The New Christian Militarism: Evangelical Base-Building with the Police in Brazil

Rodrigo Duque Estrada Campos

PhD

University of York

Department of Politics and International Relations

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Abstract

This thesis investigates the impact of religious activism in the security sector in Brazil. Specifically, it analyses the role of nation-wide, Evangelical base-building projects with the police forces in the context of the dramatic political, economic, and social shifts the country has witnessed in the last decade - of which the election of a far-right government under Jair Bolsonaro in 2018 was its staunchest expression. I argue that powerful Evangelical actors in civil society have succeeded in constructing socially effective and politically consequential solidarity networks with many police organisations, in a process that merges faith-based, missionary activism with militarised police power. I call this merger the new Christian Militarism and empirically locate these base-building initiatives as one piece of a complex mosaic where Evangelical ideology and militarised social practices entwine in a wider strategy of social ordering. To understand this phenomenon, I conduct a qualitative historical analysis on the development of Christian Militarism in Brazil and an idiographic case study of Evangelical military chaplaincy organisations, which have grown exponentially in the last decade. Although fieldwork data draws from a wide range of military chaplaincies operating within police institutions, I provide an in-depth analysis of two specific organisations that are at the forefront of this expansion: *PMs de Cristo* (‘Officers of Christ’) and *Ministérios Pão Diário* (‘Our Daily Bread’). Employing analytical techniques such as thematic analysis, document analysis, literature review, and semi-structured interviews, I address the social base, ideology, and political project of those organisations, and analyse their relationship to the contemporary far-right. This thesis contributes to current debates on far-right politics in the Global South and adds to the pool of knowledge on the intersections between religion and security in Brazil.

List of Contents

List of Tables and Figures

List of Illustrations

List of Abbreviations

To facilitate consultation, only abbreviations that appeared more than once in the thesis were included in this list.

ACISO	Ações Cívico-Sociais (Social-Civic Actions)
ACMEB	Aliança Evangélica Pró-Capelania Militar e de Segurança Pública do Brasil (Evangelical Pro-Military and Public Security Chaplaincy Alliance of Brazil)
AIB	Ação Integralista Brasileira (Brazilian Integralist Action)
AMME	Associação Missionária dos Militares Evangélicos (Missionary Association of the Evangelical Military)
ANC	Assembleia Nacional Constituinte (National Constituent Assembly)
ANL	Aliança Nacional Libertadora (National Liberation Alliance)
CNV	Comissão Nacional da Verdade (National Truth Commission)
ESG	Escola Superior de Guerra (Superior War College)
FBSP	Fórum Brasileiro de Segurança Pública (Brazilian Forum of Public Security)
FPE	Frente Parlamentar Evangélica (Evangelical Parliamentary Front)
FPSP	Frente Parlamentar de Segurança Pública (Public Security Parliamentary Front)
GLO	Garantia da Lei e da Ordem (Law and Order Guarantee)
GPS	Global Police State
IURD	Igreja Universal do Reino de Deus (Universal Church of the Kingdom of God)
MC	Military Chaplaincy
MDB	Movimento Democrático Brasileiro (Brazilian Democratic Movement Party)
MINUSTAH	Mission des Nations Unies pour la stabilisation en Haïti (United Nations Mission for the Stabilisation of Haiti)
MJSP	Ministério da Justiça e Segurança Pública (Ministry of Justice and Public Security)
MPD	Ministérios Pão Diário (Our Daily Bread Ministries)

PCB	Partido Comunista Brasileiro (Brazilian Communist Party)
PDSP	Pão Diário Segurança Pública (Our Daily Bread Public Security)
PL	Partido Liberal (Liberal Party)
PMDF	Polícia Militar do Distrito Federal (Military Police of the Federal District)
PMESP	Polícia Militar do Estado de São Paulo (Military Police of the State of São Paulo)
PRB	Partido Republicano Brasileiro (Brazilian Republican Party)
PRONASCI	Programa Nacional de Segurança com Cidadania (National Programme of Security with Citizenship)
PRÓ-VIDA	Programa Nacional de Qualidade de Vida para Profissionais de Segurança Pública (National Programme on the Quality of Life for Public Security Professionals)
PSC	Partido Social Cristão (Social Christian Party)
PSD	Partido Social Democrático (Democratic Social Party)
PSDB	Partido da Social Democracia Brasileira (Brazilian Social Democracy Party)
PT	Partido dos Trabalhadores (Workers' Party)
PTB	Partido Trabalhista Brasileiro (Brazilian Labour Party)
SENASP	Secretaria Nacional de Segurança Pública (National Secretary of Public Security)
SUSP	Sistema Único de Segurança Pública (Unified Public Security System)
UDN	União Democrática Nacional (National Democratic Union)
UFP	Universal nas Forças Policiais (Universal in the Police Forces)
UMCEB	União de Militares Cristãos Evangélicos do Brasil (Union of Christian Evangelical Military of Brazil)
UMESC	União de Militares Evangélicos de Santa Catarina (Union of the Evangelical Military from Santa Catarina)
UPP	Unidade de Polícia Pacificadora (Pacifying Police Unit)

