the joint operation. The investigators also seized grenades, pistols, revolvers, ammunition, torture equipment, cash and slot machines from the death squad's headquarters in Icoaraci (Pará State Prosecutor, 2008). After receiving a tip from Major Ferreira Lima in the Secretariat of Public Security, Rosevan fled Icoaraci before the Razor on the Meat raid.⁵⁴ He was eventually captured and arrested on charges of homicide, organised crime, robbery, association with drug-trafficking and gambling (Diário do Pará, 2011).

With the arrest of all its members in February 2008, the Icoaraci death squad ceased to exist (Pará State Legislature, 2015). In 2011, Rosevan and his girlfriend received an habeas corpus that authorized their release to await a jury trial (Diário do Pará, 2011). On November 19 of that year, Rosevan summarily executed six minors, ages 12 to 17, in Icoaraci (Pará Justice Tribunal, 2018b). Following his former death squad's modus operandi for murders, Rosevan was sitting on the back of a motorcycle when he fired the shots. Rosevan committed the murders because one of the victims had reportedly stolen his girlfriend's phone (Pará State Legislature, 2015). The theft was seen by Rosevan as a stain on his reputation in Icoaraci, which had already been waning following his arrest and the dismemberment of his death squad.⁵⁵

The fact that the massacre took place with over 20 witnesses in the surrounding area indicated that Rosevan was confident that Icoaraci residents would be too afraid to name him during the murder investigation.⁵⁶ He even returned to the crime scene 30 minutes after the murders took place, where he spoke to journalists and denied his involvement (Diário do Pará, 2011). However, the Civil Police had obtained anonymous witness statements naming Rosevan as the assailant and he was arrested the day after the massacre (Diário do Pará, 2011). State

⁵³ Interview with member of Pará State Legislature Carlos Bordalo, February 23, 2022

⁵⁴ Interview with criminal attorney Laura Guimarães, February 8, 2022

⁵⁵ Interview with criminal attorney Paulo André, February 8, 2022

⁵⁶ Interview with criminal attorney Laura Guimarães, February 8, 2022

prosecutors obtained judicial authorization to move Rosevan's jury trial from Icoaraci to downtown Belém, since they were aware that he had cultivated a fearsome reputation for violence in his community (Pará Justice Tribunal, 2018b). Even with the venue change, most of the witnesses were still afraid to be depose in the jury trial.⁵⁷ In October 2014, the jury found Rosevan guilty and sentenced him to 120 years in prison, 20 years for each of the murders (Diário do Pará, 2014). In May 2018, Rosevan was sentenced to a further 76 years in prison alongside 17 members of his death squad at the conclusion of the Razor on the Meat jury trial (O Liberal, 2018a).

Analysis

The Icoaraci death squad shares many traits with the PATAM, particularly when it came to its varied efforts to conduct criminal activity while on police duty. Like the PATAM, the Icoaraci also did not develop electoral interests or make use of political connections to establish its criminal governance authority. Meanwhile, the onset of a large-scale drug trade appears as a new and important variable that helps to explain why death squads continued to come into being in the years following the PATAM's dissolution. An analysis of the relevant explanatory variables for the continued expansion of police criminality in Belém through the Icoaraci death squad is included below.

Knowledge Transfer

By transferring the PATAM's officers and soldiers to other police units upon the unit's abolition, the Pará state government not only reinforced the sense of institutionalized impunity within law-enforcement, as previously stated. It also facilitated the exchange of criminal knowledge, as the former members of the PATAM were able to share their racketeering and hired killings expertise with new colleagues. The techniques required to launch death squads was therefore no longer restricted to elite officers, as the former *patanxeiros* disseminated their expertise to the lower echelons of the hierarchy. As a result, the cohort of officers that joined the police at the turn of

⁵⁷ Interview with criminal attorney Paulo André, February 8, 2022

the century, which included Rosevan and his death squad colleagues, were able to gain first-hand knowledge regarding the opportunities for police to accrue illicit revenue while on-duty.

This allowed the Icoaraci death squad to make use of the repertoires of criminality modelled by the PATAM in the early 1990s. The Icoaraci outfit's on-duty protection offerings resembled that of the PATAM's, and they allowed Rosevan and his colleagues to develop a clear *modus operandi*, consisting of daily security patrols for local businesses and weekly killing rampages of suspected thieves. The fact that the death squad used their police uniform and patrol cars during their criminal activities also demonstrates that the PATAM created an enduring example for subsequent generations of police officers to engage in illicit activity while not even trying to hide the fact that they were on police duty and using police equipment. As noted by one of my police interlocutors discussing why police attempt to provide criminal governance while on-duty: "To exercise power, it is better to do it while wearing the uniform".⁵⁸

Support from Police Agencies

Unlike the case of the PATAM, in which various officers engaged in death squad activity whilst on patrol, the Icoaraci death squad had an organizational form that was separate from their on-duty hierarchies. The group also had its own headquarters and a membership contingent that included a police officer outside of the local battalion as well as local civilians. Nevertheless, the members of the death squad who were stationed in the 10th police battalion in Icoaraci were able to conduct their criminal activities while on police duty, using police cars, uniforms and weapons. These officers comprised the bulk of the Icoaraci death squad. The ability to simultaneously report for police duty and accumulate illicit gains served as a powerful incentive for officers to take part in Rosevan's organization.

It is also worth noting the parallels between the criminal trajectory of death squad members and their simultaneous career progression within the police. Rosevan received a promotion from

⁵⁸ Interview with Military Police Coronel Sandoval Bittencourt de Oliveira Neto, September 14, 2022

the Military Police even after he had been suspended for disciplinary infractions and when his illicit activities were already being investigated by state prosecutors. Taking the historical examples of Le Cocq and Detective Fleury that were detailed in Chapter IV into account, Rosevan's promotion demonstrates that deviant police continue to find it easy to fit into the organizational culture of law-enforcement. Rosevan's promotion whilst he was leading the Icoaraci death squad also shares parallels with the PATAM officers being able to remain in the police even after the abolition of the elite force.

Hard-line Public Security Policies

The form of institutional reward manifested in Rosevan's career progression also signals the entrenchment of the war-like mentality of law-enforcement agencies in Brazil, where violent officers are continuously lauded. This incentivization of violent conduct in turn empowers violent officers to engage in criminal activity. The perils of institutionally rewarding police who engage in unlawful violence was articulated to me by one of the police commanders that I interviewed: "In the police you gotta have pitbulls. But you also need to have a leash with a choker on it to pull the pitbull back. The problem is that in the Military Police you have people who sometimes release the pitbull and can't get him back".⁵⁹

Rosevan would certainly qualify as one of the 'pitbulls' described by my interlocutor. The death squad leader was clearly highly capable of engaging in coercive repression and was continuously rewarded within the police for operating at the margins of the law. The emergence of the Icoaraci death squad coincided with the period in which Belém became a prominent drug hub. The police responded to the exogenous shock of the drug trade by pursuing aggressive coercive strategies that enhanced police lethality and strengthened the dictatorship-era police doctrine of combatting internal enemies. This public security strategy provided beneficial to the

⁵⁹ Interview with Military Police Coronel José Vicente Braga da Silva, January 26, 2022

likes of Rosevan and his associates in the 10th battalion, who were able to provide criminal governance in their turf and obtain illicit profits whilst embedded in the police.

Reputation

Rosevan accumulated considerable clout as a violent officer within the police bureaucracy. This reputation was nurtured by his prior activities in offering unlawful protection, which made him a well-known figure in Belém's criminal ecosystem and a feared local leader in his home turf of Icoaraci. The Icoaraci death squad leveraged Rosevan's reputation as a violent cop and prominent racketeer to establish itself as a prominent provider of criminal governance in the city.

Large Illicit Market

The Icoaraci death squad was active in a time in which Belém's criminal ecosystem had scaled up in terms of the number of illicit trades and illicit entities operating in the city, compared to the dynamics of criminal markets during the period of the PATAM. As a result of this trend, the Icoaraci was able to tap into novel opportunities for police officers to enrich themselves in an illicit manner on an enhanced scale. Nevertheless, like the PATAM, the Icoaraci death squad profited from the fact that there remained a dearth of unlawful protectors both for criminal operatives and local merchants in irregularly settled and violent neighbourhoods. The Icoaraci death squad replicated their predecessors in the PATAM by using their police links to make convincing unlawful protection claims in a social context where there was still intense demand both for local settlement of disputes and adjudication in illicit transactions, but a limited supply of entities capable of meeting that demand.

In addition, because of the drug boom, death squads like the Icoaraci outfit generated more complex and sophisticated organizational forms. Rosevan's outfit in Icoaraci could continue to charge local commerce for protection, like the PATAM. At the same time, the group was able to increase its revenues by establishing similar protection rackets involving DTOs. In the process, the Icoaraci death squad profited from the drugs market without needing to deal or move drugs themselves. More importantly, the proceeds from the drug-related protection racket allowed the

Icoaraci death squad to invest in a variety of other criminal markets. The interference of death squads in the drug market therefore elevated these groups into diversified criminal enterprises. Previously, these death squads had limited themselves to hired killings and unlawful protection of commercial establishments, a marketplace where their coercive capacities could fit into seamlessly and without a great deal of organizational sophistication. By obtaining large revenue streams from the drug trade, death squads like the Icoaraci outfit led by Rosevan could become professionalized clandestine entities that harnessed considerable cash flows from a variety of sources.

Discussion

Table V: Comparison of Factors Facilitating the Proliferation of Police Criminality in Belém

Factors	PATAM (1988-1992)	Icoaraci Death Squad (2005-2008)
<i>Hard-line Public Security Policies</i>	Yes	Yes
<i>Knowledge Transfer</i>	Yes	Yes
<i>Reputation</i>	Yes	Yes
<i>Support from Police Agencies</i>	Yes	Yes
<i>Large Illicit Market</i>	No	Yes
<i>Electoral Interests</i>	No	No

The case comparisons reveal four explanatory variables that shape the proliferation of police criminality in Belém: hard-line public security policies, police support, reputation and knowledge transfer. It is also worth reiterating that neither of the cases in this chapter relied on links with

elected officials to establish themselves. Hence, whilst political connections may have explained the rise of the original death squads in Rio (Alves, 2020) and emerges as an important variable to explain the expansion of entities engaged in criminal governance more generally (Trejo & Ley, 2020; Barnes, 2017), they do not help to explain the proliferation of police criminality in Belém.

When it comes to hard-line policy directives, the case of the PATAM patrols reveals that the first efforts by police to establish death squads in Belém was instigated by institutional incentives for law-enforcement to express their authority through extra-legal violence. The establishment of the National Security doctrine during the military dictatorship and its continuation within police institutions post-democratization pushed local police forces to create elite units that operated with minimal oversight. By bringing together highly capable specialists in violence to operate with little to no judicial supervision, the policy push to create elite police units generated a propitious institutional setting for police to directly interfere in criminal markets.

Whilst the Icoaraci death squad did not originate from specific policy directives like the PATAM was, the War on Drugs approach to public security had a pertinent effect on the continued expansion of police criminality in Belém. Both the shoot-to-kill operational approach and militaristic organizational culture of policing were considerably buttressed with the onset of the War on Drugs. The conduct of Rosevan and his colleagues in the death squad therefore resembled the standard approach to law-enforcement that they learned in their police work. Clients in the death squad's murder-for-hire services could ensure that police officers in the death squad possessed both the technical know-how to perpetrate unlawful killings and institutional protection from within the police to not face repercussions. Local merchants and drug traffickers paid the death squad for protection knowing that Rosevan and his colleagues had vast experience in the police in engaging in extreme levels of coercion. Militaristic law-enforcement practices therefore facilitate the prowess of police officers in criminal transactions. This relation between police doctrine and criminality reflects the persisting links between violent law-enforcement conduct and illicit markets throughout Brazilian history.

As a result, the findings in this chapter shed further light on the extreme forms of violence and blatant disregard for the law that shape a large component of policing in Brazil. These organizational dynamics allow officers to believe that they can act in any way they see fit whilst in the line of duty. My theoretical framework of criminal embeddedness proves useful in disentangling the findings regarding the complementarity between nature of police work and police-backed criminal governance. Examining the parallels between the violence employed by police in regular conduct and the actions of death squads in their attempts at criminal governance reveals the extent to which law-enforcement officers are not just in close contact with a criminal underworld, but largely shape the dynamics of illicit markets. The legal impediments that prevent civilian judiciary institutions from holding violent police to account, the reluctance of police agencies to investigate their own officers and the many procedural impediments available to police officers to curtail disciplinary proceedings creates a generalised culture of police impunity that contributes to the proliferation of police criminality.

These dynamics also ensure that police agencies aid the expansion of police criminality within and across jurisdictions. The PATAM and the Icoaraci death squads conducted their criminal activities during their patrol hours and while using their police uniform, cars and weapons. Successive generations of police can look at the ways in which death squad members were able to remain in active duty whilst accruing illicit gains to nurture the idea that their law-enforcement status grants them considerable leeway to engage in violent and unlawful behaviour. Other factors contributed to the spread of police criminality in Belém, including the issue of reputation. This chapter discloses that the development of vigilante aesthetics and a violent persona are not restricted to civilians involved in organised crime (Gambetta, 1996). Both the PATAM death squad operatives and Rosevan nurtured reputations as experts in unlawful violence. These reputations are important for police criminals to thrive in illicit transactions, as clients and victims are more likely to comply with demands placed by officers who are infamous for their violent acts.

Furthermore, the dissemination of criminal expertise amongst police resonates as an important issue throughout this chapter. Police often engage in criminal interchange while on patrol and reinforce it through an internal culture that incentivizes unlawful and lethal force. I argue that this knowledge transfer traces its roots to the dissemination of criminal expertise amongst elite police officers, as demonstrated in the PATAM's efforts to copy both the lethal aesthetic of the Le Cocq death squad in Rio and the unlawful lethal prowess of the ROTA in São Paulo. Despite being run by conventional soldiers, the Icoaraci outfit shared many characteristics with the original death squads comprised of elite officers, including engaging in unlawful protection, hired killings, revenge killings and conducting death squad activity while on-duty. The historical trajectory of the death squad phenomenon, from being originally crafted by elite officers and then taken on by low-level soldiers, reveals that the idolatry of the elite units extends to their competence in criminal markets.

The consolidation of drug-trafficking in Belém from the 2000's onwards contributed to the rise of diversified and increasingly professionalized forms of police criminality. The protection rackets instituted within the PATAM patrols had little organizational sophistication, as its leadership structure and membership contingent mirrored patrol hierarchies. The subsequent drug boom in Belém enhanced the scale and profitability of other criminal market activities in the city. The drug trade is defined by the interactions between primary producers, smugglers, wholesalers, local commandos, and street-level dealers (Arias & Grisaffi, 2021; Hirata & Grillo, 2019). The Icoaraci death squad became involved in this division of labour in a lateral way, providing protection to drug outfits that wanted to sell in their turf. In the process, the group was able to diversify its criminal portfolio and become a profitable illicit enterprise in its own right.

While the Icoaraci outfit had incentives to obtain profits from a large illicit market that the PATAM patrols did not have, Rosevan's group resembled the PATAM in meeting demands for unlawful protection. The first iterations of police criminality in Belém in the 1990s and early 2000's reveal that death squads fulfilled governance roles in districts which were being informally settled

at a rapid pace. The fact that Belém's criminal ecosystem was limited in scale at the time meant that the city lacked entities that could offer unlawful adjudication in this rapidly changing urban landscape. Police criminals were able to fulfil some governance functions like security and dispute settlement. This ability to enact rule-setting authority therefore contributed to police criminality taking root in Belém. However, as the following chapters of the thesis disclose, the consolidation of the drug trade in Belém would lead to the rise of a highly competitive criminal landscape in which various illicit entities competed with each other for criminal governance authority.

Conclusion

In shedding light on the importance of militaristic police directives, law-enforcement support, reputation and continuous forms of knowledge transfer amongst deviant police to the proliferation of police criminality in Belém, this chapter delineates the characteristics of the original form through which law-enforcement became directly involved in criminal governance. Death squads in Brazil surpass conventional forms of police corruption to become significant stakeholders in illicit economies. The blueprint that death squads have adopted since the late 1950s, in which officers are able to pursue criminal governance throughout the urban space while on-duty, is effective in facilitating direct involvement by police in illicit markets beyond its original jurisdiction in Rio. The groups studied in this chapter highlight that this blueprint is also highly adaptative and capable of being implemented by law-enforcement in Belém.

Crucially, the groups studied in this chapter exemplify the inadequacy of conceptual frameworks that frame police as antagonistic social actors vis-à-vis criminality to explain the dynamics of urban violence in Brazil. It is impossible to classify the PATAM's 'Charles Bronson' or the likes of Rosevan as 'rotten apples' vis-à-vis the rest of the police, or as law-enforcement officers that are antithetical to the social category of crime. Indeed, the criminal activities perpetrated by the PATAM and the Icoaraci death squad, including racketeering and extrajudicial executions not only resembles the work of conventional criminal operatives, but are also reminiscent of common conduct witnessed in standard police work.

Death squads trace their roots to exclusionary and authoritarian political structures in Brazil that advanced a notion of policing as a form of social cleansing. Despite the transition to democracy, this notion of policing as a tool to subjugate society's 'undesirables' remains active and has helped to nurture an institutional setting within law-enforcement that encourages police criminality. The doctrine of social cleansing facilitates extreme and often unlawful conduct by police in their day-to-day duties. Successive generations of police officers imbibe this doctrine of violent policing and become empowered to deploy the extreme use of force for their own ends. This chapter also shows that police officers have adapted to urbanization and the onset of large illicit markets to remain at the forefront of criminal governance provision.

The proliferation of police criminality in Belém did not end with the dismantlement of the Icoaraci death squad in 2008. The high-profile nature of the Razor on the Meat operation and Rosevan's long prison sentence did not deter police officers in the city from continuing to engage in criminal governance. Going forward, the study unpacks the ways in which police criminality continued to expand in Belém and evolved into the militia type. In the following chapter of the thesis, I examine how militias took inspiration from illicit entrepreneurial strategies and methods of unlawful coercion pioneered by death squads to create more intense forms of police-backed criminal governance provision.

Chapter VI. The Evolution of Police Criminality in Belém

Introduction

Having identified the factors that shaped the proliferation of police criminality in Belém in the previous chapter, the thesis moves on to explore the evolution of police criminality from its original death squad form into the militia type. This focus on evolution allows the chapter to inquire into dynamics surrounding the expansion of police criminality within Belém, both in relation to new territories in the metropolitan region and in relation to new domains of governance. In the process, the focus on militia governance also allows me to explore why police criminality continued to endure in Belém following its first manifestations with the likes of the PATAM patrols and the Icoaraci death squad. Examining the evolutionary nature of police criminality therefore links the initial forms of this phenomenon that contributed to its proliferation in Belém with more contemporary dynamics that empower law-enforcement to continue to engage in criminal governance.

As noted in the Introduction chapter, I define Brazilian militias as criminal groups led by off-duty and retired police officers. Militias focus the bulk of their activities in a single territory and are engaged in criminal governance to pursue their two foundational objectives, that of accumulating unlawful revenue and becoming the primary purveyors of political order in their turf. Militias first emerged in Brazil during the early 1990s in marginal neighbourhoods located in the westside of the city of Rio (Burgos, 2002). By the mid-2000's, militias had spread to over 40 neighbourhoods throughout Rio, an area that is home to approximately 2 million residents (Hirata et al, 2022). Most of the existing research asserts that Brazilian militias are endogenous and exclusive to the metropolitan region of Rio (Arias & Barnes, 2016; Alves, 2020). However, during the same period that militias expanded throughout Rio in the mid-2000's, two entities run by police officers made efforts to establish the militia model of governance in Belém (Couto, 2018). The groups in question consisted of the *Liga da Justiça* (Justice League), which was active in the

neighbourhood of Terra Firme and the *Irmãos da Farda* (Uniformed Brothers), based in the neighbourhood of Guamá. This chapter engages in a paired comparison of these two groups to delve into the factors that led to Belém police officers attempting to institute militia governance.

Despite being mostly overlooked by existing scholarship, these efforts at establishing militia governance in Belém are a concerning development. They offer the prospect of the largely successful institutional model developed by Rio's militias expanding to other jurisdictions throughout Brazil, thereby mirroring the ways in which death squads spread from Rio and other large urban centres to the rest of the country. Efforts to institute militias in Belém are also worth studying because they illustrate the diverse nature of the police criminality phenomenon, and its ability to evolve into different forms of unlawful governance across time and space.

I argue that the exchange of criminal expertise amongst police officers played an important role in the efforts at establishing militias in Belém, just as it did for the proliferation of death squads in the city. Police officers in Belém took inspiration from Rio's militia leaders when it came to establishing a vigilante aesthetic that sought to portray their organisations as reliable providers of order and security. Militia operatives in Belém also took heed of the market activities of Rio's militias. They were the first police-backed criminal groups in Belém to participate in markets that Rio's militias pioneered, including the sale of water and gas in their turf and clandestine transport.

In addition, while the establishment of militia governance in Rio was initially tied to a prohibitive stance towards drug-trafficking, militia replication efforts in Belém were driven from their onset by the prospect of profiting from a large-scale retail and wholesale market for drugs that had recently established itself in the city. Militia groups in Belém were set up by police with the goal of harnessing localized political authority in strategically located neighbourhoods for this burgeoning drug market. As with the prior iterations of death squads in Belém, direct and continuous logistical support provided by police agencies also contributed to the Justice League and Uniformed Brothers' efforts to engage in militia governance.

The chapter also generates reflections into the reasons that both militia groups struggled to achieve institutional longevity in Belém. Both groups struggled to survive for prolonged periods of time, in contrast to Rio's militias, many of which have been active for decades (Araujo & Cortado, 2020). I argue that Belém's militias were short-lived because they failed to replicate their Rio predecessors when it came to abiding to a low-profile strategy that sought to avoid armed confrontation with criminal competitors. One of the Belém militias, the Justice League of Terra Firme, also diverged from the successful model of militia governance in Rio when it came to failing to leverage the reputation of its police leadership to justify its unlawful protection claims.

Even though both militia groups struggled to survive, I assert that both entities left an important legacy for police criminality in Belém. They serve as inspiration for future generations of police officers in the city since they staked the claims of illicit police interests in the two most populous neighbourhoods of Belém. The two groups were also inspirational for deviant police when it came to their efforts to pioneer networks that brought criminal police groups into close contact with law-and-order politicians. The remainder of the chapter proceeds with the empirical sections comparing the two attempts at instituting militia governance in Belém, followed by a discussion of the results and a brief conclusion.

Case Studies

The Justice League Militia

Terra Firme is one of the largest neighbourhoods in Belém with approximately 60,000 residents (Barbosa et al, 2019). Since the 1980s, the neighbourhood took on the contours of many low-income communities in urbanized contexts that are criminalised in media depictions and police attitudes (Lessing & Denyer Willis, 2019). The scholarship on social movements and urban activism in Brazil has identified that poverty is synonymous with race in Brazil (Alves, 2018). Poverty is black, and black women usually lead low-income households in the urban margins (Santos, 2021). These women-led black households challenge official neglect by adopting survival strategies and mobilizing for improved public services (Santos, 2021). Terra Firme has a long

history of grassroots activism that has successfully petitioned the Belém city government to legalize squatter settlements, build public schools and bridges in the neighbourhood, pave roads and provide sewage (Barbosa et al, 2019).

In the decades preceding large-scale informal land occupations of the neighbourhood in the 1980s, the Federal University of Pará claimed to hold all property deeds in Terra Firme (Deluchey, 2019). Following the onset of migration into the area, the Military Police began to conduct constant raids of the community to raze houses, mostly built as wooden shacks on the banks of the Tucunduba river (Santos & Souza, 2021). During the Lula da Silva administration (2003-2010), the federal government donated the university land to the city government, which in turn allowed for the legal recognition of the squatters' occupations (Deluchey, 2019).

When DTOs began using the port of Belém to transport cocaine into Europe and West Africa in the early 2000's, Terra Firme became an important component of the new trafficking routes.⁶⁰ Traffickers were increasingly active in the neighbourhood, since the boats arriving from the Amazon sailed into the Tucunduba River that passes through Terra Firme. Increased presence of traffickers in the area also facilitated the creation of the *boca de fumo* drug sale points in street corners, where local operatives began selling cocaine, weed and crack.⁶¹ Terra Firme's proximity to high-income neighbourhoods facilitated an extensive clientele for the local drug market.

Initial attempts to govern the local drug market in Terra Firme were conducted by three brothers and residents of the neighbourhood, Adriano Cardoso do Nascimento (aka '*Narigudo*' 'Big Nose'), Alexandre Cardoso do Nascimento (aka '*Tandar*'), and André Cardoso do Nascimento (aka '*Dedé*') (Metropolitan Police Homicide Division, 2015). The three brothers were arrested for car thefts in the early 2000's and spent a few years in a state-level prison, where they became acquainted with members of Brazil's largest DTO, São Paulo-based PCC (Pará Justice Tribunal Gazette 2014c). When the brothers returned to Terra Firme, their PCC contacts connected them

⁶⁰ Interview with Military Police Coronel José Vicente Braga da Silva, January 26, 2022

⁶¹ Interview with Military Police Coronel Fábio Lobo, September 16, 2022

with wholesaler partners to provide cocaine and weapons for them to take over several of the local *bocas de fumo* (Pará State Legislature, 2015). With these contacts and resources in hand, the Nascimento create a trafficking group called the *Equipe Rex* (Rex Squad).

During that time, the PCC had to contend with other DTOs dealing drugs throughout Belém, including groups allied with their main national-level competitor, Rio de Janeiro's CV. As a result, the Nascimento brothers were unable to monopolize Terra Firme's retail drug market (Metropolitan Police Homicide Division, 2015). The fragmented nature of the drug market provided a boon for local police who could demand bribes from the various trafficking groups active in Terra Firme.⁶² Like in Rio, the police also began to conduct violent raids of the neighbourhood to generate public goodwill that drug-trafficking was being dealt with by law-enforcement. At the same time, the police officers leveraged the violent nature of these raids to pressure traffickers into paying higher bribery fees.⁶³

Meanwhile, trade in other illicit goods were thriving in Terra Firme, including in pirated DVDs, which were made in a clandestine laboratory operated by local resident Joaquim Almeida Virgulino (aka Jac).⁶⁴ Jac also worked as a taxi driver in the area (Pará State Legislature, 2015). Like the Rex Squad and other DTOs in Terra Firme, Jac paid off the police to allow his clandestine laboratory to keep functioning. His contacts within the police included Pet, the corporal mentioned in the Introduction of the thesis who was a member of the Motorised Battalion for Tactical Patrols (ROTAM) elite police unit and a resident of the neighbouring district of Guamá.⁶⁵ Jac was also close to Cleiton Costa⁶⁶, a Civil Police Sheriff. Costa was the head of the Marco police station, which oversaw major police operations throughout Belém. He was frequently at the helm of the violent police raids in Terra Firme during that time, and was therefore nurtured various bribery arrangements with local traffickers (Pará State Legislature, 2015).

⁶² Interview with Military Prosecutor Armando Brasil, September 15, 2022

⁶³ Interview with civil servant Antonio Cruz, March 9, 2022

⁶⁴ Interview with Professor Aiala Colares Couto, July 23, 2021

⁶⁵ Interview with criminal attorney Laura Guimarães, February 8, 2022

⁶⁶ Pseudonymized due to security concerns.

In early 2010, Sheriff Costa and local police officers involved in the violent raids of Terra Firme partnered with Jac to create a militia. This new organization was created to interfere in the local drug market in more direct ways than previous bribery arrangements by police.⁶⁷ The police's unlawful revenue streams would also be augmented by charging local businesses in Terra Firme for protection (Pará State Legislature, 2015). Alongside Costa, his police associates and Jac, at least seven other local civilians joined the Justice League (Pará Justice Tribunal, 2018b).

Over the previous two years, the Pará state government had pursued an aggressive anti-drugs policy in Belém's urban margins to buttress public approval of its public security credentials. An important component of this policy was the large-scale raids of drug dens that Sheriff Costa occasionally led.⁶⁸ The frequency of the police raids had momentarily destabilized the drug market, leaving only locally integrated entities like the Rex Squad standing.⁶⁹ In this context, the police raids and its extensive political backing and media covering helped Costa to develop a public reputation as a tough cop. However, the destabilization of the drug market also decreased the amount of bribery payments that Costa and other deviant police officers could earn from the drug trade. In response, Sheriff Costa and his police associates decided to directly interfere in criminal governance to make up for their inability to obtain large amounts of bribes from various DTOs like they did in the early years of Belém's drug boom.⁷⁰

The militia created by Costa and his associates called itself the *Liga da Justiça* (Justice League). The name was a direct reference to Rio's largest, oldest and most profitable militia group, which had received extensive national media coverage during the anti-militia parliamentary commission installed by the Rio State Legislature in 2008 (Pará State Legislature, 2015). Rio's Justice League became infamous for its ostentatious armed patrols with machine-gun yielding

⁶⁷ Interview with civil servant Antonio Cruz, March 9, 2022

⁶⁸ Interview with Professor Jean-François Yves Deluchey, February 3, 2022

⁶⁹ Interview with Professor Aiala Colares Couto, July 23, 2021

⁷⁰ This move from demanding bribes from DTOs to becoming directly involved in drug retail exemplifies the distinctions between police corruption and police criminality that I conceptualize in Chapter II of the thesis.

operatives and for posting a Batman sticker in front of the houses of residents that paid for the militia's protection (Cano & Iooty, 2008). As a result, the Justice League in Rio had become the inspirational model for other police-backed criminal groups throughout Brazil. This vigilante aesthetic was shared by Sheriff Costa and facilitated the creation of his militia:

In Belém, militias were built by police officers, who then brought civilians into the fold... Costa was involved in all of this. He was known as Batman; he used the police raids as political leverage to project himself as this powerful vigilante. So there were plenty of his police colleagues who played the role of Robin. Behind this public figure of the 'tough cop' there was a large protection network being built, where the police began to organize criminal markets at the convenience of vigilante police leaders.⁷¹

The police officers involved were reluctant to expose their involvement in this new organisation. As a result, Jac was placed ostensibly at the helm of the Justice League's day-to-day activities. When he was off duty from leading the Marco police station, Costa remained the most significant force behind the militia, shaping its strategy and providing the group with weapons and law-enforcement assistance.⁷² The militia was active in the riverside area where drug shipments took place regularly and where several drug retail spots were located.⁷³ The Justice League leveraged the generalized insecurity in Terra Firme to convince local businesses to pay for the group's protection. Its racket initially reached a few street blocks around the Lauro Sodré street in Terra Firme bordering the Tucunduba river (Pará State Legislature, 2015). The militia had ambitions to dismantle the Rex Squad and expand throughout the neighbourhood (Pará Justice Tribunal Gazette, 2014c).

From its onset, the militia ordered summary executions of people reportedly engaged in robberies in the area. The group used caliber-40 pistols, which were exclusively distributed to the police (Pará State Legislature, 2015). The Justice League also sold residents cooking gas and mineral water, both lines of businesses that they directly replicated from the business model of Rio's militias.⁷⁴ During the day, police cars occasionally circulated the Justice League's turf to

⁷¹ Interview with civil servant Antonio Cruz, March 9, 2022

⁷² Interview with member of Pará State Legislature Carlos Bordalo, February 23, 2022

⁷³ Interview with member of Pará State Legislature Carlos Bordalo, February 23, 2022

⁷⁴ Interview with civil servant Antonio Cruz, March 9, 2022

convince local merchants that their businesses were being protected, while Jac and another militia operative called Soró also conducted armed patrols of the area (Pará Justice Tribunal Gazette, 2014c). The police patrols often collected the militia's protection fees from the local businesses (Pará State Legislature, 2015). Costa was seen in the area every week to meet with Jac during off-peak hours after lunch or late at night (Pará State Legislature, 2015). In addition, the militia began to take over unregulated land in the community, which was used to store the group's weapons arsenal and which the Justice League planned to further replicate the blueprint of militias in Rio by building irregular residential units for rent (Pará State Legislature, 2015).

After its first few months of activity, the Justice League's operations were bolstered by three unprecedentedly large police raids that occurred in quick succession in Terra Firme in April, May and August 2010 (Agência Pará de Notícias, 2010). With national elections approaching at the end of that year, the state government launched these raids to bolster Governor Ana Julia's re-election bid.⁷⁵ The largest police raid was conducted in May 2010 under the leadership of Sheriff Costa. It involved armoured helicopters and over 200 police officers, who conducted 71 arrests throughout Terra Firme (Agência Pará de Notícias, 2010). These mega police raids were portrayed in the media as heroic efforts to dismantle drug-trafficking in Terra Firme. Its practical effects diverged from this media narrative. The police raids dislodged Rex Squad from several of its *bocas de fumo* drug retail spots. The Justice League began to run these retail spots and launched a turf war aiming to take over the Rex Squad's remaining points of sale in Terra Firme (Pará Justice Tribunal, 2018a).

In August 2010, following on the gains attained by the police raids, members of the militia went to Ligação street where the Rex Squad was headquartered dressed as trash collectors. Upon arriving at the headquarters, they assassinated Tandar, one of the brothers who had founded the Rex Squad (Pará State Legislature, 2015). However, the militia was unable to fully dismantle the

⁷⁵ Interview with Professor Jean-François Yves Deluchey, February 3, 2022

Rex Squad network. In September, six members of Rex Squad invaded the Justice League's headquarters dressed as evangelical preachers and killed João dos Santos Pinheiro Silva, one of the militia's foot-soldiers (Pará Justice Tribunal, 2018c). Soró, one of the Justice League's main operatives, was also assassinated by Rex Squad during that time (Pará State Legislature, 2015).

The Justice League's failure to dislodge Rex Squad during the turf war diminished the attractiveness of the militia to articulate illicit police interests in the neighbourhood. Meanwhile, the 2010 police raids that arrested several of its leaders, the assassination of its co-founder Tandar by the Justice League and the ongoing conflict with the militia also led to a leadership turnover within Rex Squad. They distanced themselves from their PCC partners and began to receive funds and weaponry from the CV. The PCC's biggest rival in transnational drug-trafficking was becoming an ascendant force in Belém's drug market and was able to provide greater support to Rex Squad than the PCC (Pará Justice Tribunal Gazette, 2014c).⁷⁶

The new Rex Squad leaders intensified the turf war in an effort to dismantle the Justice League. One of the group's new commandos Costa Alexandre Nunes dos Passos set up a trap for the militia. He sent a female cousin of his to live in the Justice League's territory to gradually earn the militia's trust (Metropolitan Police Homicide Division, 2015). A few weeks later in October 2010, at the end of a bloc party in the Justice League's turf, Passos' cousin invited three militia operatives to her house. When they arrived, Passos and three other Rex Squad soldiers summarily executed the Justice League operatives (Metropolitan Police Homicide Division, 2015).

Hence, by October 2010, the militia was effectively dismantled (Pará State Legislature, 2015). During that same month, the national elections were held. Sheriff Costa, who had well-known ambitions to run for public office by that time, did not want to disrupt the electoral process

⁷⁶ The Rex Squad's alliance with the CV in late 2010 was facilitated by the CV and the PCC reaching a wider agreement during that time over control of trafficking routes in the state of Pará. The PCC agreed to move drugs through the southern region of the state and the CV controlled the northern routes, through which it continues to monopolize drug exports in the port of Belém (Lima, Bueno & Marques, 2021).

by deploying more police in violent confrontations in Terra Firme.⁷⁷ The Rex Squad was able to retake its drug retail spots by the end of 2010 (Pará State Legislature, 2015). In the beginning of 2011, Jac left Terra Firme and went into hiding (Pará Justice Tribunal, 2018b). In May 2012, he was shot seven times and killed by two unidentified men (Diário do Pará, 2012). By that time, Rex Squad had become the dominant force over the Terra Firme drug routes and retail spots (Metropolitan Police Homicide Division, 2016).

Following the end of the electoral period and the dismantling of the Justice League, the police changed its approach of conducting occasional and spectacularized raids of Terra Firme's drug dens. In 2011, the Pará State Government now under a new administration led by Governor Simão Jatene established a permanent police occupation in Terra Firme in the moulds of Rio's famous Unidades Policiais Pacificadoras (UPP) pacifying police units (Monteiro, 2013). The Unidade Integrada Pró Paz (Integrated Police Unit for Peace, UIPP) was the first of its kind in Belém and was implemented under the guise of improving relations between the local community and the police. Comprised of Military and Civil Police officers, fire wardens and public defenders, the UIPP unit in Terra Firme invited community leaders to take part in community policing councils and offered leisure activities for at-risk youth (Monteiro, 2013).

As in many cases of failed community policing initiatives, where the police refuse to allocate adequate resources and structural commitment to improve law-enforcement legitimacy (Blair et al, 2021), the UIPP project failed to improve relations between citizens and police in Terra Firme. The violent legacy of the Justice League and the mega police operations continue to define public perceptions of law-enforcement in the area (Santos & Souza, 2021). In contrast to Rio's UPP units, which were comprised of new recruits trained under a human rights doctrine (Caldas, 2018), Terra Firme's UIPP was managed by many of the same police officers who had previously operated in the community.⁷⁸ As a result, the corrupt relations between the police and Rex Squad

⁷⁷ Interview with civil servant Antonio Cruz, March 9, 2022

⁷⁸ Interview with Military Police Coronel José Vicente Braga da Silva, January 26, 2022

resurfaced, now under more peaceful conditions since the DTO retained exclusive control of Terra Firme's drug dens and trafficking routes.

Analysis

Before assessing the factors that facilitated the efforts to launch the militia, it is worth noting that despite its various replication efforts, the Justice League was only able to remain active for a period of approximately one year. The militia did not reach sufficient scale and organizational sophistication, especially considering that throughout the militia's existence it faced armed competition from Rex Squad. At the height of its operations between May 2010 and August 2010, the Justice League held several drug retail dens previously controlled by the Rex Squad and its protection racket reached a few street blocks bordering the strategically valuable Tucunduba river. The militia had expansive ambitions, including the plans to rent out unregulated parcels of land and charging residents protection fees. However, these plans were never fulfilled. A large part of the Justice League's membership was comprised of inexperienced personnel who were fully dependent on police backing. They were eventually outmatched in a turf war against the Rex Squad, which had financial and logistical backing from powerful national-level DTOs (initially the PCC and then the CV).

Large Illicit Market

The emergence of a profitable drug-trafficking market in Belém during the course of the 2000's played a foundational role in the creation of the Justice League militia. The Justice League was set up by police officers in Terra Firme who sought to recover their illicit revenue streams after a heavy-handed approach against DTOs had weakened their corrupt ties with local drug traffickers. Rather than positioning themselves as moralistic opponents of drug-trafficking as Rio's militias initially did, the Justice League chose from its onset to participate in the profitable and highly competitive local drug market in Terra Firme.

This decision to pursue drug profits in turn contributed to the Justice League's short-lived existence. Participating in the drug trade entailed engaging in armed confrontations with the Rex

Squad to take over local retail spots. This confrontational coercive strategy further distanced the Justice League from the militia model developed in Rio. During the first years of their existence, Rio's militias avoided combat against criminal competitors in order to solidify their standing as reliable security providers in their turf (Cano & Duarte, 2012). This aggressive coercive strategy driven by its goal of pursuing gains from the drug trade prevented the militia from directing its resources towards maximizing localized political authority.

Hard-Line Public Security Policies

I argue that the Justice League's efforts to institute militia governance were directly connected to initiatives by the Pará state government to bolster its public security credentials ahead of an election season. These initiatives were centred the War on Drugs directive of armed combat against drug-trafficking. Costa adeptly weaved his illicit interests in the Justice League into his standard police work that was being driven by the War on Drugs. He followed the government's directive by leading large-scale operations against the Rex Squad. At the same time, these raids directly benefited the Justice League militia, which was able to take control of profitable drug sales points. This interweaving of illicit interests into police activity is facilitated by the restricted policy options available to public security personnel in Brazil, in which the only way to deal with a large illicit market is through violent repression.

In addition, the multiple layers of bureaucratic protection that police officers enjoy also manifests itself in the case of the Justice League in Terra Firme. Sheriff Costa and the other police officers involved in the group did not face any disciplinary proceedings or institutional backlash for their militia activities. Whilst the cases in Chapter V exposed how police bureaucracies struggled to hold police criminals to account during on-duty hours, police involvement in the Justice League demonstrates that police agencies also fail to institute adequate forms of oversight when police officers are off-duty.

Knowledge Transfer

As mentioned, the Justice League was created during a time period in which the criminal repertoires of Rio's militias had reached the public spotlight in Brazil (Cano & Duarte, 2012). This high-profile exposure allowed police officers to take note of the repertoires of violence and criminality developed by Rio's militias. The officers involved in the Justice League were amongst those who were inspired by militia governance. As a result, the Justice League copied the name and vigilante aesthetic from Rio's most famous militia group and engaged in several criminal markets that Rio's militias had been pioneers. The Justice League in Terra Firme further attempted to replicate Rio's forms of militia governance by creating a database of residents, an effort that signalled its aspiration to develop a sprawling protection racket that could include residents and local commerce.