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Author’s Declaration

I declare that this thesis is a presentation of original work and I am the sole author. This work has not previously been presented for an award at this, or any other, University. All sources are acknowledged as References.

Chapter 1 - Introduction

I am no doubt a pacifier. But I believe I can pacify with guns in hands (Ramos, Evangelical pastor, 2022).

During a late-night patrol in Ribeirão Pires, a small town in the metropolitan region of São Paulo, an Evangelical pastor named Rafael was called by the commander of the 30th Battalion of the Military Police: "we have a case we believe is of spiritual nature". Rafael, who also worked as a voluntary chaplain with police officers, knew this was a special request. He was not being asked to bless the troops with Biblical sermons before their shift started - which he was accustomed to doing as a member of the *PMs de Cristo* ('Officers of Christ') association. For him, this was a divine calling, an opportunity to contribute to a police operation. When Rafael arrived at the scene, there were four police cars parked outside a suburban house. The police, "sweating and exhausted", could not explain what was happening: "something weird, an impressive force". They had been trying to immobilise a woman inside the house, but to no avail. Rafael asked them to wait outside: "Please, it is an issue I will explain after".

Chaplain Rafael walked in the house to inspect the situation. The woman "literally flew at him" violently, and Rafael realised it was "a matter of demonic possession". He raised one hand while holding the Bible with the other and began exorcising the spirit out of the woman's body. Then, "she dropped to the floor, he picked her up, and she came back to normal". Next, Rafael received "an orientation from God", some kind of a "vision about a child". The woman realised it was her grandson, who was found in a room with a "fractured arm, possibly because of the reactions of this woman" while she was possessed. The chaplain brought the child outside to the police. Taken by surprise with the oddity of the situation, the officer in charge asked Rafael what he thought they should do with the woman, to which he replied: "Nothing. Let her follow on with her life in peace, it is solved".

The story above was shared with me by chaplain Mendes in our interview during my fieldwork visit to the headquarters of *PMs de Cristo* in São Paulo. Anecdotal or not, Mendes said it was one "among many other experiences that have occurred within police battalions". While he toured me around the office, I came across a room equipped with many desktop computers and headsets, which were being set up to function like a call centre for chaplains to connect directly with the police. Speaking to another pastor, Silveira, who coordinates the

Universal nas Forças Policiais (Universal in the Police Forces - UFP), a nation-wide chaplaincy project run by the mega-church *Igreja Universal do Reino de Deus* (Universal Church of the Kingdom of God - IURD), I asked him if Evangelical chaplains were engaging in more than just providing 'spiritual assistance' to the police - perhaps contributing to fighting organised crime? "We already do this", he replied. According to him, criminals typically have "a family member from the church, so the church is a very strong point of connection between local communities and the police".

I was intrigued and puzzled by this. Brazil is officially a secular state, meaning it is constitutionally forbidden for public institutions to create "relationships of dependence or alliance with churches or religious sects", or to create "distinctions between Brazilians and preferences among them" (Brazil, 1988). In practice, secularism has never been fully achieved in Brazil, and the place of religion in the public sphere is a very disputed topic politically as well as legally. However, the enmeshment of religion with policing, in the form of 'spiritual assistance' to officers or as 'back-ups' in police operations, seemed to add another layer of complexity to this issue, especially given the historically violent and militarised forms of policing in Brazil. Bishop Garcia, working in the same project as Silveira, told me that "this thing of saying that the state is secular is bit of a hypocrisy". He continued: "you walk in various security institutions, there is a Catholic chapel [...] there is an image of a patron saint". He was right. In many Brazilian public institutions - even in the Supreme Court - there are Catholic crosses nailed to the walls. Garcia's reflection was clear: after centuries of Catholic hegemony, why should Evangelicals, the fastest growing religious group in Brazil, not also contend for the hearts and minds of the police?