Reputation

Costa created the militia during the time in which he was building a public profile as a 'tough cop'. As will be examined in the following section and the subsequent chapter, he eventually leveraged this fame to achieve electoral success. Despite being a member of the Civil Police and at least notionally lacking the coercive credentials of the Military Police, Sheriff Costa was able to develop a fearsome reputation for violence by leading many large-scale police raids in the urban margins. This reputation became an asset for Costa to generate illicit gains. However, the Justice League diverged from the paradigmatic examples of Rio's militias when it came to its organizational structure. The Terra Firme militia neglected to adequately leverage the reputation of its police leadership, thereby undermining its governance capacities. The scholarship on militias in Rio emphasizes that militia groups tend to openly acknowledge the presence of police officers in their organizations (Mesquita, 2008; Zaluar & Conceição, 2007). The process of openly expressing the involvement of police officers is important to make militias stand out amidst the complex, fragmented and rapidly changing characteristics of criminal governance in the urban margins (Duarte, 2019).

Even though the Justice was created and led by a police officer with a reputation for vigilantism, Sheriff Costa failed to make his presence explicit in the militia's chain of command. Costa was seen by some residents regularly meeting with Jac, but he did not put himself forward as the head of the militia in an ostensive form. Without well-known police active in as the militia's leader in day-to-day interactions, the Justice League was unable to make convincing protection claims and could not keep its competitors at bay.

Support from Police Agencies

The Justice League was the first police-backed criminal group in Belém to have a senior police officer involved in the organisation. The leading role that Sheriff Costa played in the group represented a considerable innovation compared to previous forms of police criminality that were active in Belém. Whereas previously, police criminality in the city was limited to a small number of death squads led by soldiers (of both elite units and standard battalions), the creation of the Justice League by one of the city's most prominent officers in one of its largest neighbourhoods confirmed that police involvement in criminality was reaching new heights. Police officers were increasingly willing to directly compete with DTOs for spoils of the drug trade and were doing so by leveraging repertoires of coercion and criminality developed by Rio's militias. The logistical and personnel support that the Justice League received from the police for its illicit objectives therefore contributed to its forays into criminal governance. These forms of support included the occasional use of police patrols to collect protection payments, the supply of police weapons to the organization, the large-scale police operations throughout 2010 that allowed the Justice League to briefly take over Rex Squad's *bocas de fumo* and the clandestine weekly meetings between Jac and Sheriff Costa.

Electoral Interests

At its onset in 2010, the Justice League was able to take advantage of the fact that it was beginning to operate in a highly strategic neighbourhood for political considerations ahead of the national elections that year. Both the incumbent government and the police leaders involved in the militia

were interested in portraying themselves as reliable security providers in a densely populated neighbourhood in which violence was a substantial source of public concern. Electoral interests therefore contributed to the emergence of the militia and its brief ability to displace prominent local DTOs in Terra Firme. The militia's failure to defeat the Rex Squad led Costa to step away from the militia, as the high-profile nature of the turf war between the Rex Squad and the Justice League was antithetical to his 'tough cop' public profile. Facing the choice between buttressing the Justice League and thereby continuing the high-profile murders and drug-related violence in the community or establishing stable bribery arrangements with a Rex Squad that had obtained considerable backing from the CV, the police and the newly elected state government ultimately decided for the latter.

The Uniformed Brothers Militia

Guamá is the most populous neighbourhood in Belém, with approximately 100,000 residents (Abreu, 2020). Located on the other side of the Tucunduba River to Terra Firme, Guamá became the other main entrance point for drug shipments into the city alongside its neighbour.⁷⁹ Guamá also underwent a similar process of urbanization to Terra Firme. During the 1980s, squatter settlements arose in its riverside banks (Couto, 2021). The informal land occupations gradually expanded inland to border the high-income neighbourhoods of Belém's city centre (Cardoso, 2007). Like Terra Firme, Guamá's proximity to the federal university and the high-income neighbourhoods makes it a prime location for the sale of illicit drugs.⁸⁰

In the early 2000's, local off-duty and retired police officers in Guamá established protection rackets targeting local supermarkets.⁸¹ They monitored the establishments and sought to prevent petty thefts in exchange for weekly protection payments.⁸² The officers involved

⁷⁹ Interview with Professor Aiala Colares Couto, July 23, 2021

⁸⁰ Interview with Military Police Coronel Sandoval Bittencourt de Oliveira Neto, April 5, 2022

⁸¹ This was the same racket in which Rosevan this point it is worth reiterating that a protection racket consists of a relation of exchange in which the racketeer tends to provide a genuine service in exchange for illicit payments. In contrast, relations of bribery or extortion are predatory in nature, in which the entity that obtains illicit payment neglects to provide anything in return (Varese, 2014; Moncada, 2019).

⁸² Interview with Military Police Coronel José Vicente Braga da Silva, January 26, 2022

included Rosevan, who would go on to form the Icoaraci death squad studied in Chapter V. The leader of the racket was the previously mentioned ROTAM elite police unit corporal Pet, a personal acquaintance of Jac and Sheriff Costa. Pet was a Guamá resident since the 1980s and a local hero for law-enforcement in Belém (O Liberal, 2014e). He was known as a hard-line officer with one of the best shooting records in the ROTAM (Adorno & Amorim, 2018). He had acquired the nickname Pet prior to embarking on his law-enforcement career. As a teenager, he was a member of a graffiti gang called the Terror da Pedreira and used Pet as his signature in street murals.⁸³ The nickname Pet was meant to signify animalistic tendencies and his proclivity for violence.

During the early 2000's, Pet's coercive expertise led him to be called up to two National Guard operations in Rio, in which state-level police agencies appoint their best officers for emergency operations or for security detail during major events (Pará State Legislature, 2015). Police intelligence reports subpoenaed by the 2014-15 parliamentary commission revealed that during his stints with the National Guard, Pet met with the operatives that established the original militias in Rio and exchanged expertise on criminal governance with them (Pará State Legislature, 2015). After returning to Belém, Pet was charged with intent to cause bodily harm for shooting a 17-year-old boy in the foot while he was on police patrol in Guamá in April 2007 (Pará Justice Tribunal Gazette, 2014b). He denied the charge and the case was proscribed in 2014 (Pará Justice Tribunal Gazette, 2014c).

The other major operative of the racket involving local supermarkets in Guamá consisted of Otacílio José Queiroz Goncalves (aka Silinho), a retired Military Police soldier. Silinho was also a Guamá resident. He was arrested for murder while on police duty in 2003 but was released on the grounds that he reportedly suffered from schizophrenia.⁸⁴ Silinho had previously faced a murder trial for a homicide that he committed while on police work in 1998, but the suit had been

⁸³ Interview with Military Police Coronel Sandoval Bittencourt de Oliveira Neto, September 14, 2022

⁸⁴ Interview with criminal attorney Laura Guimarães, February 8, 2022

dropped due to lack of evidence (Pará Justice Tribunal Gazette, 1998). Even with multiple instances of excessive force while on police work, the Military Police did not expel Silinho and placed him under retirement with a pension. He remained respected within the police force because of his longstanding reputation as a *justiceiro* (vigilante).⁸⁵

In 2005, Pet and Silinho established new protective arrangements with drug operatives who wanted to sell in Guamá. Six years later they decided to create a militia group to establish direct control of the *bocas de fumo* drug selling points in Guamá.⁸⁶ This move to directly participate in the drug trade in 2011 coincided with the dismantling of the Justice League and the ascendancy of Rex Squad in neighbouring Terra Firme. The Rex Squad's dominant position in Terra Firme represented a direct threat to Silinho and Pet's criminal activities in Guamá. With increased drug revenues and amicable relations with the police in Terra Firme, Rex Squad's prospects of taking over Guamá's criminal markets were vastly improved during that time.

Pet and Silinho called their militia group the *Irmãos da Farda* (Uniformed Brothers), thereby styling their organisation as a confederation of concerned law-enforcement officers who sought to bring order to Guamá (Pará Justice Tribunal Gazette, 2014c). Pet was the head of the Uniformed Brothers, with Silinho in a secondary role responsible for operational command. Pet had walked with a cane after being involved in a shootout at a bar in Guamá in 2005 that had left one of his legs maimed (Pará State Legislature, 2015). As a result, Pet often avoided physical exertions and Silinho executed his orders alongside the militia's foot soldiers. By the time he had launched the militia, Pet was on leave from the ROTAM police unit, because of his injury and a series of investigations of violent misconduct against him, including the previously mentioned 2007 criminal charge.

The militia's soldiers, who were responsible for the collection of protection proceeds, control of the drug dens and for armed patrols of the neighbourhood included Tarso de Oliveira

⁸⁵ Interview with Military Police Coronel José Vicente Braga da Silva, January 26, 2022

⁸⁶ Interview with civil servant Antonio Cruz, March 9, 2022

da Silva Pereira (aka Tayson), a Military Police sergeant who worked as a prison guard, Josias Siqueira da Conceição (aka *Galo Cego* ‘Blind Rooster’), a decommissioned soldier in the Brazilian Army who worked in the construction sector in Guamá, and Military Police soldiers Romero Guedes Lima (aka *Montanha* ‘The Mountain’, who also worked for the Icoaraci death squad), Walmir Oliveira and Valdomiro Barros (Pará State Legislature, 2015). The militia also employed two civilians, including André Luiz Ferreira Belo who went by the nickname of ‘*Gasparzinho*’ (Little Ghost) (Pará Justice Tribunal, 2017a). Little Ghost was suspected of being involved in 30 murders during his time working for the Guamá militia (O Liberal, 2016).

The other civilian, José Augusto da Silva Costa (aka *Zé da Moto* ‘Motorcycle Zé’), got his nickname because he owned a local dealership.⁸⁷ Motorcycle Zé initially worked as a driver for the militia’s armed patrols and targeted assassinations. He eventually rose through the ranks to become one of the main leaders of the Uniformed Brothers behind Pet and Silinho (Metropolitan Police Homicide Division, 2015). Motorcycle Zé had previously provided logistical assistance to the Justice League and was one of the few members of the Terra Firme militia to have survived the turf war against the Rex Squad (Metropolitan Police Homicide Division, 2015). Police intelligence reports also indicate that Motorcycle Zé was studying law during the time that the Uniformed Brothers was formed (Pará State Legislature, 2015). He reportedly had ambitions to become a Civil Police officer (Pará State Legislature, 2015).

Along with managing drug retail in Guamá, the Uniformed Brothers also expanded their unlawful protection offerings. No longer restricting themselves to supermarkets, they began to charge Guamá’s storefront businesses for protection (O Liberal, 2014e). Unlike the Justice League in Terra Firme, which was only able to operate its racket in a few street blocks, the Uniformed Brothers were able to operate throughout the entire neighbourhood of Guamá.⁸⁸

⁸⁷ Interview with social worker Amanda Leão, February 24, 2022

⁸⁸ Interview with member of Pará State Legislature Carlos Bordalo, February 23, 2022

By 2012, the militia installed cameras throughout the streets of Guamá that were monitored both through a safe room at Pet's house and a personal tablet that Pet reportedly always kept with him (Pará State Legislature, 2015). In addition, the militia required local businesses to place banners inside their establishments with the words 'Protected by Pet' (O Liberal, 2014d). Suspected thieves were routinely killed by the Uniformed Brothers. Those who spent time in Guamá during that time recall that: "Pet's house was full of cameras, he considered himself to be the boss of the neighbourhood. In the morning young men would show up murdered and everyone knew who did it".⁸⁹ The Uniformed Brothers also began to demand protection payments from local clandestine commuter van services in 2013 (Adorno & Amorim, 2018). These unregistered commuter vans serve many residents of low-income neighbourhoods throughout Brazil, since they charge lower fare prices and are able to reach more remote areas than regular bus services (Pope, 2019). The commuter van market is also a prominent revenue stream for Rio's militias, which first developed the model of charging van drivers for protection to access commuter routes that run through their territory, before eventually taking over the van cooperatives (Manso, 2020). The militia also offered murder-for-hire services. Amongst the alleged clients that hired the militia for killings were Deivite Galvão, a member of the City Council of Ananindeua in the greater Belém metropolitan region, and Ailson Amaral, mayor of Igarapé-Miri, another city located in the greater Belém region (Pará State Legislature, 2015).

Furthermore, Silinho organised vigilante patrols every night with cars and motorcycles under the guise of preventing robberies and muggings in Guamá (Pará Justice Tribunal, 2018a). These night-time patrols enforced a curfew on the neighbourhood after 10pm. The patrols included vehicles from Motorcycle Zé's local dealership as well as ROTAM vehicles, the latter of which Pet would call over from his loyal contacts in the elite police unit (Pará State Legislature, 2015). The ROTAM also shared intelligence information with Pet regarding Rex Squad.⁹⁰

⁸⁹ Interview with social worker Amanda Leão, February 24, 2022

⁹⁰ Interview with member of Pará State Legislature Carlos Bordalo, February 23, 2022

Meanwhile, ROTAM officers served as Pet's personal bodyguards, stationing the elite unit's cars in front of the militia leader's house in Guamá.⁹¹ The militia's drug dens functioned seamlessly, since the police were not inclined to go after a local law-enforcement hero in Pet.

The militia's criminal governance efforts were further bolstered in 2013, when the Pará State Government passed a law that allowed police officers to carry their police weapons with them while they are off duty (Boechat, 2019). The new policy was passed in response to public concern with the high number of police officers who were being killed outside of their working hours (Boechat, 2019). The new policy failed to acknowledge that a significant reason for the murder of off-duty police was because officers were engaging in informal private security work or criminal activity during after-work hours. The new legislation allowed the Uniformed Brothers to expand their weapons arsenal overnight.

2013 also marked the year in which the Uniformed Brothers considered themselves strong enough to confront the Rex Squad's dominant position in the drug market in Belém. In March of that year, Rex Squad operative Jaime Mendes da Silva was killed in Terra Firme, and Pet was named as the only murder suspect during the investigations (Pará Justice Tribunal Gazette, 2014a). Lethal incidents continued, especially following the night of January 17, 2014, when two Military Police soldiers were killed in an armed confrontation in the neighbourhood of Jurunas near Guamá (G1.com, 2014a). Pet and his operatives saw the murder of the two officers as a useful pretext for a show of strength. The following two days, the militia summarily executed six people in Jurunas and Guamá (Pará Justice Tribunal, 2014a). Subsequent murder trials revealed that the six victims were not involved in the murder of the two police officers (Pará Justice Tribunal, 2014a). One of the six victims of the militia killings was Gleydson Gomes, who had been involved in the shootout in which Pet's leg was maimed in 2005 and who Pet had reportedly been keen on settling scores with since that time (Pará Justice Tribunal, 2014a).

⁹¹ Interview with Military Police Coronel José Vicente Braga da Silva, January 26, 2022

The January 2014 killing spree by the Uniformed Brothers was therefore part of the longstanding tradition by Brazilian police to respond to the killing of an officer with revenge operations. This practice originated in Rio where, as noted in Chapter IV of the thesis, the first police death squad established in the city in the 1950s abided by the dictum of ‘10 bandits murdered for every police officer killed’ (Rose, 2005). As seen with the six innocent people murdered in the January 2014 massacre, the classification of who is considered a ‘bandit’ by the police is exceedingly broad, especially since “*Chacinas* (mass killings by police) are a method for the police to display their power. To kill with impunity, the objective is precisely to kill anyone, not to kill so-called enemies”.⁹² Revenge police killings tend to indiscriminately target young black men, thereby continuing the long history of anti-black violence by state agents in Brazil (Alves, 2018).

Throughout 2014, the Uniformed Brothers kept the pressure up on Rex Squad. The two surviving brothers who had founded Rex Squad were killed by the militia in drive-by shootings. Their assassinations resembled that of their brother Tandar, who had been murdered by the Justice League militia in 2010. Adriano Narigudo was killed in April 2014. Dedé was killed in September 2014, in the midst of the national election season (Pará Justice Tribunal Gazette, 2014c). A Guamá-based drug trafficker subsequently claimed in police interrogations that the September 2014 murder of Dedé was perpetrated with the use of a van littered with campaign stickers (Metropolitan Police Homicide Division, 2015). The use of the campaign van allowed the Uniformed Brothers to drive through Terra Firme and not arise suspicion (Metropolitan Police Homicide Division, 2015).

In fact, during the election campaign in September and October 2014, the Uniformed Brothers provided security to candidates who wanted to campaign in Guamá that aligned with a law-and-order platform (Metropolitan Police Homicide Division, 2015). Amongst the law-and-order candidates was Sheriff Costa, the former founder of the Justice League and Pet’s

⁹² Interview with human rights activist Clara Silveira, February 24, 2022

longstanding associate in the Belém police. Costa was running for the Federal Congress. He was elected with over 260,000 votes, the highest tally of any candidate in the state of Pará that year (Abreu, 2020). The militia's interference in the 2014 election campaign generated rumours in Guamá that both Pet and Silinho had ambitions to ride the wave of electoral popularity of violent policing to run for the Belém City Council in the subsequent electoral cycle in 2016.⁹³

At the end of the electoral cycle, the turf war between the Uniformed Brothers and the Rex Squad escalated. The head of Rex Squad at the time, Moisés da Silva Gomes, who was in a high-security federal prison, reportedly sent out an order to kill one of the leaders of the Guamá militia (Metropolitan Police Homicide Division, 2015). The assassination order was framed by Gomes as retaliation for the killings of the Nascimento brothers (Metropolitan Police Homicide Division, 2015). Following Gomes' directive, nine members of Rex Squad went to Guamá on the evening of November 4, 2014, in a convoy consisting of a car and two motorcycles (O Liberal, 2014a). They reportedly assassinated Pet with 20 gunshots as he was stepping out of his car after arriving home (Pará Justice Tribunal Gazette, 2014c). The first police to arrive following Pet's murder found that the deceased leader of the Uniformed Brothers was carrying an unregistered Military Police weapon at the time of his murder.⁹⁴

The assassination attempt was successful even though five ROTAM cars were stationed around Pet's house at the time (Metropolitan Police Homicide Division, 2015). One of the ROTAM cars was stationed less than 100 metres from Pet's house at the time of the murder (Pará Civil Police, 2015). Witnesses who deposed before the 2014-15 parliamentary commission stated that the ROTAM patrol cars stationed by Pet's house did not pursue the assailants following the murder (Pará State Legislature, 2015). The intensive ROTAM presence and the lack of response by its officers generated suspicion that the ROTAM commanders might have been behind Pet's killing, since Pet's successful criminal career was becoming a reputational hazard for the elite unit

⁹³ Interview with member of Pará State Legislature Carlos Bordalo, February 23, 2022

⁹⁴ Interview with Military Police Coronel José Vicente Braga da Silva, January 26, 2022

(Pará State Legislature, 2015). However, the line of investigation taken on by homicide detectives focused solely on the turf war between the Uniformed Brothers and the Rex Squad as the reason for the murder. This sole focus on the Rex Squad persisted even though the phone logs obtained by the Civil Police during the murder investigations contained a statement by a Rex Squad leader in which he claimed that “it was the ROTAM that killed Pet and blamed it on us (Rex Squad)” (Pará Civil Police, 2015, p. 797).⁹⁵

As mentioned in the Introduction of the thesis, the hours following Pet’s assassination were marked by members of the militia and police officers throughout Belém sending out messages via WhatsApp and Facebook calling for a general mobilization of police to hunt down Pet’s killers, once again re-enacting the long tradition of revenge killings following the murder of a police officer. One of the Facebook posts, published by an unofficial ROTAM page, read: “Go with God, brother! You fought a good fight and accomplished your mission, Corporal Pet. The hunt has begun...!!! Watch out scoundrels... ROTAM has blood in its eyes” (Pará State Legislature, 2015, 153). Over 50 police officers and members of the militia responded to the general mobilization call to engage in the revenge killings.⁹⁶ Motorcycle Zé, one of the Uniformed Brothers’ leaders, stole motorcycles that were parked in Guamá streets to be used in the killings.⁹⁷

While the killers drove around in motorcycles, a support car accompanied them to collect the stray bullets to hinder subsequent investigations. The few bullets that remained and that were subsequently found by investigators were from calibre-40 police pistols.⁹⁸ On the day following Pet’s murder, Sheriff Costa, the newly elected member of the Federal Congress, published a video on YouTube in which issued threats to the Rex Squad for its alleged role in Pet’s murder. Standing in front of the Federal Congress building in Brasília, Costa read out a dramatic “warning to the

⁹⁵ All translations from Portuguese to English are my own, unless otherwise noted.

⁹⁶ Interview with human rights activist Clara Silveira, February 24, 2022

⁹⁷ Interview with human rights activist Clara Silveira, February 24, 2022

⁹⁸ Interview with member of Pará State Congress Carlos Bordalo, February 23, 2022

bandits” stating that the following day, he would return to Belém and would “go to the streets... to prevent the bandits from doing in Belém what they do in Rio de Janeiro” (G1.com, 2014e).

On November 5, public schools in the neighbourhoods of Terra Firme, Guamá, Jurunas and Cremação and the local federal university were closed due to the revenge killings (O Liberal, 2014c). Streets throughout Belém were empty as people were reluctant to go to work. The state government rejected a petition from members of the State Legislature to call in the National Guard to curb the police killings (O Liberal, 2014f). It is important to once again highlight that local human rights NGOs claim that the number of victims of the massacre of November 4-5 far exceeded the official figure of 11 victims, potentially rising to 35 people killed (SDDH-PA et al., 2014). The death certificates issued by notaries contained the wrong date of death for several of the victims, indicating that the police and coroners were eager to find any means to de-characterize the killings as part of a mass execution.⁹⁹ The victims were innocent bystanders who were not aware of the curfew order issued by the police officers and militiamen (G1.com, 2014d).

Rosinaldo da Conceição, the commander of the ROTAM at the time, attended Pet’s funeral alongside many other police officers (O Liberal, 2014d). The ROTAM commander spoke to press outlets covering the funeral. He hailed Pet as a “cop who was admired by his colleagues and who was known for being a skilled operational officer” (O Liberal, 2014d). Friends of Pet also spoke to the press in the wake of the funeral and stated that he was a “protector of the community. Anyone who needed anything in the area would come to speak with him” (O Liberal, 2014f). They also noted that Pet frequently complained that promotions in the Military Police took too long, and that with his 20 years of police service, Pet thought that he should have already been promoted to the level of a sergeant (O Liberal, 2014f).

Following the revenge killings alongside their allies in the police, the Uniformed Brothers militia was unable to withstand the leadership void caused by Pet’s murder. As the second in

⁹⁹ Interview with former Ombudsman of Public Security of Pará State Eliana Fonseca, August 10, 2022

command in the militia, Silinho was tasked with taking over from Pet. However, in December 2014, Silinho was charged with homicide for two of the murders that occurred on November 4 (Diário do Pará, 2016).¹⁰⁰ The city-wide curfew order sent out the night of Pet's murder and the mass killings throughout Belém exposed the extensive reach of the militia's criminal governance authority and led state prosecutors to intensify their homicide investigations into the January 2014 killings, of which Silinho and Tayson had already been indicted for. With this intense judicial scrutiny on the group, the militia ceased to engage in armed combat with the Rex Squad (Pará State Legislature, 2015).

In February 2015, Silinho was arrested in relation to his involvement in the murders of January 2014 and November 2014 (Diário do Pará, 2015a). Silinho was carrying an unregistered calibre-40 police pistol at the time of his arrest, leading to an additional charge of illegal firearm possession.¹⁰¹ In March 2017, a jury trial found Silinho guilty of the six homicides of January 2014 and of participation in a private militia. He was sentenced to 29 years in prison, which was later converted to house arrest on appeal (Pará Justice Tribunal, 2018a). Former Army soldier Tayson was also found guilty of the same crimes (Pará Justice Tribunal, 2018a).

The ensuing void in criminal governance provision caused by Pet's death allowed Rex Squad to take over the *bocas de fumo* in Guamá, thereby solidifying its position as the dominant DTO and criminal governance provider in Belém. (Fórum Brasileiro de Segurança Pública, 2022). As will be covered in the following chapter, some militia operatives, including The Mountain and Motorcycle Zé, were also able to successfully appeal their homicide convictions and would go on to become involved with other police-backed criminal groups. In the meantime, following his own successful house arrest appeal, Silinho returned to his home turf in Guamá.¹⁰² He quickly became a target of local prosecutors under suspicion that he was involved in vote-buying ahead of the 2022

¹⁰⁰ Amongst Silinho's homicide victims of November 4 in Terra Firme were a 37-year-old man with learning disabilities who was not aware of the curfew order installed by the police and militia. The other victim was a 16-year-old boy (Diário do Pará, 2016).

¹⁰¹ Interview with Military Prosecutor Armando Brasil, September 15, 2022

¹⁰² Interview with former Ombudsman of Public Security of Pará State Eliana Fonseca, August 10, 2022

general elections.¹⁰³ Three of the largest voting districts in Belém are located in Guamá. Silinho and his associates were reportedly hired by political parties to coerce residents of the three Guamá districts to sign up to vote-buying arrangements (Piran, 2022). In April 2023, Silinho was killed by three unknown assailants in front of his house in Guamá (Diário do Pará, 2023).

Analysis

Active for approximately four years, the Uniformed Brothers successfully emulated Rio's militias in establishing rules of conduct and enforcing weekly protection payments throughout its community. The militia therefore attained a level of operational capacity that resembled Rio's longstanding militias. Its chain of command had established functions for each member of their organisation, allowing it to engage in a large amount of market transactions and governance initiatives in Guamá. At the height of its operations in 2013, the Uniformed Brothers proved to be the most expansive and sophisticated police-backed criminal group that Belém has seen to date.¹⁰⁴ Its sprawling protection racket involving local commerce and commuter van cooperatives, its dominance of the local drug dens and its various efforts to rule over Guamá made it the most longstanding police-backed criminal group that pursued the model of militia governance initially developed in Rio. However, the simultaneity of the murder of its leader, the amplification of law-enforcement investigations against its personnel following the November 2014 massacre and the escalation in the turf war with Rex Squad destabilized the militia. The factors that contributed to the Uniformed Brothers' efforts to engage in militia governance are detailed below.

Hard-line Public Security Policies

Chapter V's focus on the PATAM revealed that the discretionary authority granted to elite police units can facilitate police criminality. Pet's criminal governance activities confirms that this policy directive of allowing rapid-response units to act like military commandos that deploy extreme forms of violence continuously encourages new iterations of police criminality. The fact that elite

¹⁰³ Interview with prosecutor Sávio Brabo, September 20, 2022

¹⁰⁴ Interview with criminal attorney Paulo André, February 8, 2022

officers are granted considerable autonomy and are rarely punished for wrongdoing empowers them to augment their police income with illicit revenue. In addition, the Uniformed Brothers' replication efforts in Guamá were also facilitated by the fact that the state government at the time led by Governor Jatene was keen on turning a blind eye towards criminal police conduct. For over three years, the militia was able to operate with minimal interference from judicial investigators or public scrutiny. This pattern of non-enforcement resembles the early years of Rio's militias, in which the state government saw militias as the 'lesser of two evils' compared to DTOs (Araujo, 2017). Furthermore, the 2013 legislation that allowed police officers to take their patrol weapons home with them at the end of their shifts further exemplifies ways in which public security policy can directly impact criminal conduct by police officers. The new law provided a boon to police-backed criminal groups like the Uniformed Brothers, as it became easier for its law-enforcement personnel to take weapons out of police stations and use them in their militia work.

Electoral Interests

The Uniformed Brothers made further attempts to replicate the paradigmatic forms of militia governance developed in Rio by cultivating ties with political operatives. From the start of the militia's activities, Pet and his associates developed political connections, initially by offering hired killing services to politicians and then by offering security details during electoral campaigns. These activities marked the first steps towards larger political ambitions, which were at a level never envisaged by previous generations of police criminals in Belém. Its leaders had plans to run for public office as a means to further expand their political authority over Guamá (Pará State Legislature, 2015). Pet's murder and Silinho's arrest meant those ambitions were never fulfilled. Nevertheless, their electoral objectives served as a significant incentive for them to engage in criminal governance.

Knowledge Transfer

Pet's ties to Jac and Sheriff Costa gave him access to the Justice League's embryonic efforts at militia governance in Terra Firme. His connections to the previous iteration of militia governance

in Belém meant that Pet was able to avoid many of the Justice League's mistakes regarding the disorganised nature of its network and its insistence on deploying aggressive tactics against other criminal operatives from the onset of its activities. As a result of this process of learning, Pet's outfit went on to create an organisation that was more organised, better equipped and more connected to police institutions than the Terra Firme militia. Furthermore, Pet's interactions with militia operatives in Rio during his stints with the National Guard provided him with first-hand insights into criminal governance directly from the original founders of the militia phenomenon. Insights from Rio's militia leaders made clear to Pet the importance of leveraging his reputation for violence and enacting a strict organizational structure to make his militia succeed. The various forms of knowledge exchange allowed the Uniformed Brothers to institute its own version of militia governance with a wide array of background knowledge and experience.

Reputation

Like Rio's militias, the Uniformed Brothers had a strict hierarchical chain of command. The police officers involved in the group were residents of Guamá and were well-known for being specialists in violence. Unlike Costa's approach to the Justice League, the Uniformed Brothers' leaders made no effort to hide their involvement in the organization. These officers like Pet and Silinho were well-known in Guamá as experts in violence. Local businesses that were compelled to pay for the militia's protection were aware of the violent reputations of the law-enforcement agents involved in the militia. In addition, Pet's reputation as a local hero of the ROTAM elite unit guaranteed that the militia could rely on the ROTAM to share intelligence reports and provide patrol vehicles, weaponry, and bodyguards.

Large Illicit Market

Like its predecessors in Terra Firme, the Uniformed Brothers diverged from the model instituted by Rio's militias in pursuing drug revenue from the start of the militia network. The profitability of the drug trade motivated the likes of Pet and Silinho to launch the militia. In contrast to the intense pressure that the Justice League faced from the Rex Squad over Terra Firme's drug dens,

no prominent DTO was present in Guamá to compete with the Uniformed Brothers. As a result, the militia was able to complement their drug trade activities with their other governance initiatives in the neighbourhood.

Support from Police Agencies

The Uniformed Brothers enjoyed wide-ranging forms of support from police agencies for the vast majority of its existence. The forms of direct police assistance were provided on a daily basis to the Uniformed Brothers. From 2011 to 2013, rival criminal groups who eyed Guamá's drug dens were reluctant to go after the militia out of fear of provoking reactions from Pet and his colleagues in the ROTAM. In addition, the support from the ROTAM, the most violent and reputable police force in the state of Pará, also ensured that other police units and prosecutors were not inclined to focus their investigative scrutiny on the Uniformed Brothers. It was only when police support waned that the militia began to struggle. The fact that the ROTAM cars stationed by Pet's house on the night of the murders did not pursue his killers remains unexplained. Nevertheless, it suggests that the militia's growing local power and electoral ambitions may not have been well regarded by the ROTAM commanders. In any case, the lack of action by the ROTAM officers during the events leading up to and following Pet's assassination confirms that, when support from police institutions subsides, militias struggle.

Discussion

Table VI: Factors Facilitating the Efforts to Establish Militias in Belém

Factors	Justice League	Uniformed Brothers
<i>Large Illicit Market</i>	Yes	Yes
<i>Hard-line Public Security Policies</i>	Yes	Yes
<i>Knowledge Transfer</i>	Limited	Substantial
<i>Support from Police Agencies</i>	Limited	Substantial
<i>Electoral Interests</i>	Yes	Yes
<i>Reputation</i>	No	Yes

Both the Justice League and the Uniformed Brothers attempted to implement a new organisational form for police to engage in criminal governance in Belém. This organisational form was modelled on that of Rio's militias and entailed an intense territorial presence through which the likes of Sheriff Costa and Pet could both accumulate political clout and accumulate illicit revenue. The emergence of the two militias in Belém solidified the presence of police in the city's competitive criminal landscape. Their activities signalled that law-enforcement officers were going to continue to develop ways to engage in criminal governance.

Unlike in Rio, the prospect of drug profits served as a foundational incentive for law-enforcement to create militias in Belém. This chapter reveals that the two existing attempts at instituting militias in Belém were enacted shortly after the onset of a large-scale drug market in the city. Both groups operated in the neighbourhoods that are the main focal points of the drug trade in Belém. From the very start of their activities, the Justice League and Uniformed Brothers focused on taking over drug dens and obtaining revenue from drug sales. Their approach to the

drug trade confirms that police officers involved in criminal governance do not fully incorporate previous blueprints of police criminality. The likes of Sheriff Costa and Pet picked and chose the traits of militia governance that they wanted to adopt.

This ‘pick and choose’ approach also manifested itself when it came to both militias’ protection rackets. Neither of Belém’s militias emulated Rio’s militias when it came to charging residents for protection. This was likely because the inclusion of residents in the protection racket would have required a degree of internal organization and bureaucratic discipline that would have been too onerous for the two groups to implement. Both of Belém’s militias had approximately 10 people working for them on a constant basis, with both also retaining different forms of police assistance to aid their permanent cohorts. The inclusion of potentially thousands of people in the militias’ protection rosters would have been a difficult task for either organization to execute.

Despite both militias in Belém lacking sufficient bureaucratic prowess to enact wide-ranging protection rackets involving residents and merchants, they nevertheless implemented forms of governance that were more advanced than that of death squads. Both groups were active on a day-to-day basis in their respective communities, engaging in security patrols, the collection of unlawful protection payments and settling disputes. Meanwhile, the Uniformed Brothers harnessed a considerable weapons arsenal, a convoy of motorcycles and cars as well as surveillance equipment that allowed the militia to successfully operate throughout the entire neighbourhood of Guamá. In addition, both militia groups enjoyed direct forms of police support, even if the support that the ROTAM elite police unit provided to the Uniformed Brothers was more extensive and enduring. However, as soon as the ROTAM withdrew its support for the militia, Pet and his counterparts became vulnerable to attacks from the Rex Squad and from legal scrutiny by prosecutors and police investigators.

Furthermore, the importance of learning and criminal interchange by police-backed groups resonates as an important explanatory variable, just as it did in the previous chapter. Both of Belém’s militias were created in the immediate aftermath of the 2008 parliamentary commission on militia

groups in Rio. During that time, the coercive strategies and illicit revenue potential of militias had reached national fame. Law-enforcement officers in Belém were able to take inspiration from Rio's militias to further advance police criminality in their own jurisdiction. The Justice League made efforts to copy certain parts of the militia illicit entrepreneurial model, albeit from afar. In contrast, the Uniformed Brothers made extensive efforts to exchange criminal expertise and learn first-hand from their predecessors in criminal policing. Through his personal connections to Jac and Sheriff Costa and stint working for the National Guard in Rio, Pet's engaged in first-hand exchange of illicit expertise. Amongst the crucial lessons that the Uniformed Brothers took on was the importance of the characteristics of who provides governance in neighbourhoods where booming criminal markets and irregular forms of urban settlement go hand in hand. As in many other cases of criminal governance (Moncada, 2021; Arias, 2017), the ability to devise an organisational structure of a criminal enterprise that can take full advantage of the reputations of its leadership contingent proved essential to the Uniformed Brothers' more durable replication of militia governance, compared to the Justice League's one-year existence.

The two efforts at instituting militias reveal that police criminality in Belém has also evolved over time when it comes to electoral interests. Both militia groups were influenced by electoral considerations. The Justice League took advantage of large-scale police raids which were launched with electoral objectives in mind to expand its presence in Terra Firme's drug trade, whilst its leader leveraged his vigilante prowess to launch a successful electoral career. The Uniformed Brothers went further when it came to the electoral interests underpinning its operations. The militia became a provider of various unlawful services on behalf of politicians. These associations with politicians strengthen the Uniformed Brothers' governance authority in Guamá.

Furthermore, I find that comparing Belém's militias reveals that this type of police-backed criminal governance is not conducive to high-profile forms of violence and competition with other criminal actors. Militias stake their governance claims on meeting local demand for security

(Mesquita, 2008). It is through this effective security provision that militia-occupied territories in Rio cultivate reputations as ‘tranquil areas’ (Duarte, 2019). When a militia like the Justice League in Terra Firme decides to engage in armed combat with a local criminal rival from the onset of its operations, it becomes unable to engage in effective security provision. Turf wars force militias to allocate resources away from quotidian policing. The Uniformed Brothers’ eventual decision to engage in a turf war against the Rex Squad also contributed to its demise, as the militia ceased to direct its coercive capacities towards maintaining governance authority in Guamá.

Conclusion

The attempts at criminal governance by the Justice League and the Uniformed Brothers counteracts the scholarly consensus that militias in the Brazilian context are exclusive to Rio. The varying efforts employed by the Justice League and Uniformed Brothers confirms that, in creating militias, police can mobilize their expertise in extra-legal violence to provide intensive and day-to-day forms of criminal governance at the local level. Patterns of violent socialization within law-enforcement and the exchange of unlawful expertise amongst police can propel the militia form to new locations. Police officers are also capable of engaging in militia activity by adapting to the shifting opportunities of criminal markets. In this way, police criminality is constantly evolving, expanding into new jurisdictions, and transforming into different organizational forms.

The activities of militia personnel in Brazil therefore in many ways resembles the conception of violent entrepreneurs used by Volkov (2016) to analyse the autonomous protective associations that emerged in Russia following the collapse of the Soviet Union. Violent entrepreneurs aim to convert the management of violence in a territory into money or other valued assets on a permanent basis (Volkov, 2016). The Russian rackets consisted of local criminal operatives and recently decommissioned or off-duty military and law-enforcement personnel (Volkov, 2016). Like Brazilian militias, the Russian rackets led by police officers often integrated local civilian handlers into their network (Volkov, 2016).

Crucially, Belém's militias fused their violent entrepreneurialism with electoral interests. In the process, they exacerbated the worrying links between criminality and state institutions in Brazil. This crime-politics nexus developed by militias is especially concerning considering that the attempts by the Justice League and the Uniformed Brothers suggest that, under the right circumstances, militias have the potential to take root at the hands of police officers throughout Brazil.

I therefore argue that, as is the case with death squads, the foundational militias in Rio created a model of criminal governance by police that has the potential to spread across jurisdictions. The two groups studied in this chapter shed light on the fact that militias break away from the death squad model to focus on various forms of policing, rule-setting and public goods provision in a single territory. These multifarious activities by militias demand internal discipline and daily bureaucratic activities that far surpasses the organisational sophistication of death squads. As a result, militia governance provision is difficult to implement and to maintain. Compared to death squad activity, which police officers can conduct whilst on patrol, militia governance requires intensive and constant forms of interference in community life.

These greater demands that militias generate may explain why, following the dismantlement of the Uniformed Brothers, police officers in Belém largely prefer to get involved in death squads, through which they do not need to restrict themselves to a single territory and to cumbersome bureaucratic coordination. In the following chapter, I consider the factors that facilitate the persisting nature of police criminality in Belém following the dismantlement of the Uniformed Brothers militia and the dramatic events of November 2014. Despite diverging from the militia type, the death squads that emerged in Belém from 2015 onwards took inspiration from Pet and Costa in trying to incorporate political-electoral dynamics into their criminal governance efforts.

Chapter VII. The Persistence of Police Criminality in Belém

Introduction

This chapter explores the reasons why the police criminality phenomenon continues to manifest itself in Belém. As is the case in other Brazilian cities (Cano & Duarte, 2012; Bicudo, 1988), the onset of significant public reckoning and investigative scrutiny on illicit activity by police has not deterred law-enforcement in Belém from engaging in criminal governance. The dramatic events of late 2014, which included Pet's murder and the two-day curfew led to considerable public outrage regarding criminal police conduct in Belém.¹⁰⁵ The instalment of the investigative parliamentary commission targeting death squads and militias during that time represented a dramatic shift in the ways state institutions approached the issue of police criminality. For the first time, there was considerable pressure within government agencies and the public at large to take unlawful police conduct seriously.¹⁰⁶

However, in the years following 2014, police criminality became an even more prevalent feature of urban violence in Belém post-2014, with many death squads driving the city's homicide rates and interfering in its criminal ecosystem.¹⁰⁷ With that in mind, this chapter compares two death squads that have emerged in the city following the 2014-15 parliamentary commission to unpack the reasons for the persisting nature of police criminality in Belém. The death squads in question consist of the M da Pedreira and the Ananindeua outfit.

The resilient nature of police criminality in Belém resembles what has occurred in several of Brazil's major urban centres, where illicit interests have also become attached to police institutions on a long-term basis (Flom, 2022). This dynamic of enduring police criminality is most pronounced in Rio, where large swathes of the urban sprawl have endured prolonged periods of interference by death squads and militias in daily life. Indeed, around 2 million people in Rio live

¹⁰⁵ Interview with human rights activist Clara Silveira, February 24, 2022

¹⁰⁶ Interview with civil servant Antonio Cruz, March 9, 2022

¹⁰⁷ Interview with Military Police Coronel Albernando Monteiro da Silva, February 17, 2022

in neighbourhoods controlled by police criminals, and many of these neighbourhoods have had to contend with that state of affairs for decades (Hirata et al, 2021).