'Spiritual assistance', however, is far from being just a problem of law or inter-religious competition. When mixed with politics - specifically far-right politics - it can have far-reaching consequences. Take, for instance, the case of Silvinei Vasques, then General-Director of the Federal Highway Police under the government of Jair Bolsonaro (2019-2022). Vasquez - who is now arrested for attempting to obstruct the elections in 2022 - worked to implement a 'Spiritual Assistance' project for all 27 units of the Highway Police. In the ceremony that officialised the project, Vasquez remarked it had two objectives: first, to "save many lives"; second, to "bring security to those officers who, by virtue of law, the force of events, and by necessity, had to kill criminals, so that they can understand that the work within legality also has spiritual support". He concluded, "this is very important". Now, take this logic and multiply it in a country that has around 90 different police institutions of various types (military, civil,

federal, highway, forensic, judicial, etc.). Pastor Almeida, from the *Ministérios Pão Diários* (Our Daily Bread Ministries - MPD), a church that worked closely with the government, provided me with an estimate of what Bolsonaro's administration was pursuing: a federal public policy to train a workforce of "10,000 voluntary" chaplains. Although well-intentioned from a missionary perspective, especially considering the precarity of police labour in Brazil, there is a need to reflect critically on the instrumentalisation of military chaplaincies within institutions dedicated to the control and use of collective violence (Bergen, 2004).

This thesis investigates the impact of religious activism in the security sector in Brazil. Specifically, it analyses the role of nation-wide, Evangelical base-building projects with the police forces in the context of the dramatic political, economic, and social shifts the country has witnessed in the last decade - of which the election of a far-right government under Jair Bolsonaro in 2018 was its staunchest expression.[1] I argue that powerful Evangelical actors in civil society have succeeded in constructing socially effective and politically consequential solidarity networks with many police organisations, in a process that merges faith-based, missionary activism with militarised police power, that is, the structures engaged in the deployment of state violence. I call this merger the new Christian Militarism and empirically locate these base-building initiatives as one piece of a complex mosaic where Evangelical ideology and militarised social practices entwine in a wider strategy of social ordering. Below I offer a brief contextualisation and outline the research puzzle this thesis addresses.

1.1 The research puzzle

We live in times of accentuated global crises, of which the mainstreaming of far-right governments across the Global North and South is a complex and multifaceted symptom (Bello, 2019; Pinheiro-Machado and Vargas-Maia, 2023). In Brazil, despite sharing many characteristics with, and indeed borrowing its repertoire from, other far-right social forces in places like the US, India, Europe, Philippines, and Israel, the far-right turn is also linked to a distinctively national context of transformations in state and society. Although having deeper historical roots in different social movements and political regimes of the twentieth century

[1] Activism can be broadly understood as varied forms of lobbying for social change from left to right of the political spectrum (Millward and Takhar, 2019; Bob, 2012). Although 'activism' and 'base-building' are often interchangeable terms, in this thesis I consider the latter to be a specific type of activism, emphasising the construction of a social base, a common ideological worldview, and a political project of social transformation. On leftist base-building see Peloso (2012) and Sen (2003).

(Kaysel, 2015; Deutsch, 1999), its recent re-emergence in a democratic setting is linked to a juncture of economic and political crisis that began in the early 2010s after a cycle of economic prosperity and social inclusion represented by the years of the *Partido dos Trabalhadores* (Workers' Party - PT) in power, with the governments of Lula da Silva (2003-2010) and Dilma Rousseff (2011-2016). However, a series of events taking place towards the end of president Rousseff's first mandate (2011-2014) led to the fall of the PT and the retrenchment of progressive politics in Brazil (Cruz et al., 2015). From the June 2013 mass demonstrations, which introduced new forms of political participation by subaltern layers as well as right-wing mobilisation, through to the cycle of middle-class protests in 2015 and 2016, the PT was unable to sustain its government coalition and retain political support from dominant elites (Saad Filho and Morais, 2019).

Over a year into Rousseff's second mandate, all the optimism that the PT had embodied was reversed, when Congress voted to impeach her in August 2016 on grounds of 'creative accounting', which many have interpreted as a parliamentary coup (Jinkings et al., 2016). Coupled by a large economic recession, the crisis resulted in the reactivation of far-right forces, which began summoning symbolic associations of the PT with the threat of 'communism', 'the end of the traditional family', 'child eroticization in schools', among other conspiracy theories (Lacerda, 2019).