I argue that contemporary manifestations of police criminality in Belém are facilitated by converging interests between politics and crime. Contemporary police-run criminal groups reinforce the nexus between police criminality and electoral politics inaugurated by the Justice League and Uniformed Brother militias in Belém by assisting politicians with electoral gatekeeping and hired killings. These converging interests allow death squads to become personally associated with elected officials, who in turn are able to enhance the reputation of death squad leaders in police institutions and hinder investigative scrutiny on these groups. This chapter also emphasizes the importance of clandestine transport as another component of the police criminality-politics nexus. For criminal police groups, these illicit markets with direct political implications are advantageous because they retain a considerable degree of social legitimacy, which ensures that judicial repression of that market is minimized. The profitability of drug-trafficking also remains an important large illicit market that drives police involvement in criminal governance.

Tough-on-crime approaches to public security and a lack of oversight mechanisms within the police continues to create a supply of experts in unlawful violence, thereby ensuring that successive generations of criminal governance operatives can emerge within the police ranks. Moreover, the two groups studied in this chapter also reveal that factors that were crucial to proliferation like institutional support from police agencies, knowledge transfer and reputation have less influence on the persistence of police criminality. Contemporary criminal groups run by police tend to receive minor and one-off of support from law-enforcement agencies. However, the enhanced political connections of contemporary death squads contribute to the reluctance of investigative agencies to target police-backed criminal groups. The entrenchment of a host of profitable illicit trades and the various historical precedents of criminal governance set by prior generations of police criminals means that contemporary operatives are less concerned with exchanging illicit expertise with their police peers. These dynamics of longstanding examples of

police criminality and persisting forms of institutional impunity that allow police to engage in illicit transactions without facing repercussions has also meant that operatives of more recent police-run criminal groups do not need to build up fearsome reputations in order to launch criminal enterprises.

The chapter proceeds by detailing the resurgence of police criminality post 2014-15 through the case of the M da Pedreira death squad. I then cover the Ananindeua death squad before offering a cross-case discussion and ending with brief concluding thoughts.

Case Studies

The M da Pedreira Death Squad

Following the massacre of scores of innocent civilians by police and militiamen in the aftermath of Pet's murder in November 2014, police criminality could no longer be ignored by state authorities in Belém. Previously, the regular forms of violence deployed by death squads and militias was largely neglected by local media, particularly since the targets of that violence were usually black youth from the urban margins.¹⁰⁸ This state of affairs reflects the widespread neglect over the value of black life undergirding Brazilian history (Alves, 2018). However, the coordination between the Uniformed Brothers militia and the police to shut Belém down for two days and kill indiscriminately throughout the city generated an unprecedented sense of urgency to confront police criminality. Investigations against police criminals were dramatically accelerated.¹⁰⁹ At the same time, local politicians in Belém reacted to calls by civil society groups for state institutions to confront police criminality. The congressional staff involved in setting up the investigative commission in the State Legislature recalled that, following the November 2014 massacre:

Members of the Legislature realized that the government had kept this (police criminality) under wraps. The governor refused to admit the existence of Pet's militia and the fact that they were responsible for the murders... but there was massive social commotion after November 4. A state of exception is what really happened that night and public consternation over that helped put pressure to set up the commission.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁸ Interview with criminal attorney Paulo André, February 8, 2022

¹⁰⁹ Interview with prosecutor Savio Brabo, September 20, 2022

¹¹⁰ Interview with civil servant Antonio Cruz, March 9, 2022

The political negotiations involved in installing the parliamentary commission were fraught, as Governor Jatene had been re-elected only days before the November 2014 massacre. Jatene had little desire to acknowledge the presence of police-backed criminal groups in his capital city.¹¹¹ In addition, the October 2014 elections had also elected a new State Legislature, whose members were set to take office at the end of January 2015. As a result, the existing State Legislature in the aftermath of the November 2014 massacre was the equivalent of a lame-duck Congress. Thinking that this political context would weaken the investigations into death squads and militias, Jatene's allies in the Legislature eventually acquiesced to public pressure and agreed to install a parliamentary commission. Proceedings had to be concluded within 45 days so that it could finish before the start of the new legislative term. In fact, many of the conservative members of the outgoing legislature voted in favour of installing the commission thinking that there would not be enough time for the commission to get anything done, especially during the Christmas holiday period.¹¹²

Nevertheless, between December 2014 and mid-January 2015, the investigative commission set up by the State Legislature held hearings regarding death squad and militia activity in Belém and in the rest of Pará state. The commission ended up deposing over 70 police officers, as well as human rights campaigners, public security personnel, survivors of death squad and militia violence and experts on police criminality (Pará State Legislature, 2015). The hearings were interrupted at times by members of the law-and-order caucus who barged in and issued threats against the commission members and the witnesses.¹¹³ The commission concluded proceedings with a report that included policy recommendations for the state government to address what its

¹¹¹ Interview with Military Police Coronel José Vicente Braga da Silva, January 26, 2022

¹¹² Interview with member of Pará State Legislature Carlos Bordalo, February 23, 2022

¹¹³ Interview with member of Pará State Legislature Carlos Bordalo, February 23, 2022

members found to be alarming levels of criminal infiltration in the local police forces (Pará State Legislature, 2015).

The re-elected government of Governor Jatene received the commission's findings in January 2015. However, the member of the State Legislature who led the investigative commission noted that "The government was not willing to confront them (death squads and militias) ... they opted to coexist with these groups".¹¹⁴ Jatene had campaigned on a public security platform that was favourable towards police violence.¹¹⁵ Following his re-election, he had little interest in acknowledging that the local police forces had become significant incubators of criminal groups.¹¹⁶ The rising electoral popularity of violent policing in the 2014 elections was further exemplified by the previously mentioned record number of votes that Sheriff Costa obtained to be elected to the Federal Congress (Abreu, 2020). This electoral context, and the maintenance of a public security approach that continued to conceive of DTOs as the sole instigators of criminal violence, curbed efforts to confront police criminality. As a result, despite the intense public spotlight and civil society mobilizing, police officers were allowed to continue to engage in criminal activity.¹¹⁷

As mentioned in the previous chapter, following the disintegration of the Uniformed Brothers in early 2015, law-enforcement refrained from creating new militia groups. The organizational discipline required of militia governance and the unmatched reputation of Pet made the Uniformed Brothers a difficult model to follow for other police in Belém aiming to accumulate illicit revenue. Instead, police officers in Belém kept the tradition of police criminality alive by continuing to engage in its original form, death squads.¹¹⁸

By 2018, towards the end of Jatene's second term as governor, prosecutors with Belém's organised crime taskforce estimated that more than 20 police death squads were active in the city (O Liberal, 2018c). This marked the heyday of police criminality in Belém, as an unprecedented

¹¹⁴ Interview with member of Pará State Legislature Carlos Bordalo, February 23, 2022

¹¹⁵ Interview with civil servant Antonio Cruz, March 9, 2022

¹¹⁶ Interview with criminal attorney Paulo André, February 8, 2022

¹¹⁷ Interview with Military Police Coronel. José Vicente Braga da Silva, January 26, 2022

¹¹⁸ Interview with human rights activist Clara Silveira, February 24, 2022

number of criminal groups run by police officers competed with DTOs for market share in illicit trades and for political authority in the urban margins (Barbosa, 2018). During that time, police inspectors estimate that criminal groups run by police were responsible for around 40 percent of all homicides in the Belém metropolitan region.¹¹⁹ Furthermore, unlike the newcomer drug operatives that emerged in the 2000's, powerful DTOs had consolidated their governance reach in Belém during the 2010's. The DTOs in question were flush with cash, affiliated with national-level drug syndicates and socially integrated into the dynamics of the city's urban margins (Lima, Bueno & Marques, 2021). The leaders of these DTOs were prominent lifelong residents of these marginal neighbourhoods and were able to go toe to toe with police officers who also aspired to provide criminal governance.¹²⁰

The consolidation of a large-scale drug market in Belém generated a media frenzy regarding urban violence, leading to increased public calls for violent police conduct to tackle drug-trafficking. The city's police replicated law-enforcement in Rio by increasing the frequency of high-profile raids of low-income communities (Deluchey, 2019). These expeditions continued to generate high levels of police lethality against innocent civilians and failed to dislodge drug-trafficking, just as they did in the earlier phases of the War on Drugs, during which the likes of Sheriff Costa developed their 'tough cop' reputations.¹²¹ Despite the illicit interests that were implicated in these raids, the police officers involved in them would go on to run successful election campaigns for municipal, state, and federal-level legislatures with a rhetoric of shoot-to-kill policing.¹²²

These police-turned politicians included Silvano Oliveira da Silva, a Military Police Sergeant who was elected to the Belém City Council and Military Police Colonel Neil Duarte, who had previously been involved in a high-profile mass killing by police in Belém known as the Tapanã

¹¹⁹ Interview with Military Police Coronel Albernando Monteiro da Silva, February 17, 2022

¹²⁰ Interview with civil servant Antonio Cruz, March 9, 2022

¹²¹ Interview with Military Police Coronel Sandoval Bittencourt de Oliveira Neto, April 5, 2022

¹²² Interview with Military Police Coronel Albernando Monteiro da Silva, February 17, 2022

Massacre and was elected to the Pará State Legislature. The preeminent member of this law-and-order caucus was Sheriff Costa. Following Jair Bolsonaro's election as president in 2018, Costa became a close ally of the new government.¹²³ He shared in the president's fascination with lethal policing and stringent law-and-order rhetoric, and he would go on to accumulate extensive clout with the Bolsonaro administration.¹²⁴ Costa was granted authorisation to appoint his allies to crucial federal-level administrative posts in Belém (Dutra, 2022). Crucially, these elected officials like Sheriff Costa, Colonel Neil and Sergeant Silvano also used their legislative pulpits to defend police anytime there was a mass killing by law-enforcement in Belém (G1.com, 2014e). They were also personally acquainted with several of Belém's prominent police criminals and pushed for legislation seeking greater leeway for police to engage in lethal conduct with impunity.¹²⁵

Along with their links to this law-and-order caucus, the new generation of death squad participants in Belém no longer restricted themselves to demanding bribes or charging drug traffickers for protection. Instead, they took inspiration from the Justice League and Uniformed Brothers militias to run the *bocas de fumo* drug selling points themselves.¹²⁶ The direct management of drug retail allowed officers to retain a greater share of drug profits than previous death squads that only charged drug operatives for protection. Prominent amongst this new generation of death squad leaders was Military Police corporal Heleno Arnaud Carmo de Lima, aka Leno. Leno was stationed in the 20th Military Police battalion that oversaw police operations in Guamá and in other southern districts of Belém (Pará Justice Tribunal, 2017b). At the battalion, Leno was able to witness the development of the Uniformed Brothers in Guamá during the early 2010s. The battalion where Leno was stationed made no attempt to combat the militia in Guamá.¹²⁷

In the months following the murder of Pet and the ensuing disintegration of the Guamá militia in early 2015, Leno recruited six Military Police officers and 13 civilians to establish a death

¹²³ Interview with Military Police Coronel José Vicente Braga da Silva, March 22, 2022

¹²⁴ *Ibid*

¹²⁵ Interview with Military Prosecutor Armando Brasil, September 15, 2022

¹²⁶ *Ibid*

¹²⁷ *Ibid*

squad in Pedreira, his home neighbourhood located in central Belém (Pará Justice Tribunal, 2017b). The death squad remained connected to the police, as members perpetrated death squad activity while on police duty and using police resources. The police officers who joined Leno's outfit included The Mountain, who was a colleague of Leno's at the 20th police battalion.¹²⁸ The Mountain had a long career in police criminality in Belém, having previously been a member of the Icoaraci death squad and Pet's militia (G1.com, 2014b). Leno also recruited another former member of Pet's militia in Guamá into his death squad, the civilian known as Little Ghost (Pará Justice Tribunal, 2017b).

Along with taking over drug retail, the death squad's first forays into criminal governance followed the playbook devised by the PATAM and the Icoaraci death squad in requiring supermarkets and bars in Pedreira to pay them weekly protection fees.¹²⁹ This protection offering was particularly profitable in Pedreira, which is a neighbourhood with bustling commercial activity. Pedreira's characteristics as a prominent location for commerce near the centre of Belém also made its drug retail scene particularly profitable.¹³⁰ Like the Icoaraci outfit, Leno's death squad accumulated fundamental rule-setting and dispute-settlement authority in Pedreira through the takeover of drug dens and the protection offerings for bars and supermarkets.¹³¹ In addition, the Pedreira death squad took part in weapons trafficking and hired killings (Pará Justice Tribunal, 2017b). The death squad stole calibre-40 police pistols from the 20th battalion's arsenal and sold the weapons throughout Belém (Pará Justice Tribunal, 2017b).

Phone records obtained by state prosecutors revealed that the death squad operatives referred to their organization as 'M da Pedreira', which stood for 'Militia of Pedreira' (Pará Justice Tribunal, 2017b). In calling their organization a militia, the Pedreira operatives signalled their aspiration to become a prominent provider of criminal governance akin to Pet's organization and

¹²⁸ Interview with Military Prosecutor Armando Brasil, September 15, 2022

¹²⁹ Interview with Military Police Coronel Albernando Monteiro da Silva, February 17, 2022

¹³⁰ Interview with Military Police Coronel José Vicente Braga da Silva, January 26, 2022

¹³¹ Interview with Military Prosecutor Armando Brasil, September 15, 2022

the original militia groups based in Rio. By that time, Rio's militias had become notorious throughout Brazil for their localized authority and electoral reach (Misse, 2018). Leno's recruitment of former operatives of the Guamá militia to his organization confirmed his intention to follow in the footsteps of Pet.

However, the Pedreira outfit did not go on to develop the organizational sophistication to emulate militias' capacities to become the primary provider of political authority in their community.¹³² Instead, the group preferred to expand their illicit commercial interests beyond their original turf. The death squad's phone logs revealed that they specialized in extorting the potential victims that they had been hired to kill throughout Belém. Leno and his associates would call the potential victims and charge them up to BRL 15,000 (£2,500) to take their name off the kill list (Pará State Prosecutor, 2019a). Leno also maintained a social media presence, posting videos on Facebook and sending audio messages on WhatsApp in which he bragged about the murders he committed (G1.com, 2020). In one such video, Leno sang a few verses about himself: "he's worse than the devil, he's worse than Bin Laden, it's crazy Leno, the hunter of this city... he's going to kill, he's going to shoot, he's going to kill, he's going to terrorize" (Ver o Fato, 2019a).

The M da Pedreira also regularly conducted home burglaries in in the Belém neighbourhood of Jurunas (Pará Justice Tribunal, 2017b). In their phone logs, the death squad operatives would refer to the burglaries as 'birthday parties' (Pará Justice Tribunal, 2017b). The burglaries usually took place during the month of July, the holiday period in Belém (Pará Justice Tribunal, 2017b). Leno personally participated in the burglaries, keeping watch over the residences, and staying on the phone with his death squad colleagues who broke in and seized goods inside the property.¹³³ Like the PATAM and the Icoaraci death squad, the M da Pedreira used calibre-40 police pistols and patrol cars from their police battalion during their criminal activities.¹³⁴

¹³² Their adoption of the term militia also demonstrates the extent to which not only scholars, but also criminal operatives, often conflate the phenomena of death squads and militias.

¹³³ Interview with Military Police Coronel Ricardo André Biloia da Silva, September 16, 2022

¹³⁴ Interview with Military Police Coronel Fábio Lobo, September 16, 2022

In January 2017, the M da Pedreira took part in their own massacre alongside police colleagues, following on the tradition instituted by Sheriff Le Cocq's original death squad in Rio that for every cop killed in the line of duty, at least 10 people had to be murdered. In the morning of January 20, 2017, a soldier of the elite ROTAM unit was shot in the head and killed by two assailants in Belém.¹³⁵ In response, Leno gathered his death squad associates and they joined ROTAM officers and other Military Police on the largest police killing spree in the city to date. They executed 28 people in 11 Belém neighbourhoods over a two-day period (Pará State Prosecutor, 2019a). As was the case in the November 2014 massacre following Pet's death, none of the victims had anything to do with the murder of the ROTAM soldier. The massacre took place because the M da Pedreira's law-enforcement contingent shared in the wider police idolatry of elite officers.¹³⁶ The mystique surrounding the ROTAM within law-enforcement meant that the assassination of a member of the elite unit was considered an affront to the entire police.¹³⁷

Moreover, on August 4, 2017, Leno was the victim of a murder attempt in Pedreira. He had just parked his motorcycle in front of a mechanic in Pedreira when two assailants fired at him (Diário do Pará, 2017). The assailants were not identified, and Leno was shot twice in the leg (G1.com, 2017b). By that point, Leno had acquired a reputation as the most prominent police criminal in Belém, following on the footsteps of Pet (Adorno, 2020). Whilst Leno was receiving treatment for his injuries, Military Police officers began sharing a picture through police WhatsApp groups. The picture in question was taken in the hospital and showed Leno posing alongside City Council member Sergeant Silvano (Ver o Fato, 2017). Despite Leno's well-known criminal credentials, the murder attempt against him was framed within law-enforcement as another attack against police forces. The law-and-order caucus therefore took advantage of Leno's shooting to further strengthen their electoral popularity amongst police officers. These efforts were not limited

¹³⁵ Interview with Military Prosecutor Armando Brasil, September 15, 2022

¹³⁶ Interview with Military Police Coronel José Vicente Braga da Silva, January 26, 2022

¹³⁷ Interview with Military Police Coronel José Vicente Braga da Silva, January 26, 2022

to City Council member Silvano. Leno also received a hospital visit from the other prominent member of Belém's law-and-order caucus, Sheriff Costa. During his visit, the Federal Congressman demonstrated a mark of respect by using the formal personal pronoun '*senhor*' to refer to Leno.¹³⁸

Despite various accusations of Leno's illicit conduct, the Military Police refused to launch an investigation against him and the Pedreira death squad.¹³⁹ State prosecutors began monitoring Leno's phone conversations in September 2017 in relation to their organised crime investigations (Pará State Prosecutor, 2019a). They arrested Leno and five other Military Police members of the Pedreira death squad that same month when the phone logs revealed them discussing their participation in the January 2017 mass killings (Pará State Prosecutor, 2019a). The arrest of their leader and the bulk of their police contingent led to the dismantlement of the M da Pedreira death squad.¹⁴⁰

Leno and his death squad associates remained in prison until August 2018, when a state-level judge ruled against the homicide charges (O Liberal, 2018b). Upon his release from prison, Leno began sending death threats to prosecutors and journalists covering the trial (Diário do Pará, 2019a). He was arrested once again in January 2019 and was sentenced to six years in prison (Pará State Prosecutor, 2019a). In 2020, Leno was released on appeal by a federal-level court and returned to Pedreira.¹⁴¹ Congressman Costa reportedly leveraged his contacts within the Bolsonaro government to get the appeals court to approve Leno's release.¹⁴² Leno continues to receive a wage from the police. The Military Police initiated proceedings to expel Leno from their ranks in May 2020, but no outcome has been reached in the proceedings.¹⁴³

¹³⁸ Interview with Military Prosecutor Armando Brasil, September 15, 2022

¹³⁹ *Ibid*

¹⁴⁰ Interview with Military Police Coronel Albernando Monteiro da Silva, February 17, 2022

¹⁴¹ Interview with Military Prosecutor Armando Brasil, September 15, 2022

¹⁴² *Ibid*

¹⁴³ Interview with Military Police Coronel Ricardo André Biloia da Silva, September 16, 2022

Analysis

The M da Pedreira illustrates the ways in which criminal police groups in Belém continue to emerge on a contemporary basis by reproducing operational strategies and command structures from previous generations of death squads. At the same, Leno's outfit instituted several institutional innovations to the death squad form. The factors that facilitated the rise of the M da Pedreira as one of Belém's new iterations of police criminality are detailed below.

Electoral Interests

The M da Pedreira was active in a period in which deviant police officers had profited from mass support for violent policing to get elected to all spheres of government. The death squad was able to enjoy affective ties with these elected officials, as evidenced by the treatment he received from the law-enforcement caucus when he was hospitalized with gunshot wounds in August 2017. The electoral links served to bolster the death squad's reputation within law-enforcement, thereby contributing to an unwillingness from within the police to investigate its criminal activities. Leno's affinity with elected officials also protected him against an onerous prison sentence, thereby demonstrating that political-electoral connections are an integral component of contemporary death squads.