Although Bolsonaro himself was no outsider to politics, having held a parliamentary mandate for nearly 30 years, his campaign in 2018 managed to articulate the image of an anti-establishment leader fighting against elite privileges, corruption, and being tough on crime. His campaign slogan, "Brazil above everything, God above all", recasting an old slogan from the Armed Forces during the military dictatorship (1964-1985), was a testament to the profound changes the country was undergoing.

Many have interpreted this critical juncture as giving way to a process of de-democratisation in Brazil (Pinheiro-Machado et al., 2019; Fernandes, 2019), where powerful social forces articulated a far-right agenda with the objective to "revoke all that had been achieved in terms of democratization of society, reinvention of politics, and the welfare state since the 1980s" (Singer, 2018, p.1). On the other hand, the electoral success of the far-right also reflected the emergence of subjective forms of contestation which placed state violence and strong-man politics as a solution to the crisis (Pinheiro-Machado and Scalco, 2020; Anderson, 2019). For a large share of the popular classes that had their material conditions improved under the PT government, *Bolsonarismo*, the contemporary ideology of the far-right, represented a reactive solution to the looming threat of downward mobility and steep increase

in violent crimes (de Lima et al., 2020), which in 2018 alone victimised nearly 58,000 people from intentional homicides (FBSP, 2020, p. 7).

According to the literature, the contemporary far-right encompasses three broad and interrelated political agendas: 1) punitivism; 2) Christian family moralism; and 3) the neoliberal restructuring of the state (Lacerda, 2019; Webber, 2020; Almeida, 2019). While neoliberalism is not a novelty to the Brazilian right, it is the entwinement of Christian ideology with a politics of punishment and militarism that constitutes the element of radicalisation of the contemporary far-right (Lacerda, 2022; Feltran, 2020). Some elements of this entwinement coalesced politically after the 2014 legislative elections, which had elected "the most conservative Congress since military rule" (Souza and Caram, 2014). For example, between 2015-2018, the articulations between the Evangelical and Security caucuses proved decisive in Rousseff's impeachment proceedings. According to congressman Capitão Augusto from the *Partido Liberal* (Liberal Party - PL), "we share the same values. We help one another mutually, we integrate not only by name, for the record, but to effectively help in every project that they are supporting" (Medeiros and Fonseca, 2016). Lacerda's (2019, p. 201) study found that there was "association between being a police or military officer and participating in the evangelical caucus", and "in being protagonist in public security-related commissions and being a member of the Evangelical Front". However, it was Bolsonaro who capitalised on the far-right tide and best represented the entwinement of religious ideology with militarism.

A former captain of the Army, Bolsonaro has a long-term relationship with, and support from, security forces in the country, most notably the military, police forces, private security contractors and arms industry, as well as militia groups that dominate significant areas of the Rio de Janeiro state (Webber, 2020). Bolsonaro has throughout his career echoed a militarist discourse, hailing police brutality and opposing human rights activists. He considers the military coup of 1964 a "democratic revolution" whose mistake was "to torture but not kill" (Marin, 2019). Bolsonaro's security proposals included the legalization of torture, the reduction of the criminal age majority, the repeal of the disarmament statute, and the defence of lawfulness for police officers who kill while on duty.

However, it was the religious discourse that received larger electoral traction. Bolsonaro began mobilising themes of sexual morality after his re-election as a congressman to the Lower Chamber of Congress in 2014, when his electorate had grown 436% compared to his re-election in 2010 (Lacerda, 2019, p.187). This was largely due to the support he began receiving from Evangelicals in his constituency in the state of Rio de Janeiro. Although a life-long Catholic, Bolsonaro performed a public stunt in a visit to Israel in May 2016, where he was baptised in

the Jordan River by a far-right pastor from the Assembly of God church. Echoing conspiracy theories that the PT had a plan to destroy the 'traditional family' and indoctrinate children with 'Cultural Marxism', his 2018 campaign focused heavily on the weaponization of social media by spreading targeted fake news to Evangelicals (Cunha, 2022).

The weight of Evangelicals in Bolsonaro's election was decisive. After his attempted murder at a rally in September 2018, Bolsonaro took advantage from not participating in the electoral debates and instead gave long interviews to TV channels owned by Evangelical preachers, such as Edir Macedo, founder of IURD and president of *Grupo Record*, a media conglomerate including Brazil's second largest TV audience. Although Evangelicals are the second largest electorate (30%) in the country, falling behind Catholics (56%), they voted as a bloc to Bolsonaro, delivering 11 million votes to him in the second round. This was just above the difference that separated Bolsonaro from his opponent of PT, Fernando Haddad, who lost short of 10.76 million votes (Webber, 2020a, p.8).

If *Bolsonarismo* embodied and enabled those agendas while in power, their merger as a coherent set of discourse and practices preceded the far-right government. For instance, in Evangelical churches, the militarisation of prayer and religious liturgy has become increasingly notorious. In 2015, videos circulated by IURD sparked controversy showing young men dressed in moss-green t-shirts marching in military formation inside temples. They saluted the pastor and responded to orders with bravado: "Thanks to the Lord, today we are here ready for battle!" (Granjeia and Dantas, 2015). The young participants, part of the so-called *Gladiadores do Altar* ('Altar Gladiators'), were being prepared for pastoral life. A similar case was that of the *Batalhão da Patrulha da Paz* ('Peace Patrol Battalion'), an Evangelical group operating in marginalised areas of the Federal District since 2011. Wearing fake police uniforms and driving around in vehicles resembling police cars, they approached homeless individuals and drug addicts in so-called 'spiritual operations', with the aim of admitting them, sometimes forcefully, to Christian drug rehabilitation centres known as therapeutic communities (Audi, 2020).

In more extreme cases, religious leaders and security professionals with strong confessional bonds have sought to provide theological justification for police lethality and ways to smooth out potential contradictions between 'being Christian' and 'killing in duty'. For instance, pastor Lucinho Barreto, an influential preacher of the *Lagoinha* Baptist Church, used his Youtube channel in July 2013 to encourage police officers to "unload bullets" on criminals:

> Police officer, Christian or not, are you on duty? The Bible calls you agent of God, you are an emissary from Heaven, you are Jesus protecting our society. So, when the time comes and you have to use the pistol, there is no other way, brother, take the pistol and do not fire a few shots, fire lots […] The authority is backed by the Bible and by God to unload bullets in the face of people who do not wish to live according to our laws (Barreto, 2018).

Another social media influencer, Sgt. Passos, a police agent in the Special Operations Battalion of Rio de Janeiro' Military Police whose alias is 'Christ's Skull', corroborated this view. In an interview in June 2021, he declared:

> We do end up killing indeed [...] in the legal exercise of our function. But the Bible in Exodus, I cannot remember which verse, but the Bible and the Brazilian Penal Code back me. [I am Authorised] by God and by men [...] If Brazil decides to have the death penalty all of a sudden, that's backed [Biblically] (Passos, 2021).

In March 2022, a video in which a pastor blessed the guns of police officers in the state of Paraná went viral. Touching each firearm individually with his hands, Renê Arian, of the Agnus Church, prayed for Jesus to "anoint these guns" and "protect the population against bad men" (Arian and Barichello, 2022). The person recording the video, police commissioner Tito Barichello, now a far-right deputy at Paraná's State Assembly, thanked the pastor and said the guns will be used to "defend society" (Arian and Barichello, 2022). In December of that year, two weeks after the presidential elections, a police officer was recorded agitating the crowds at a far-right rally in Recife, state of Pernambuco, where protesters called for military intervention following the defeat of Bolsonaro to Lula da Silva, leader of the PT. In his dramatic testimony, the officer preached:

> Samuel says that God ordered him to anoint Saul as king. And he told Saul: attack the Amalekites. Kill everyone, including pregnant women, pierce the sword in [their] womb, because what is in there is the son of the Devil. We need to understand that these people from the PT [...] are sons of the Devil. I am a pastor, chaplain, captain, I am pro-guns. I am going to arm myself, because I am going to kill all of these devils (G1, 2022).