Knowledge Transfer

Leno had had direct exposure to the criminal police activities of Pet in the neighbourhood of Guamá. He was able to learn how to create unlawful enterprises whilst retaining police links. Crucially, this knowledge transfer was conducted within the structures of law-enforcement, since Leno was stationed in the 20th battalion during the time in which the Uniformed Brothers held sway over Guamá. In addition, the fact that two of the members of the M da Pedreira (the 'Mountain' and 'Little Ghost') were previously members of the Icoaraci death squad and of the Guamá militia confirms that the death squad sought to learn first-hand from experienced operatives in criminal governance. These operatives are integral to the dissemination of criminal expertise amongst the police. The Pedreira death squad leveraged the expertise acquired by Leno,

the 'Mountain' and 'Little Ghost' to implement the traditional *modus operandi* of police criminality by charging local bars and supermarkets for protection. The M da Pedreira's activities in weapons trafficking and murder-for-hire, with the added innovation of extorting potential victims, also followed on from the precedent of the previous generation of death squads.

Hard-line Public Security Policies

The M da Pedreira took advantage of the War on Drugs narrative that had crystallized within the public security sector and in media discourse throughout Brazil in the 2010s. The electoral popularity of this narrative, along with the state government's reluctance to rein in police criminality, played an important role in allowing new death squads to come into being following the November 2014 massacre and the 2014-15 parliamentary commission in Belém. By that time, violent police raids of low-income communities became a routine, albeit ineffective recourse to address issues of urban insecurity. In once again only offering large-scale repression by police as the solution to problems of violence, public security agencies empowered new generations of police to employ unlawful coercion on a quotidian basis. The persistence of the warlike doctrine in police institutions allowed the likes of Leno to view unlawful violence as an everyday tool of policing. The normalization of the excessive use of force by law-enforcement in turn allowed police officers to deploy these techniques of intense coercion in their pursuit of illicit profits.

Furthermore, it is worth acknowledging that the ability to reconcile criminal endeavours with on-duty police work once again manifests itself in the case of the M da Pedreira. While the Icoaraci outfit and the PATAM rackets were constituted in the same neighbourhoods where the police officers worked, Leno created his death squad in Pedreira (central Belém) whilst he was stationed in a police battalion several kilometres away. Leno's ability to combine his posting in the 20th battalion with death squad activities reveals that police involved in criminal governance are able to conduct a vast array of illicit transactions during their standard law-enforcement working hours. They are also able to devise sophisticated organizational structures with a considerable membership contingent that engages in diversified criminal enterprises. As was the case with the

PATAM and Icoaraci death squads, the internal barriers to accountability within police agencies meant that Leno and his police colleagues could retain their law-enforcement affiliations while they were conducting death squad activities.

Finally, the January 2017 police massacre that the Pedreira death squad took part in further manifests the enduring links binding public security and criminality in Brazil. The participation of Leno and his associates in the massacre confirms that death squads are able to come together with regular law-enforcement in upholding the longstanding unlawful codes of police culture in Brazil. The January 2017 massacre evinces the extent to which death squad members continue to identify as police officers. For the M da Pedreira members who went on the killing spree with their police colleagues, there was no tension between their police affiliations, their death squad activities and their ability to identify with the violent mores of police culture.

Support from Police Agencies

Compared to the criminal groups studied in the previous chapters, the M da Pedreira did not enjoy a great deal of support from police agencies. The police equipment that they utilized in their criminal work, including patrol cars, uniforms and weapons, were often seized scrumptiously from the 20th police battalion. While several of the other criminal groups studied in this thesis directly obtained help from police battalions, the M da Pedreira largely had to steal equipment from its police base. Nevertheless, the death squad did receive substantial police backing when it came to non-enforcement. Police investigators avoided going after the M da Pedreira for over two years, likely because they saw DTOs as more urgent targets and did not want to be seen to be persecuting police personnel. It was only when Leno was caught on tape discussing the January 2017 massacre that prosecutors were able to press charges against the death squad members.

Reputation

Whereas previous generations of police criminals like Rosevan and Pet had established reputations as vigilantes by the time they formed their illicit organizations, Leno gradually built up his reputation through his death squad work. He was not renowned within the local police force as an

expert shooter or intrepid officer. However, the profits that M da Pedreira accumulated and its affective associations with police politicians allowed Leno to gradually build up a reputation as a prominent criminal. Reputational dynamics therefore contributed to the Pedreira death squad's efforts at engaging in criminal governance.

Large Illicit Market

The M da Pedreira emerged in a period where drug-trafficking had consolidated itself as the dominant criminal market in Belém. As a result, the profits available in this large illicit market served as a powerful attraction for Leno and his colleagues to create the death squad. Previous generations of death squads had approached drug-trafficking as a 'dirty businesses' that could only be approached through clandestine protection networks. However, with its immense profits and territorial entrenchment in the city, direct involvement in the drug trade became integral to the M da Pedreira's aims to generate illicit revenue. Direct involvement by police criminals in the drug trade was also facilitated by the fact that, by the 2010s, Belém's powerful and nationally connected DTOs no longer required the forms of protection that the likes of the Icoaraci death squad had offered. In fact, these DTOs were able to fulfil many of the forms of criminal governance in the urban margins that death squads had pioneered (Couto, 2021). Within this new political economy of crime, Leno's outfit moved to directly participate in drug sales in order to establish themselves as viable unlawful governance providers.

The Ananindeua Death Squad

Located in Belém's eastern suburb, Ananindeua is the second largest city in the state of Pará with over 500,000 residents (IBGE, 2022). Ananindeua was initially settled as a commuter town because of its proximity to Belém's railway network. From the 1980s onwards, the city was integral to the intensified process of urbanization that were ongoing in the Belém metropolitan region. Several factories were built in the city and migrants who were crowded out of Belém's urban sprawl settled

in Ananindeua.¹⁴⁴ By the 2000's, Ananindeua became the second largest electoral college in the state of Pará, only bested by the adjacent state capital of Belém. As a result, Ananindeua became crucial for the electoral dynamics in the state. Its districts with a large contingent of low-income voters residing in informally occupied land or government-owned housing blocs became important battle grounds in gubernatorial and legislative elections.¹⁴⁵

During that time, Ananindeua was also integrated into the large-scale drug-trafficking routes being set up in Belém's metropolitan region. The city became known as the 'trafficking beltway' since it sits at the crossroad of two important state and interstate highways.¹⁴⁶ As occurred in Belém during the 2000's, drug-traffickers also set up large amounts of drug selling points in Ananindeua to help finance the trafficking operations that passed through the city.¹⁴⁷ By the 2010s, the prominent position of the CV and its affiliates in Belém's drug market also extended to Ananindeua. Even with its leaders being held in state and federal prisons, the CV retained criminal governance authority in several of Ananindeua's neighbourhoods, including Aurá and Cidade Nova (State Penitentiary Secretariat, 2020b). The CV establishes curfews, controls population flows and sets rules of community conduct.¹⁴⁸ Furthermore, the CV stockpiles weapons in these neighbourhoods and operate *bocas de fumo* retail spots for drugs (State Penitentiary Secretariat, 2020b).

The CV's governance authority in these neighbourhoods was secured through alliances with local community leaders, including Deivite Galvão, popularly known as 'Gordo do Aurá' (Fatty of Aurá) (O Liberal, 2019a). Deivite led an organization that managed food donations and community events in Aurá. He was arrested in 2006, 2011 and 2018 on homicide and drug trafficking charges, but managed to get elected to the City Council in 2012 and re-elected in 2016 (Ver o Fato, 2019b). Deivite's status as an influential community leader in Aurá made him a

¹⁴⁴ Interview with Military Prosecutor Armando Brasil, September 16, 202

¹⁴⁵ Interview with prosecutor Sávio Brabo, September 20, 2022

¹⁴⁶ Interview with Military Prosecutor Armando Brasil, September 16, 202

¹⁴⁷ Interview with journalist Lucio Santos, June 7, 2023

¹⁴⁸ Interview with human rights activist Clara Silveira, February 24, 2022

proficient campaigner. Despite his ties with the CV, he regularly took part in campaign outings with influential politicians (O Liberal, 2019a). He had considerable prowess in getting people from Ananindeua's urban margins to go out to vote.

As discussed in Chapter VI, Deivite also had ties to the Uniformed Brothers, having hired the militia to carry out summary executions for him in the early 2010s (Pará State Legislature, 2015). Deivite was personally close to Motorcycle Zé, the former member of both the Uniformed Brothers and Justice League militias in Belém (Pará State Legislature, 2015). During the fallout of the November 2014 massacre, Motorcycle Zé was sentenced to 15 years in prison for homicide, but he managed to get acquitted on appeal (G1.com, 2017a). Upon his acquittal, the CV began to hire Motorcycle Zé's convoy of motorcycles to monitor and threaten prison wardens who worked in penitentiaries where leaders of the organisation were incarcerated (State Penitentiary Secretariat, 2020a). Simultaneously, Motorcycle Zé set up his own trafficking outfit. He used his convoy to move drugs throughout the state of Pará using his transport fleet and various shell companies (Pará State Prosecutor, 2021a). Motorcycle Zé's group specialized in purchasing drugs in the ports of the Belém area and transporting them to the north-eastern state of Pernambuco (Pará State Prosecutor, 2021a). He based his operations in Ananindeua to take advantage of the city's easy access to interstate highway links.

Ananindeua's criminal ecosystem is not limited to the CV and Motorcycle Zé's emerging trafficking outfit. Clandestine transport is also a prominent market in the city (Pará State Prosecutor, 2019b). The Justice League, one of the original militia groups that were set up in Rio, pioneered the involvement of deviant police in the clandestine transport market. The Justice League recruited police officers into their organization and deployed them to demand protection payments from clandestine van drivers. Eventually, the militia took over many of Rio's profitable clandestine van cooperatives (Pope, 2019).

In 2018, police officers and associated personnel in Ananindeua created a death squad that initially prioritise this clandestine transport market (Pará State Prosecutor, 2021b). Whilst

clandestine transport continues to be a prominent revenue stream for Rio's militias, the only Belém-based criminal police group that had previously made efforts to interfere in clandestine transport was the Uniformed Brothers militia. The resurfacing of this operational focus on clandestine transport by the Ananindeua death squad shows that police criminals continue to learn from each other, even if through indirect forms. In more recent cases like the Ananindeua group, these exchanges are further facilitated by state-level associations of police officers.¹⁴⁹ Over the last 10 years, these associations play an increasingly role akin to police unions, even though it is illegal for police officers to engage in industrial organizing in Brazil.¹⁵⁰ Police associations from all of Brazil's 27 states are in constant contact with each other.¹⁵¹ They are also involved in supporting the electoral campaigns of vigilante police, thereby becoming important nodes connecting police vigilantes to police officers with electoral ambitions (Abreu, 2020).

Rather than devising an organization that was intensely rooted to a particular territory of the city like militias do, the Ananindeua outfit that emerged in 2018 followed the squad template of operating throughout the city. However, unlike previous iterations of death squads in the Belém metropolitan region that were mainly comprised of officers who worked in the same battalion, the Ananindeua group was made up of police and associated personnel working in several government agencies and police institutions. The death squad's main figure was Leonardo Machado Santos, a Military Police soldier who was supposed to work in Castanhal, a city located in the north-eastern region of Pará state. Leonardo had been irregularly seconded to work as an advisor for the municipal transport secretariat of Ananindeua since at least 2015.¹⁵² Active-duty police officers cannot take on other government roles without authorization from police authorities and Leonardo's role at the transport secretary had not been officially ratified by the Military Police.

¹⁴⁹ Interview with journalist Lucio Santos, June 7, 2023

¹⁵⁰ Interview with Military Prosecutor Armando Brasil, September 16, 2022

¹⁵¹ Interview with Military Police Colonel Sandoval Bittencourt de Oliveira Neto, April 5, 2022

¹⁵² Interview with Military Prosecutor Armando Brasil, June 20, 2023

This irregular secondment was facilitated by the head of the Ananindeua transport secretariat at the time, a retired Military Police Colonel called Marco Antonio Machado. Machado was Leonardo's uncle and had extensive political connections to members of the PSDB political party that ran the Pará State Government and the Ananindeua city government at the time. The Colonel was an advisor in the successful re-election campaigns of Governor Jatene in 2014 and Ananindeua Mayor Manoel Pinheiro in 2012 (Diário do Pará, 2015b). Machado's political clout allowed him to irregularly hire his nephew to work in the transport secretariat. The chief of the Military Police at the time was aware of the irregular appointment, but Machado ensured that no internal opposition was met within the police.¹⁵³

Prior to the creation of the death squad, Leonardo and his uncle mobilized agents of the transport secretariat to conduct raids of the formal legalized buses in Ananindeua's major thoroughfares. They threatened to confiscate the buses if they did not receive unlawful payments (Diário do Pará, 2015c). In 2015, Leonardo and Machado faced criminal charges after they were accused of threatening to kill two owners of a company that provided payment machines for the city's bus fleet.¹⁵⁴ In their depositions during the criminal investigation, the owners of the two companies stated that Leonardo pointed a pistol in their face and demanded that they sell their businesses (Diário do Pará, 2015d). The victims also claimed that Colonel Machado told them that he was under orders from the Ananindeua mayor to get them to sell (Diário do Pará, 2015d). Machado did not face any repercussions from the criminal charges. In 2018, his political influence was further strengthened when the Military Police appointed him to lead the police delegation responsible for defending police interests in the Pará State Legislature.

Hugo Atayde, a lawyer and Ananindeua City Councillor, replaced Machado as head of the city's transport secretariat in early 2018. Atayde's father was the former head of the Civil Police in the state of Pará. His father led the transport secretariat at the state level when Atayde held the

¹⁵³ Interview with Military Prosecutor Armando Brasil, June 20, 2023

¹⁵⁴ Interview with Military Prosecutor Armando Brasil, September 16, 2022

equivalent position in the Ananindeua city government.¹⁵⁵ In his career as an attorney, Atayde represented several police officers accused of homicides and participation in death squads (Ver o Fato, 2021). Atayde is a close ally of David Senna (G1.com, 2019b). In 2018, Senna was a prominent local politician and was considered a rising star in Pará state politics with ambitions to reach executive office.

Even with his uncle's departure, Leonardo continued to work in the Ananindeua transport secretariat in an irregular manner. The death squad was launched in early 2018 following Atayde's appointment. Leonardo and Atayde created the death squad with the goal of revamping the transport secretariat's prior attempts at unlawfully interfering in the transport market. Rather than conducting raids on an ad-hoc basis and threatening operators of legal providers to the formal line of buses, they targeted unlawful protection payments from the more widely used informal van providers. Atayde utilized his political influence to protect the death squad and he occasionally took part in the group's protection patrols (Pará Justice Tribunal Gazette, 2020).

Furthermore, Leonardo had operational leadership over the death squad. He recruited seven other Military Police soldiers from battalions in Ananindeua, Castanhal and Belém to join the group (Pará Civil Police, 2019). The death squad also employed Geraldo Palheta da Silva Júnior, a congressional staff member of Belém City Councillor Silvano (Pará Civil Police, 2019). As noted in the previous section of this chapter, Silvano was a Military Police soldier and prominent member of Belém's law-and-order caucus who had previously been associated with the M da Pedreira death squad. In January 2019, Leonardo was appointed to work alongside his uncle in the State Legislature in Belém, which facilitated coordination with Silvano's team, who were also based in the state capital (Pará Justice Tribunal Gazette, 2020).

The Ananindeua death squad initially specialized in hired killings and in demanding protection payments from the city's informal van providers.¹⁵⁶ The protection payments were made

¹⁵⁵ Interview with journalist Lucio Santos, June 7, 2023

¹⁵⁶ Interview with journalist Lucio Santos, June 7, 2023

on a monthly basis and were collected by the death squads' police contingent. Leonardo cultivated contacts with his former colleagues in the 5th Military Police Battalion of Castanhal, including the battalion commander, who provided the death squad with weapons and vehicles (Pará State Prosecutor, 2021b). Leonardo took possession of six weapons, including a submachine gun and a rifle, as well as a ballistic helmet, teargas grenades, a bulletproof shield and over 800 rounds of munition from the Castanhal battalion (Pará State Prosecutor, 2021b). The death squad also utilized a police pistol owned by Leonardo's uncle, the Colonel in charge of representing the Military Police in the State Legislature (Pará State Prosecutor, 2021b).

Utilizing a weapon taken from the Castanhal battalion, Leonardo murdered Sidcley Moraes Borges, who had robbed one of the vans under the death squad's protection in late 2018 (Pará Justice Tribunal Gazette, 2019). Throughout that year, at least a dozen other murders were attributed to the death squad in Ananindeua (Pará Justice Tribunal Gazette, 2019). To avoid detection during that time, the death squad bribed a Civil Police Sheriff in Ananindeua called Eliete Borges to forge alibis for the murders committed by the group's members (G1.com, 2019a).

During the elections held in October 2018, Atayde was re-elected to the Ananindeua City Council on the same party ticket as Senna, his longstanding ally. That year, Senna was elected to the State Legislature with over 100,000 votes (Pará Electoral Justice Authority, 2020). Almost half of his vote share came from districts in Ananindeua (Pará Electoral Justice Authority, 2020). Senna's high vote count during that year's elections was credited in part to his alliance with Deivite, the Ananindeua city councillor with ties to the CV. Deivite held rallies with Senna in his electoral stronghold of Aurá and called Senna 'my congressman and future governor' in a Facebook post published during the campaign.¹⁵⁷ Furthermore, Senna's high vote count led to his appointment as the president of the State Legislature at the start of 2019. The October 2018 election also saw

¹⁵⁷ <https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=491812709117610&set=a.491812675784280>

Sheriff Borges, who received bribes from the death squad, run an unsuccessful campaign for the State Legislature (Ver o Fato, 2019c).

Whilst the electoral process was taking place in October 2018, the Ananindeua death squad began purchasing its own vans which were used in informal commuter transport routes (Pará Justice Tribunal Gazette, 2019). In moving on from charging transport providers for protection to directly obtaining proceeds from clandestine transport, the death squad's revenue streams increased considerably during that time. At the end of 2018 and start of 2019, the death squad also partnered with Motorcycle Zé and began to interfere in local drug-trafficking disputes (Pará State Prosecutor, 2021a). The death squad took over drug dens and murdered competing dealers. As a result, it quickly came into conflict with City Councillor Deivite and the CV. In February 2019, Atayde's house was burgled. In response, the death squad tortured and killed an individual called Walberson Dantas, who reportedly had ties to the CV. Dantas was identified by the death squad as responsible for the burglary (Pará Justice Tribunal Gazette, 2020). Two days later, City Councillor Deivite was murdered with 14 gunshots fired from the same vehicle that was used in Dantas' murder (Ver o Fato, 2019b). Following Deivite's murder, Councillor Silvano posted a video on social media celebrating Deivite's death (Diário do Pará, 2019b).

Deivite was a well-known politician in the Belém area, and his murder caused considerable public commotion.¹⁵⁸ His killing also took place within a changed political-electoral context in Pará state. Helder Barbalho took over from Jatene as state governor in early 2019.¹⁵⁹ From the start of his administration, Barbalho publicly acknowledged that police criminality and high levels of police lethality were exacerbating urban violence in the Belém area.¹⁶⁰ One of Barbalho's priorities in the public security policy area was to direct resources and political support for civilian and military

¹⁵⁸ Interview with criminal attorney Paulo André, February 8, 2022

¹⁵⁹ The Barbalhos are one of Pará's most prominent political dynasties. Helder's father Jader is currently a Senator and he was also the governor who ordered the abolition of the PATAM in 1992. Helder's brother is a minister in the current federal administration led by President Lula.

¹⁶⁰ Interview with member of Pará State Congress Carlos Bordalo, February 23, 2022

prosecutors to expedite their probes against police criminals.¹⁶¹ Deivite's murder therefore became a prominent focus of local investigative authorities.

At the end of the investigations regarding Deivite's murder, prosecutors and police inspectors concluded that the Councillor's death was likely motivated by two factors: the conflict over drug-trafficking retail spots in Ananindeua and electoral disputes (Pará Justice Tribunal, 2023). Two informants who contributed to the investigation pointed to Senna of the Pará State Legislature as the person who had the most to gain from Deivite's death (Pará Justice Tribunal, 2023). They claimed that Senna and Deivite reportedly had disputes stemming from the negotiations in which Deivite agreed to aid Senna's 2018 election campaign (Pará Justice Tribunal, 2023). In 2019, Senna was preparing a run for mayor of Ananindeua. By 2023, he remained one of the most powerful politicians in the state.¹⁶²

A month after Deivite's murder, the Civil Police and state prosecutors launched Operation Anonymous, a large-scale investigation targeting several criminal police groups. The Ananindeua group was the most prominent target of the probe, with three of its members including its leader Leonardo arrested on organised crime charges (Pará Civil Police, 2019). Following Leonardo's arrest, police discovered that he owned assets beyond what a standard wage as a police soldier could provide. Leonardo owned five luxury cars and a three-story house in Ananindeua (Pará Justice Tribunal Gazette, 2019). The death squad members were released in April 2019, but the Ananindeua death squad only lasted for five more months. In September 2019, police and prosecutors launched a second round of Operation Anonymous. This time they arrested all the members of the death squad, including City Councillor Atayde (Pará State Prosecutor, 2021b).