The examples above are not isolated phenomena. In a national survey conducted in 2017, 53% of respondents agreed totally or partially with the statement "the police officer is God's warrior whose objective is to impose order and protect the good citizens" (de Lima, 2020). Another survey conducted in 2020, already under Bolsonaro's government, mapped the online interactions of police officers in religious and pro-Bolsonaro social media pages and found that on average, 56% of the more radical and far-right manifestations were from

Evangelical officers, a number that stands well above the average national population that identifies as Evangelical, which at the time was 31% (FBSP, 2020b; G1, 2020)

The relationship between Evangelicals and security, or what I here call the New Christian Militarism, is well documented in the Brazilian literature. Scholars have observed the emergence of Evangelical drug cartels and militias (Teixeira, 2009; Hinz et al., 2021; Manso, 2023), the relationship between Evangelical legislators and hard-line security policies both in Congress and state-level assemblies (Lacerda, 2019; Novello and Alvarez, 2022), Evangelical activism in prisons (Pereira, 2017; Dias, 2005) and in drug rehabilitation centres (Cortez and Barroso, 2023), and the participation of Evangelical actors in military interventions, notably in the state of Rio de Janeiro (Machado et al., 2020; Machado, 2016). Although there is some work on Evangelicalism and policing (Albernaz 2010; Teixeira, 2008; Galdeano, 2014), this is more related to the construction of police sub-cultures rather than the mobilisation and activism of Evangelical groups within police institutions.

Moreover, in the burgeoning anglophone literature on the global far-right, there appears to be limited points of entry to discuss the activism of far-right religious movements in the security sector. While scholars have noted the relationship of far-right and security concerns, this is more on the affinities with securitisation discourses (McCluskey, 2019; Magcamit, 2017), security policies (Robinson, 2020; Fekete, 2018), or on counter-terrorist policies (Ahmed and Lynch, 2021) rather than social activism *within* security institutions such as the military and the police. Moreover, mainstream far-right studies tend to focus on top-down approaches to political analysis that emphasise electoral cycles, party politics, and elite-level articulations, with the aim to generate comparative inferences (Mudde and Kaitwasser, 2018; Norris and Inglehart, 2019). While this framing is certainly useful, it downplays important nuances between countries and different forms of manifestation of the far-right that are not readily captured by methodological nationalism, that is, the idea that the nation-state should be regarded as the principal unit of analysis (Saul et al., 2015). Underlying this limitation is a strong Western-centrism in the anglophone literature on the far-right (Pinheiro-Machado and Vargas-Maia, 2023), which lacks engagement with the distinctive nature and characteristics of far-right agency in Global South countries. This poses an interesting reflection on the social bases of the far-right in the Global South, especially from a bottom-up perspective that focuses on grassroots activism and articulations between civil society and police organisations. Thus, there is still a gap in the literature in terms of understanding the social base, ideology, and political impact of the entwinement of Evangelicalism and policing and its relationship to the far-right.

1.2 Research questions

The research puzzle and gaps identified above point to an important social and political phenomenon becoming increasingly prominent in state and society in Brazil. To better understand this phenomenon, this thesis sets to answer the following questions:

- What are the social bases of the far-right in Brazil?
- What is the relationship between security concerns and religious activism in the Brazilian far-right?
- How do Evangelical groups mobilise influence with the police forces?
- What are the political implications of this activism?

1.3 Research aims and design

To answer these research questions, this thesis aims to investigate the impact of Evangelical activism with the police forces in Brazil, in a timeframe spanning from the onset of the political crisis in Brazil in the early 2010s to the end of Bolsonaro's government in 2022. Given that this type of activism is a manifestation of a broader political trend, this research combines two methodologies: qualitative historical analysis and idiographic case study. Regarding historical analysis, this work seeks to understand how Christian Militarism has developed historically in Brazil and the more contextual form it has manifested in recent years. Regarding the case study, I propose an in-depth analysis of what appears to be the most influential and politically powerful contemporary manifestation of Christian Militarism: the case of Evangelical Military Chaplaincies operating within the police forces.

The Military Chaplaincy (MC) is an institution present in most military organisations and police forces around the world, whose objective is to provide pastoral care to officials, assists in morale-building of troops, advise superiors in religious matters, and engage with local civilians in areas of operation (Bergen, 2004). In Brazil, MCs are divided between institutional, that is, career military chaplains admitted as public servants, and voluntary, that is, chaplains from churches or religious organisations developing missionary activities.

In the last few years, the missionary market of spiritual assistance within the police forces in Brazil has gained a lot of traction among Evangelicals, who compete not only with

the legacy of the Catholic MC but also among themselves for the spiritual salvation of the police. My initial encounter with MCs was in 2020 upon reading a news article about UFP, a project coordinated by IURD. UFP is a nation-wide MC created in 2018 with the mission to "defend the teachings of the Bible within the Public Security Forces, the Armed Forces, and Governmental Institutions" (UFP, 2018). In their own words, UFP provides "spiritual and social assistance, as well as the human valorisation to the members of the Security Forces" through voluntary work and preaching events, having reportedly reached one million security agents in 2019 alone (Ballousier and Arcanjo, 2020).

Despite being the largest voluntary MC, many other Evangelical organisations have developed similar activities. In São Paulo, for instance, the Association of Evangelical Military Police officers, known as *PMs de Cristo* (Officers of Christ), have become the *de facto* MC of the state government, and since 2015 they established a partnership with the Military Police of the State of Sao Paulo to work in community policing projects. *PMs de Cristo* was founded in the 1990s and has since served as a model for other Evangelical MCs across the country, such as the *Sentinelas de Cristo* (Christ's Sentinels) in the state of Minas Gerais. Despite remaining largely unknown, *PMs de Cristo* has sometimes appeared in the media for their opposition to human rights groups in São Paulo as well as their pro-Bolsonaro activism (Furtado, 2017).

In January 2022, a news article reported that an Evangelical church called *Ministérios Pão Diário* (Our Daily Bread Ministries - MPD) had signed an agreement with the *Ministério da Justiça e Segurança Pública* (Ministry of Justice and Public Security - MJSP) under Bolsonaro to create a mobile app delivering religious messages to all security professionals in the country (Amado and Barreto, 2022). Titled *Pão Diário Segurança Pública* (Our Daily Bread Public Security - PDSP), the app offered daily meditations on the Bible, courses, podcasts, and videos created by many Evangelical military chaplains from across the country. With this agreement, it was becoming increasingly clear that MCs were being projected nationally and that *Bolsonarismo* was a vehicle for their expansion. These organisations were promoting their own national conferences to facilitate networking among Evangelical police officers; they maintained a robust presence on social media; and conducted internal studies in collaboration with Military Police commands to assess the impact of their own work. Moreover, military chaplains are also represented at the national level by two large associations: the *Aliança Evangélica Pró-Capelania Militar do Brasil* (Evangelical Pro-Military Chaplaincy Alliance of Brazil - ACMEB), which represents institutional MCs, and the *União de Militares Cristãos Evangélicos do Brasil* (Union of Christian Evangelical Military of Brazil - UMCEB), which represents voluntary MCs.

Very little is known about these organisations, and currently there is no study dissecting their recent growth and relationship to the far-right. When news broke about UFP and MPD, reaction on mainstream and progressive media outlets jumped to conclusions about the unconstitutional nature of their activities, notably the violation of the principle of separation between church and state (Dores, 2022), and to more politically charged opinions that churches were seeking to 'indoctrinate officers' or create 'private armies' (Teodoro, 2020). Despite being legitimate concerns, we are still left without an understanding of why and how these projects have thrived in recent years.

Concretely, the case study turns attention to the social base, ideology, and political project of Evangelical MCs, which I consider to be a contemporary form of Christian Militarism that is relevant to understanding far-right politics. To understand its social base, I conduct a broad analysis of the origins, practices, and recent growth of the Evangelical military chaplaincy by interviewing both institutional and voluntary chaplains from a wide range of organisations. My main interest is to understand the material foundations that allowed the exponential growth of Evangelical military chaplaincy projects, and how they are perceived as a strategic asset by police institutions.

In order to uncover the ideological basis of this type of Evangelical activism, I analyse one specific organisation which has set the template for all similar MC projects: The *PMs de Cristo*. Through interviews and thematic analysis of their own publications (printed and online), I seek to identify how they ideologically address two issues: police mandates broadly understood, which relates to notions of the role of police violence in the making of social order; and police-community relations, which reflects key elements of democratic politics.

To understand the political project of Evangelical military chaplaincies and the process of institutionalisation, I trace the development of the partnership between the transnational church MPD and MJSP under Bolsonaro's government from 2019 to 2022. Given that MPD is largely influenced by *PMs de Cristo*'s ideological framework, this cooperation agreement has the potential to indicate the degree of institutionalisation of Evangelical MCs at the national level. This part of the research was done through interviews and analysis of official government documentation pertaining to the Spiritual Assistance public policy – an unexpected discovery from fieldwork - which was made available via two freedom of information requests to MJSP, in June 2022 and August 2023 respectively.