Sheriff Borges, who the death squad bribed for alibies, had found about the arrests beforehand and went to Atayde's house the night before the police operation to warn him that he was about to be arrested (O Liberal, 2019b). Borges' leaking of the operation led to her arrest and

¹⁶¹ Interview with Military Prosecutor Armando Brasil, September 16, 202

¹⁶² Interview with journalist Lucio Santos, June 7, 2023

dismissal from the police (Pará Justice Tribunal, 2021). Atayde fled the city the same night that he received Borges' warning. He published a video on social media denying the charges against him. Atayde turned himself in three days later and was released on house arrest in November 2019 (G1.com, 2019b).

By 2020, many members of the of death squad network, including Atayde and Borges, had won successful appeals or had the organised crime charges dropped against them.¹⁶³ After winning his court case, Atayde was appointed by Senna to work in his electoral office. In March 2022, Senna promoted Atayde to be his chief of staff (Oliveira, 2022). Senna also named Borges in a list of honorary citizens of Ananindeua (Ananindeua City Council, 2021). Borges would go on to be reinstated to the Civil Police and received a promotion in 2023 (Pará State Government, 2023). Councillor Silvano was not directly implicated in the investigations surrounding the Ananindeua death squad, despite the participation of a member of his staff in the criminal network. After being re-elected to the Belém City Council in 2022, Silvano was appointed the head of the state's transport secretariat by Governor Barbalho in 2023.

Analysis

The Ananindeua death squad shares parallels with many of its predecessors. The death squad was created as a way for police to accrue illicit gains while on-duty. Like other death squads, the group took on an array of different functions from its onset, offering hired killings and interfering in clandestine transport and drug-trafficking. The factors that led the death squad to contribute to the persistence of police criminality in the Belém region are detailed below.

Electoral Interests

Most of the prior death squads in the Belém area traced their roots to police battalion colleagues who cultivate years of experience at the street-level. In contrast, the Ananindeua group was nurtured inside the transport secretariat of Ananindeua. The Ananindeua outfit therefore

¹⁶³ Interview with journalist Lucio Santos, June 7, 2023

exemplifies the increasingly explicit and wide-ranging connections between government institutions, elected officials and deviant police that ensure the continuity of police criminality in Brazil.

Unlike other death squads that simply maintained affective ties with law-and-order politicians, various political operatives had direct involvement with the Ananindeua group. Its organizational structure and activities were influenced by the likes of city councillors, municipal secretaries and political advisors. The death squad was founded by Atayde, a City Councillor who was personally connected to vigilante police through his work as an attorney. The death squad's political links quickly surpassed the Ananindeua executive branch, extending to the State Legislature, where Colonel Machado was stationed to following his stint in the transport secretariat. The group also extended its influence in the Belém City Council, where the death squad retained the services of a staff member of one of Belém's preeminent police politicians. The close relations between Atayde and Senna and the assassination of Councillor Deivite further evinced the death squad's electoral connections. The organization's links to Senna were only furtively referenced by the few interlocutors I spoke to who were willing to discuss the Ananindeua death squad, reflecting the gravity of its links to one of the most powerful contemporary political figures in the state of Pará.

Moreover, the death squad's involvement in the October 2018 elections serves as a testament to the intensified ways in which criminal police interests intersect with electoral politics in the Belém metropolitan region. One of the death squad's members was re-elected to the City Council (Atayde) and politicians who were associated with the death squad (Silvano and Santos) also obtained electoral success. Meanwhile, one of the police officers who maintained corrupt links with the death squad ran for the State Legislature and lost (Borges). The Ananindeua death squad therefore helped to solidify the links between politics, police and crime that had been gradually developing during the previous years in the Belém metropolitan region.

Reputation

While the fearsome reputations at the local level of its founders contributed to the rise and persistence of other criminal police groups studied in this thesis, the leaders of the Ananindeua death squad did not share equivalent clout. The group's operational leader, Military Police Soldier Leonardo, resided in Ananindeua and had acquired some notoriety as a violent cop who was known to be directly involved in what residents called the '*máfia das vans*' (the van mafia), as his actions alongside his uncle in the transport secretariat and subsequent death squad activity were known (Pará Justice Tribunal Gazette, 2020). However, Leonardo was a low-level cop who did not work at the street-level in Ananindeua. He was posted in the transport secretariat for several years. This meant that he did not cultivate a reputation for vigilantism or for being a community leader. The Ananindeua death squad therefore further illustrates that reputation has limited value to explain the persistence of police criminality.

Knowledge Transfer

The Ananindeua death squad replicated the criminal repertoires of the Uniformed Brothers and Rio's militias when it came to infiltrating the clandestine transport market. The death squad also took inspiration from previous generations of police criminality when it came to developing connections with politicians and becoming involved in Belém's profitable drugs market. However, unlike the M da Pedreira, which made efforts to incorporate operatives with prior experience in death squad and militia activity, the Ananindeua group did not rely on direct forms of knowledge transfer to assert its governance authority.

Large Illicit Markets

The trajectory of the Ananindeua death squad demonstrates that it is not just the large illicit market of drug-trafficking that helps to drive enduring police criminality. Indeed, the clandestine transport market also represents an important market for criminal police groups. The informal transport business is characterized as one of many illegal markets that enjoy some degree of social legitimacy (Dewey, 2017). Even as it falls on the wrong side of the law, it can serve tangible benefits in

overcrowded and infrastructurally precarious urban sprawls. As a result, the informal transport market may even be promoted by local politicians, as was seen in the Ananindeua case. However, the death squad's interference in the transport market was accompanied by indiscriminate killings, contributing to the high levels of violence in the Belém metropolitan region during that time.¹⁶⁴ The Ananindeua group had no qualms about perpetrating dozens of murders of van drivers and owners of van cooperatives from its onset. As a result, the group could not take advantage of the benign standing that the informal transport market sustained in public opinion and amongst investigators. Furthermore, by the end of its first year of activity the death squad was also involved in drug-trafficking, the criminal market where the distance between illegality and public acceptance is the greatest. Its drug trade activities culminated in the murder of a well-known City Councillor, which made the death squad vulnerable to judicial scrutiny.

Support from Police Agencies

The death squad benefitted from some forms of police support, including weapons and equipment from the Castanhal police battalion and from Colonel Machado, the Military Police's representative in the State Legislature and former head of the Ananindeua transport secretariat. However, the group's primary form of support at the government level came from the Ananindeua transport secretariat rather than from local police battalions. Most of the officers involved in the death squad did not work in Ananindeua and were unable to mobilize material assistance from local police. As is the case with reputation, crucial factors like police support which shaped the proliferation of police criminality in Belém have less bearing on contemporary criminal groups run by police.

Hard-line Public Security Policies

The trajectory of the Ananindeua death squad demonstrates the enduring forms of institutional impunity within the police. Leonardo, the death squad's leader, spent years working in an irregular basis at the Ananindeua transport secretariat with the connivance of police authorities. In addition,

¹⁶⁴ Interview with Military Police Colonel Albernando Monteiro da Silva, February 17, 2022

Leonardo and his uncle's shake-down of formal suppliers of Ananindeua's transport fleet was well publicized in local media and government circles (Diário do Pará, 2015b). Despite their illicit actions attracting high-profile attention, both avoided any disciplinary consequence from their superiors in the police.

This lack of an institutional response meant that Leonardo was free to escalate his illicit activities with the creation of the Ananindeua death squad. The other police officers involved in the group were all stationed in cities outside of Ananindeua but were able to engage in death squad activity in the city without any sort of restraint from police institutions. Furthermore, during the first year of the Ananindeua death squad's existence, the group was able to take advantage of Governor Jatene's blind-eye approach to criminal policing. The pattern of complementarity between police work and criminal activity therefore remains salient in contemporary settings in the metropolitan region of Belém.

Discussion

Table VII: Factors Shaping the Persistence of Police Criminality in Belém

<i>Factors</i>	<i>M da Pedreira</i>	<i>Ananindeua</i> <i>Death Squad</i>
<i>Support from Police Agencies</i>	Limited	Limited
<i>Knowledge Transfer</i>	Substantial	Limited
<i>Large Illicit Market(s)</i>	Yes	Yes
<i>Electoral Interests</i>	Yes	Yes
<i>Reputation</i>	No	No
<i>Hard-line Public Security Policies</i>	Yes	Yes

Comparing the M da Pedreira death squad alongside the Ananindeua death squad demonstrates that police are able to continue to engage in criminal activity on a contemporary basis with relative ease. The simple organizational structure and objectives of death squads, which allow officers to launch criminal enterprises during their on-duty hours, is particularly conducive to the persistence of police criminality. Persisting forms of institutional impunity and militarized procedures within police agencies also facilitate officers' efforts to set up criminal enterprises. For both the Pedreira and Ananindeua groups, police officers were able to remain in active-duty posts while engaging in death squad activity. The continued lack of accountability and oversight mechanisms in police agencies are therefore important contributing factors to the persistence of police criminality.

It is nevertheless important to highlight that, despite the fact that both groups benefitted from police impunity, they relied less on law-enforcement support compared to previous iterations

of police criminality. The M da Pedreira largely had to resort to stealing equipment from 20th police battalion. Meanwhile, the Ananindeua death squad received one-off forms of police support, including a handover of weapons and military equipment from the Castanhal police battalion. The leaders of both case in this chapter also did not cultivate fearsome reputations for violence at the street-level, unlike the criminal police leaders from the previous chapters. The two case studies also showed variation when it came to another variable which was important in previous chapter, knowledge transfer. The M da Pedreira tapped into prior networks of police criminals, but the Ananindeua death squad made no significant effort to learn from their peers. T

It is therefore clear that police criminality endures because law-enforcement officers are constantly findings ways to innovate and adapt in response to political-electoral trends and shifts in criminal markets. Police-run criminal groups are no longer limiting their institutional ties to law-enforcement bodies. Indeed, the findings of this chapter reveal that contemporary death squads are preferring to build more connections with elected officials, many of whom are former police officers. In addition, the role of the transport secretariat as an incubator of the Ananindeua death squad proves that deviant police are constantly finding new ways of infiltrating state institutions to advance their criminal objectives.

The persistence of police criminality is also influenced by the consolidation of drug-trafficking as a dominant and large-scale illicit market in Belém. Both case studies in this chapter followed on the footsteps of their predecessors in criminal policing by participating in drug sales. As a result, I argue that focusing on DTOs like the CV is not enough to understand the drug trade. It is necessary to come to grips with the ways in which police officers and their associates are not just taking bribes or protecting drug markets but are also directly involved in drug trafficking.

This chapter also brings to the fore the importance of the clandestine transport market to criminal groups run by police officers. The Ananindeua group targeted this market as their most important revenue stream. As a cash business with large amounts of transactions that take place on a daily basis conducted with commuters in densely populated neighbourhoods, the clandestine

transport sector offers criminal groups a reliable source of funds. Crucially, the clandestine transport market also offers the opportunity for criminal police groups to further strengthen their connections with politicians, as seen in the Ananindeua death squad's wide network of political associates. The M da Pedreira had more limited, but nevertheless pertinent political ties. By the 2010s, the dynamics of urban warfare and the extensive popularity of shoot-to-kill rhetoric propelled police officers to important electoral posts. Leno and his associates made efforts to acquaint themselves with police-turned-politicians to receive various institutional benefits from them.

Both the M da Pedreira and the Ananindeua emerged during the heyday of police criminality in the Belém region. I argue that it is not incidental that this peak in criminal police activity occurred in parallel to the rising electoral prominence of a law-enforcement caucus made up of former police officers with violent track records. These two dynamics mutually reinforced each other. Death squads can spin their criminal governance initiatives as part of the police's War on Drugs. As exemplified by the incident of Leno getting shot in August 2017, any time a police criminal member faces an attack, the group can frame it as an issue of violence against law-enforcement rather than as a part of armed disputes between illicit operatives. At the same time, police politicians can use these incidents to advance a tough-on-crime political agenda that seeks to further empower police to operate without restraint. Meanwhile, police politicians are also able to build ties to police criminals to obtain illicit campaign support, and even hire out these groups to carry out hired killings of political rivals. It was largely through these mutually beneficial ties that Belém police were able to continue to form death squads even after the public spotlight brought about by the November 2014 massacre and the 2014-15 parliamentary commission.

Conclusion

This chapter reflects on the current iterations of police criminality in Belém. The trajectory of both groups studied in this chapter reveal that police officers continue to be steeped in an institutional climate where extra-legal violence is framed as routine, and in which oversight of the actions of

police officers is discouraged. Police criminality is therefore recurrent phenomenon because it is relatively simple for officers of a militarized police force that is largely unconcerned with holding deviant behaviour to account to recruit colleagues to engage in illicit activity. Recent iterations like the M da Pedreira and the Ananindeua death squad are also able to take advantage of the decades-long precedent set by prior generations of police criminals. They are able to develop their criminal enterprises by utilising the likes of Pet and Rosevan as historical examples to follow, whilst also trialling new illicit market activities and novel ways of infiltrating state agencies. Police criminality is therefore also able to persist because law-enforcement officers are constantly evolving the operational approaches, institutional links and market specialisations of their criminal enterprises.

Crucially, the lethal actions of contemporary forms of police criminality are integrated into the wider political lexicon of violent policing, through which vigilante officers are able to reap dividends from the electoral popularity of shoot-to-kill political rhetoric. Death squads and militias are able to build clandestine links with elected officials by positioning themselves in the law-enforcement side of the ‘cops versus bandits’ public discourse of urban violence. These links threaten to undermine the quality of democratic institutions, as police politicians and their allies are able to ally with police criminals to achieve political goals.

The dismantlement of the M da Pedreira and Ananindeua death squad by Pará government authorities indicates that the state has enjoyed a more resilient oversight structure than in places like Rio, where state authorities have flagrantly refused to combat death squads and militias for decades (Manso, 2020). The onset of the Barbalho government in January 2019 represented a particularly important juncture when it comes to political control over policing. Rather than turning a blind eye like the previous administration, the Barbalho government took a more aggressive approach against criminal police groups, as evinced by the launch of Operation Anonymous in March of that year. Whilst a militarised approach to public security remains in place, the Barbalho government focused on curbing police killings and empowering prosecutors to investigate police criminals in earnest. This led to a greater degree of accountability and civilian

control over police forces, which in turn damaged the prospects of groups like the Ananindeua outfit.

However, there are other issues worth bearing in mind that signal that forms of institutional deviance which favour criminal police groups are on the rise in the state of Pará. The same Barbalho administration that stood out for its initial efforts to curb police criminality also appointed Sargent Silvano, as transport secretary at the state level, despite his links to both death squads studied in this chapter. Meanwhile, within two years of his involvement in the Ananindeua death squad becoming publicly known, Atayde became the chief of staff of Senna, one of the most powerful politicians in the state. Senna himself appears to have been associated with the death squad for his own electoral gain. These dynamics suggest that illicit police interests are becoming enduring features of the upper echelons of institutional politics in Pará, much as it has done in Rio over the last 30 years. Silvano's appointment also confirms that the transport market serves as a crucial nexus between politics and crime, far more than drugs-focused scholarship has so far unpacked. With these egregious and persisting forms of impunity and institutional connivance, police criminality can continue to be a prominent feature of Belém's socio-political fabric.

Chapter VIII. Conclusion

Introduction

The thesis has traced the efforts by police officers to create criminal enterprises capable of controlling illicit transactions and governing urban communities in Belém. It has charted the ways in which police-backed criminal groups have interfered in the lives of tens of thousands of residents of Belém over the last 30 years. Studying death squads and militias that have emerged in Belém and its surrounding areas from the late 1980s to the late 2010s, the study reveals that the connections between illicit markets and law-enforcement violence help to shape irregular forms of political order and security provision. My empirical focus on Belém expands the scope and breadth of criminal governance scholarship. It shows the sustained historical patterns through which law-enforcement in Belém leveraged their coercive expertise and legal prerogative to deploy force to institute their own versions of criminal governance in the urban margins.

The empirical focus on Belém also illustrates some endogenous features of urban violence in the city which are propitious for comparative analysis. The fact that Belém's death squads and militias struggle to achieve institutional longevity is particularly distinctive, especially when compared to Rio's long-lasting forms of police criminality (Duarte, 2019). However, the short-lived nature of death squads and militias in Belém does not prevent police officers from continuously launching criminal groups. Furthermore, Belém's strategic location connecting the Amazon to global trade routes contributes to some of the unique dynamics of police criminality in the city. As discussed previously, Belém became an essential node for drug exports as well as a profitable local consumer market for drugs during the early 2000's. The onset of a sprawling drugs market in Belém in the 2000's led to an intensification of the activities of Brazil's largest DTOs in the city. Despite being only the 12th largest city in Brazil, Belém became a prominent area of operation for large criminal organisations connected to transnational market chains. This in turn ensured that the policy directives of the War on Drugs were implemented at an intense rate in the

city during the 2000's and 2010's, leading to a highly violent and highly competitive criminal landscape.

My study reveals that the police's role in these elevated levels of urban violence in Belém in the city was not just limited to raids of urban communities where the drug market became territorialised. Police officers made continuous efforts to invest in and profit from the drug trade. They did so through their own criminal enterprises in death squads and militias. In the process, I highlight that criminal groups run by police have significantly contributed to Belém's sprawling criminal ecosystem and its warzone levels of violence. The study also reveals that police-run criminal groups are increasingly influential in electoral politics. In the process, my research emphasizes that it is essential for scholars that focus on prominent hubs for criminal markets like Belém to keep in mind that police are often able to be at the forefront of criminal governance. My study reveals that embedded illicit interests in state institutions is a concerning and recurring issue in locations that are strategic for understanding urban violence and criminal governance.

In the remainder of this concluding chapter, I reiterate the main findings, discuss the limitations of the study, and reflect on the policy implications and the prospects for future research.

Revisiting the Argument

The study finds that militaristic public security policies played a central role in the proliferation of the police criminality phenomenon in Belém. The aggressive approach to confronting urban insecurity issues has also contributed to the endurance of police criminality. The study identifies two policy programs that were essential for police criminality to spread and persist over time: the launch of rapid-response elite units and the War on Drugs approach. Starting with the establishment of the Motorized Patrol in Rio in 1958, one of the major policy initiatives launched to address crime and violence in Brazil's major urban centres consisted of the creation of elite units comprised of officers with extensive track records in unlawful coercion. 30 years after the creation of the Motorized Patrol in Rio and its accompanying death squad set up by Sheriff Le Cocq, the Pará state government deployed the same policy mechanism in Belém. The PATAM mirrored the

Motorized Patrol almost to the letter, as its officers quickly took advantage of their autonomy and prerogative to deploy extreme coercion to accumulate illicit revenue through hired killings and protection rackets. The death squad phenomenon originally emerged through the work of elite unit officers in Belém, just as it did in Rio and in other major Brazilian cities. These elite officers eventually spread the techniques and strategies of police criminality throughout the law-enforcement hierarchy.

The implementation of elite militarised units was quickly accompanied by the shoot-to-kill policing strategies of the War on Drugs. I argue that the War on Drugs approach further incentivized police violence and curbed efforts at legal accountability of police work during the democratic transition in Brazil. Indeed, the persisting nature of the War on Drugs model of policing encapsulates the failure to reform public security institutions following the democratic transition. Brazil's democratic regime maintained the dictatorship's militarised model of law-enforcement. As a result, democratic institutions have had to coexist with a public security apparatus which in many ways, particularly in its combative approach towards drug-trafficking, continues to function as it did during the period of the military dictatorship. By framing urban insecurity issues around the armed confrontation of drug markets, training officers under a military doctrine and promoting forms of socialization within the police that prizes unlawful coercion, police institutions help to sustain police criminality. I also find that other policy mechanisms like legislation to give police access to weapons while off-duty also facilitated efforts by police officers to continuously get involved in criminal governance in Belém.

I also maintain that the exchange of repertoires of criminality and coercion amongst deviant police was crucial to the proliferation and persistence of death squads and militias. Following the dissolution of the PATAM, state officials refused to recognize that the iron-first approach to public security was generating unlawful police conduct. Oversight authorities also failed to glimpse that criminal governance expertise was being disseminated within the police

ranks, first by elite officers across Brazil's major urban centres and eventually from elite troops to conventional street-level officers within jurisdictions.

My study provides evidence that the circulation of criminal expertise is a recurrent feature of police agencies. This circulation of illicit expertise within the police has not been acknowledged by prior scholarship. The PATAM copied Le Cocq's Motorized Patrol in organizing criminal activities in accordance with their patrol areas. The PATAM also learned counterinsurgency tactics of coercion from the ROTA elite unit in São Paulo, and its officers deployed these tactics in their criminal endeavours. About a decade after the end of the PATAM, Rosevan incorporated the elite unit's on-duty racketeering strategies into the Icoaraci death squad's *modus operandi*. This was followed by the Justice League replicating the market transactions of Rio's militia and Pet going to Rio to learn first-hand from militia operatives. Leno recruited former operatives of the Uniformed Brothers militia to strengthen his death squad's coercive capacities, while the Ananindeua death squad took heed of prior forms of police criminality to interfere in clandestine transport by first charging vans for protection before taking over local cooperatives. These original insights provided by the thesis reveal that criminal knowledge transfer within law-enforcement persists over time, and with it, so does police criminality.

Over the course of the thesis, various examples of institutional impunity within the police stand out as contributing factors to this process of knowledge transfer. Whether it was the likes of Pet and Silinho retaining their police affiliations despite several homicide charges against them, or Leonardo, the leader of the Ananindeua death squad, being able to work for several years in the city's transport secretariat on an irregular basis with the connivance of police authorities, we see internal procedures of law-enforcement agencies continuously protecting deviant officers. These forms of impunity allowed officers to retain their police affiliations and spread their criminal governance know-how throughout the police force. For many of the officers involved in death squads and militias, exchanging illicit expertise and participating in criminal governance becomes

a viable option for them to supplement their police income and exert political authority in their communities.

Whereas prior ‘bad-apple’ explanations of police deviance interpreted unlawful policing as the result of limited state capacity or the corruptibility of individual officers to stray from institutional norms, I argue that the institutional design of policing and public security policies are often responsible for promoting police criminality. Death squads and militias are prominent providers of criminal governance in Brazil *because* of the structures and the functions of police. Contexts like Brazil’s help to reveal that legal institutions are often responsible for driving high levels of violence and official institutions are often at the forefront of criminal governance.

Furthermore, I argue that the structures and functions of Brazil’s public security ecosystem feeds into another important factor in the proliferation of police criminality: direct forms of support from police institutions. Death squad and militias are able to engage in criminal governance with logistical aid from police agencies. Police criminals take advantage of the militarized structures of policing to obtain weapons, vehicles and personnel from their places of work. In the zero-sum ‘cops versus bandits’ approach that the police abide to, death squads and militias are often perceived as part and parcel of law-enforcement efforts to combat criminality. This strong *esprit de corps*, in which vigilante police and retired officers are still seen as part of law-enforcement, facilitates non-enforcement or selective enforcement by police institutions against death squads and militias. Police criminality is therefore able to expand across jurisdictions and within large urban centres because police criminals are able to leverage their institutional affiliations to develop profitable illicit enterprises.

Whether it was a lack of investigative scrutiny on their criminal activities, the provision of patrol cars and weapons or the sharing of intelligence reports on criminal rivals, all of the death squads and militias studied in this thesis obtained some sort of assistance from police agencies. The criminal embeddedness framework is useful to interpret these findings. It reveals that crime is indelibly tied to the state, and not just through states’ prerogative to prohibit certain economic

sectors, as previous research has acknowledged (Barnes, 2017). In fact, the surpassing of legal norms is a recurrent feature of police work. As exemplified by the Ananindeua and M da Pedreira death squads, more recent iterations of police criminality tend to rely less on police support, preferring to develop ties with political operatives. This finding indicates that contemporary police-run criminal groups rely on wider institutional connections beyond the police to advance their criminal endeavours. Nevertheless, these police criminals continue to benefit from selective or non-enforcement to engage in criminal activity.

Moreover, I find that the importance of reputation identified in prior scholarly work into conventional criminal groups (Gambetta, 1996; Moncada, 2021) is also applicable to the proliferation of criminal groups run by police officers. In the case of death squads and militias, reputation has dual purposes of strengthening the standing of police criminals within both law-enforcement agencies and local communities. Many of the death squads and militia leaders studied in this thesis were widely known as experts in violence in their turf and as highly trained and fearless officers within the police. Police criminals were able to recruit law-enforcement colleagues who respected their coercive prowess into their death squads and militia groups. At the same time, these officers were also known to take the law into their own hands in their home turfs. This street-level clout served to coerce local merchants and residents to comply with governance measures imposed by death squad and militias. Through their police criminality activities, these officers went from being local vigilantes to becoming local bosses in a more expansive sense. The likes of Pet and Rosevan were able to harness their police standing and expertise in illicit violence to impose rules and settle disputes in their communities.

However, as with police support, reputation is a less pertinent feature of enduring police criminality. New generations of police criminals do not need to develop these dual forms of reputation within the police and their local communities. Instead, they can take advantage of the precedents set by prior iterations of death squads and militias to create criminal enterprises that are directly embedded in state institutions. With the police criminality phenomenon becoming

increasingly prevalent, the officers involved in these groups do not need to stand out as experts in violence or as local leaders. The newer generation of police criminals can also recruit operatives who have experience in prior death squads and militias to make up for their own lack of clout.

These distinctions regarding what explains proliferation and what explains the persistence of police criminality indicates the potential benefits of undertaking a longitudinal approach to understand police criminality in Belém. Spanning the last 30 years of urban violence in Belém, the study traces the gradual rise of large illicit markets in the city. The expansion of illicit trades had limited applicability to explain the proliferation police criminality. However, it heavily contributed to the long-lasting nature of death squads and militias throughout these 30 years. During the early days of the police criminality phenomenon with the PATAM patrols in late 1980s and early 1990s, the elite-run death squads were unable to take advantage of an ample criminal ecosystem with which to generate unlawful revenue. Instead, they generated gains through hired killings and protection rackets with local merchants.

However, the explosive growth in drug-trafficking both for retail and wholesale purposes throughout Belém's metropolitan region during the early 2000's led successive generations of police officers to try their hand in criminal governance, often as a means to obtain additional income to offset their meagre police wages. From the Icoaraci outfit to the more recent case of the Ananindeua death squad in the late 2010s, police criminality is able to persist because of the enduring prospects for law-enforcement officers to obtain revenue in highly lucrative illicit markets. When it came to the drugs market, police initially enacted protection rackets involving drug-traffickers. Police criminality was able to remain a salient phenomenon by moving on from simple protection arrangements with drug operatives. With the consolidation of drug-trafficking as the dominant criminal trade in the city, police criminals moved to directly control local drug sales in their turf, in an effort to obtain larger profit shares of this burgeoning market.

I find that death squads and militias consistently reinvested drug proceeds into a variety of criminal trades, including gambling, weapons trafficking, hired killings and even home burglaries.

By the 2010s, clandestine transport emerged as the other major unlawful market in which police criminals could stake their claim. This market was a product of irregular and accelerated forms of urbanization, and the inability of official institutions to provide adequate transport infrastructure in the urban margins. The Uniformed Brothers militia and the Ananindeua death squad took note of the emergence of clandestine transport as a viable source of illicit funds. It is also not a coincidence that the two groups in question were the two units of analysis of this study with the most extensive political connections. In fact, I argue that intensified interactions with political operatives is fundamental to the persistence of police criminality. The rise of the electoral popularity of shoot-to-kill policing propelled officers with track records in unlawful violence into successful political careers.

I argue that, while in office, these police vigilantes help to protect the interests of police-run criminal groups. Persisting links between police criminality and an electorally prominent law-enforcement caucus therefore strengthens the ability of death squads and militias to provide unlawful forms of order in the urban margins. It is important to reiterate that these links also threaten to derail the quality of democracy in Brazil. Death squads and militias are regularly hired by politicians to engage in vote-buying, electoral gatekeeping and hired killings of their political rivals. Scholars are increasingly interested in examining the ways in which law and order politicians in several countries including Brazil have accumulated unprecedented power to influence public security in an informal manner (Novaes 2023; Laterzo, 2023). My study confirms that this research agenda also has to incorporate the electoral interests of police-run criminal groups.

Taking these factors into account, my study provides a novel perspective to understand urban violence and criminality. The dominant account of high levels of violence and crime in Brazil and elsewhere focuses on the actions of conventional criminal groups (Beato, 2019; Flom, 2022). This dominant approach maintains that it is organised crime that drives negative effects on public security (Fontes, 2018; Gonzalez, 2021). The role of the police is often framed as efforts to combat crime and violence (Lessing, 2017; Manso & Dias, 2018). Alternatively, scholars are attuned to the

corrupt links between police and crime (Auyero & Sobering, 2019). I argue that these dominant frames do not account for the entire span of police-crime relations. Police officers often surpass these conventional interactions of combatting or being corrupted by crime. They leverage their law-enforcement status to directly participate in criminal trade and unlawful governance. These forms of direct police involvement in criminality help to shape urban violence and political order and have to be incorporated into scholarly analysis of criminal governance. The thesis addresses the urgency of the police criminality problem, both in its ability to adapt to different jurisdictions and to persist over time. It therefore provides a template for future research to not accept the conventional accounts of the relations between police and crime as a universal given.

Future Research & Policy Implications

My argument that interactions between law-enforcement and criminality often translates on an empirical basis to the creation of illicit enterprises by police officers is relevant to the Brazilian context on a national level. Police criminality is able to proliferate even in contexts where illicit revenue streams are restricted. This is concerning for jurisdictions throughout the country, which are not hotspots of criminality but may nevertheless be exposed to the possibility of their law-enforcement contingents creating death squads and militias. Crucially, it is also applicable beyond Brazil's borders, as it can allow researchers to consider the impact of violent and unlawful police conduct on social life as the result of internal dynamics of law-enforcement, rather than as consequences of the corruptibility of state agents at the individual level.

Nevertheless, as with any research that engages in case studies (Geddes, 1990; Flybjerg, 2011), questions surrounding generalizability is an issue that my study must confront. One might argue that the contributions of the study are empirically restricted to its field site. My research has sought to recognize this issue by examining the specific contours of each death squad and militia that was studied, whilst also considering their relevance beyond the specific circumstances of Belém. In any case, my postdoctoral research will aim to examine the relevance of the findings unearthed in this thesis to other locations, thereby enhancing the wider applicability of my work.

My future research will also move on from this thesis' most-similar approach to compare death squads with militias across different jurisdictions. In the process, this research program will build on this study's conceptual distinctions by coming to grips with the different ways in which death squads and militias pursue criminal governance. In the Brazil context, the state of Bahia would be a fruitful research site to further study the proliferation and persistence of different types of police criminality. Police in Bahia (another major drug-trafficking node in Brazil) are replicating police criminals in Rio and Belém. They are engaging in unprecedented levels of lethality in the line of duty, whilst also launching criminal enterprises that are competing with DTOs for territorial presence in the urban margins (Oliveira, 2023)

Going forward, the research will also seek to pay attention to the relation between criminal groups run by police and threats to democracy. The thesis' findings regarding the assistance that death squads and militias provide to law-and-order politicians indicates that the authoritarian political agenda of the far-right is increasingly reliant on elective affinities with vigilante police. I will therefore consider the ways in which police criminality is helping to drive antidemocratic and far-right political mobilization in Brazil. Other opportunities to study police criminality beyond Brazil will also be contemplated, particularly in countries that are also affected by large-scale illicit markets, police violence and urban informality.

In terms of other limitations, I acknowledge that the thesis' explorative nature may also overlook or downplay other causal mechanisms affecting police criminality. For example, I do not consider whether police-backed criminal governance is able to expand and persist because these groups are able to harness at least some degree of legitimacy from residents of their territories. In addition, the scope of the study did not allow for extensive analysis into why death squad and militia groups in Belém struggle to last beyond a consecutive two-year period. In Chapter VII, I note that the varying forms of institutional control over police forces has impacted the durability of recently established death squads. However, future research can look into this issue of longevity further.

In any case, the thesis has raised glaring policy-related issues around the lack of civilian oversight over police activity and the limits of democratic control over law-enforcement in Brazil. My study of police criminality in Belém confirms that the Amazon region is a crucial global transshipping route for licit and illicit goods. Future studies can mobilize these insights to scrutinize the impact of illicit police conduct on the various illicit trades that are driving environmental devastation in the rainforest (GI-TOC, 2023). The thesis' analytical focus on police-backed criminal governance in one of the major population centres of the Amazon can be applied to the wider rainforest region to better understand the role of state-backed criminal groups in illegal logging, clandestine gold mining and wildlife trafficking.

Moreover, under current conditions, state governors in Brazil have nominal control over police forces. That rarely translates into practice, since the colonels who command the police frequently circumvent the orders of governor-appointed public security secretaries to set their own policies (Gonzalez, 2021). My study finds that this notion that the police operate autonomously from elected officials and judiciary bodies percolates throughout the law-enforcement hierarchy. At the street-level, police leverage this logic to operate at the margins of the law and create illicit enterprises.

I argue that the de-militarization of police structures is an essential policy solution to confront police criminality. The demilitarization policy agenda in which my research is implicated resonates beyond Brazil, as scholarship and segments of public discourse around the world are aiming to challenge dominant perceptions of violent policing as a necessary measure to confront criminality (Magaloni, Melo & Robles, 2023; Vitale, 2017; Go, 2023). Reforming disciplinary and oversight units in the police constitute the major de-militarization measure that could be employed on a short-term basis to combat police criminality in Brazil. A recurrent feature of this study consisted of death squad and militia operatives receiving no punishments or amenable penalties from police ombudsman authorities, before being able to return to their criminal activities

seamlessly. In fact, internal inspectors' units within the Military Police often lack funds and personnel to adequately investigate deviant police (Cruz, Cubas & Funari, 2020).

Disciplinary bodies within police bureaucracies must be empowered to remove deviant police from the line of duty and from police employment in an expedited fashion. This would constitute a major deterrent against new generations of police officers interfering in criminal markets. In addition, new legislation to revoke the authority of military courts over police matters would also ensure the end of a permissive attitude by oversight authorities for law-enforcement to engage in unlawful violence. Revoking the prerogative of military courts would also allow civilian prosecutors to be able to investigate police criminals on a more ample basis, rather than placing the burden on military prosecutors who often suffer from greater budgetary and institutional constraints to hold deviant police to account.

Crucially, demilitarisation initiatives have the potential of promoting effective policy responses that specifically target death squads and militias. When it comes to death squads, altering the operational norms of police patrols from a counterinsurgency repressive approach to a demilitarised and preventative directive would go a long way towards inhibiting the ability of police officers to launching death squads during their on-duty work. On the other hand, militias offer more challenges when it comes to policy solutions. With their more sophisticated organizational structure, their ability to rule communities on a day-to-day basis, and the various ways in which they are able to infiltrate state institutions, militia governance requires a coordinated response at the national level in Brazil. This response would have to include greater scrutiny by electoral oversight authorities and federal prosecutors to investigate instances of armed electioneering by militias and exposing the institutional actors that aid these groups. This coordination at the national level would also require federal law-enforcement to scrutinize militias' financial flows to determine their expansive influence over property and transport markets and campaign financing.

In addition, the study has focused on the ineffectiveness of the tough-on-crime public security policy paradigm in controlling violence and crime. Rather than sustaining this militaristic

approach to public safety, my research emphasizes the need to value the investigative capacities of police. This would entail merging the Civil and Military police in Brazil. Such a reform would ensure that the public security budget can be directed towards elucidating crimes, rather than the current approach in which the Military Police enjoys supremacy when it comes to budget and personnel. Merging the Civil and Military police forces would therefore help to address the basic failings of police in Brazil, in which less than fifteen percent of homicide investigations are able to identify the culprit (Fórum Brasileiro de Segurança Pública, 2023b).

A unified structure would move away from the current approach in which the bulk of everyday police work consists of heavily armed soldiers who are trained to combat internal enemies being sent on patrols (Soares, 2019). Demilitarising the operational directives of policing could therefore offset the violent mores of police culture that feed into the police criminality phenomenon. It would also ensure that civilian control over policing could exist in practice, as representatives of elected officials would have the authority to set policy and adequately oversee police activity. This civilian control over policing institutions would in turn rein in the police's longstanding notion that it operates outside the sphere of democratic politics.

Issues around the pernicious effects of armed repression of illicit markets is another internationally relevant policy implication of my research. The rise of death squads and militias was accelerated by the War on Drugs, which took off in Brazil during the early 1990s. Thirty years on, the idea that such a large and socially relevant criminal market can be simply vanquished through police repression continues to be official policy. However, as my study shows, this approach has failed to dislodge the drug trade, led to the extrajudicial killings of thousands of residents of the urban margins and has reinforced the unlawful tendencies of the police. The treatment of drugs as a public health problem and initiatives to consider the legal regulation of drug purchases would go a long way towards closing the opportunities for police to generate revenue in the profitable drug trade. Legislative authorities in Brazil are currently going in the opposite direction, as they are seeking to impose harsher sentences for drug possession and

trafficking. With an increasingly prohibitive stance towards drugs issues, the prospect of police criminality continuing to emerge will remain strong.

Finally, this study seeks to guide scholars, policy experts and security personnel to come to terms with the origins, expansion and resilience of police criminality. In tracing the contours of this salient and little understood feature of urban violence and contemporary political order, my research aims to contribute to efforts to halt the police criminality phenomenon's startling capacity for regeneration. The fact that death squads and militias expand and persist in Brazil serves as a warning for other countries. Iron-fist approaches to confront insecurity and organised crime are increasingly popular around the world (Moncada, 2021; Laterzo, 2023). Policies that allow police to engage in violence with minimal oversight have been a feature of Brazilian social life over the last 60 years. The thesis has shown that these policies have not only failed to curb criminality and improve public security, but they have also empowered police to become important stakeholders in criminal governance.

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Appendix I: List of Interviews

Police Personnel

- Military Police Coronel José Vicente Braga da Silva (former commander of the Military Police Internal Inspectors Unit). Interview on January 26, 2022 & March 22, 2022.
- Military Police Coronel Sandoval Bittencourt de Oliveira Neto (former commander of the COE special operations police unit and the ROTAM elite police unit). Interview on September 14, 2022 & September 21, 2022.
- Military Police Coronel Albernando Monteiro da Silva (former commander of the Military Police Internal Inspectors Unit). Interviewed on March 17, 2022
- Military Police Coronel Ricardo André Bilóia da Silva (current commander of the Military Police Internal Inspectors Unit). Interviewed on September 15, 2022
- Military Police Coronel Fábio Lobo (current second in command of the Internal Inspectors Unit). Interviewed on September 15, 2022.
- Military Police Sergeant Renato. Interview on September 15, 2022

Prosecutors

- Prosecutor Armando Brasil Teixeira (Chief Prosecutor of the Military Judiciary in Belém since the 1990s). Interviewed on September 15, 2022 & June 20, 2023
- Prosecutor Sávio Brabo (Prosecutor overseeing 2022 election oversight in Belém. Previously a member of the State Prosecutor's Organised Crime Taskforce in the 2000's). Interviewed on September 20, 2022

Government Officials

- Pará State Congressman Carlos Bordalo (President of the Human Rights Commission in the State Legislature and head of the 2014-15 parliamentary commission on criminal police groups). Interview on February 23, 2022.
- Antonio Cruz (Civil Servant, pseudonymized). Interview on March 9, 2022.
- Eliana Fonseca (Ombudsman of Secretariat of Public Security of Pará State from 2011 to 2017). Interview on August 10, 2022.

Civil Society (pseudonymized)

- Laura Guimarães (criminal attorney). Interview on February 8, 2022
- Paulo André (criminal attorney). Interview on February 8, 2022
- Clara Silveira (human rights activist). Interview on February 24, 2022
- Amanda Leão (social worker). Interview on February 24, 2022
- Lucio Santos (journalist). Interview on June 7, 2023

Local Scholars

- Prof. Aiala Colares Couto. Interviewed on July 23, 2021.
- Prof. Jean-François Yves Deluchey (also a former public security advisor of the Pará State Government). Interviewed on February 3, 2022.

Distribution of Interviews

Interviewee Role	Number of Interviewees	Number of Interviews
Police Officers	6	8
Public Prosecutors	2	3
Elected Officials/Government Ministers	2	2
Criminal attorneys	2	2
Civil Servant	1	1
Activists/Social workers	2	2
Local scholars	2	2
Journalists	1	1
Total	18	21

Appendix II: Judicial and Government Sources

Judicial and Government Archives

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