By providing a qualitative case study of Evangelical MCs, this thesis makes two important analytical claims. First, it argues that these solidarity networks tend to expand organically given the scope of their activities and the social problems they address. As it has

been increasingly acknowledged, Evangelical and police radicalisation to the right has become a growing trend in Brazilian politics (Almeida, 2020; Rolim, 2023). These groups have also been at the forefront of the anti-democratic protests and recent attempts at suppressing the political order, such as the violent mobs that stormed government buildings on 8 January, 2023. However, rather than situating Evangelical MCs as the mirror-image of the far-right turn at the macro-level, I seek to pivot analysis beyond electoral politics and the far-right's ideological hook to *Bolsonarismo*. While MCs did benefit from far-right mainstreaming, I demonstrate that Evangelical base-building with the police precedes *Bolsonarismo* and grows independently of party linkages or elite-level articulations, which enables it to survive electoral dislocations and readapt under shifting political settings. As I demonstrate, both Evangelical and police radicalisation to the right has other sources of legitimation and includes an array of social practices that are found in MCs, which in turn are constituted by bottom-up articulations between civil society and police organisations.[2]

A second claim this thesis makes is to characterise the strength, or the 'social glue', of the Brazilian far-right in terms of its relationship to the New Christian Militarism. The qualifier 'New' implies there was an 'Old' Christian Militarism. By looking at how this ideological force was constituted historically, I demonstrate that the merger of military violence and Christian ideology has been central in the state-making process and development of capitalism in Brazil. Although each historical cycle involved a different constellation of actors attempting to address different political problems, Christian Militarism has, since colonial times, been enacted as a key component of how the state has sought to violently integrate or neutralise marginalised social groups from above in a wider process of order building. In this sense, I argue that Christian Militarism, in its old and new manifestations, needs to be seen more broadly as a project of pacification.

1.4 An overview of the theoretical framework

This study uses pacification theory to situate Christian Militarism within a broader historical process and to grasp the specific type of agency involved in Evangelical MCs and its relationship to far-right politics. Pacification is here understood as the coercive reordering of

[2] I follow Chambers and Kosptein's (2006, p. 364) umbrella definition of civil society as "uncoerced associational life distinct from the family and institutions of the state". However, the faith-based solidarity networks analysed in this research cannot be fully decoupled from the state as they are largely constituted by individuals from military or police backgrounds. As such, the Evangelical MC, especially its voluntary variant, needs to be seen as a type of civil society organisation entwined with, and acting in support of, the state.

social relations through the imposition of 'peace', that is, the unconditional surrender of a marginalised or rebel population who is thereby pacified by the state (Neocleous, 2013). The theory of pacification underscores the powers of security through which social order is fabricated around the administration of marginalised populations (Wall and Saberi, 2017). Historically and presently, pacification strategies are often pursued in the form of a 'civilising mission', where the state intervenes to pacify forms of resistance and after engages with targeted communities to impose a process social transformation, justified as a sign of 'progress' or 'modernisation' against their previous 'backward' or 'barbarian' social condition (Hoff and Blanco, 2020).

Pacification studies form a small and recent area of studies in Brazil. Scholarship has shown that Brazilian pacification strategies – here understood as an amalgamation of pacification doctrines, practices, and discourses – have evolved since colonial times, being applied throughout distinct historical periods against diverse marginalised populations that either challenged or were considered threats to the dominant order (Chirio et al., 2017; Gomes, 2014). Research has demonstrated the centrality of pacification to the state-making process as well to the militarisation of politics in the twentieth century and authoritarian forms of rule (de Oliveira, 2014; de Souza et al., 2017). The literature has also pointed out the important role of Catholic ideology in attempting to produce a social imaginary of national unity through the imposition of reactionary moralities across different pacification strategies, either through forceful conversion or indoctrination (Moreira, 2017). Thus, pacification is an important historical process where Christian ideology and militarism merged as key elements of order-building.

Re-democratisation in the 1980s did not bring an end to authoritarian methods of social control. Rather, new pacification strategies were devised blending 'democratic' sensibilities such as the incorporation of the popular sectors and protection of human rights principles with older forms of violent intervention (Müller and Steinke, 2020). This was characteristic of the centre-left governments of the PT era from 2003 to 2016, and has been illustrated in the Brazilian military's leadership in the *Mission des Nations Unies pour la stabilisation en Haïti* (United Nations Mission for the Stabilisation of Haiti - MINUSTAH) between 2003 and 2017 and the implementation of *Unidades de Polícia Pacificadoras* (Pacifying Police Units - UPPs) in Rio de Janeiro from 2008 to 2014. Both of these pacification operations included proximity

policing and trust-building efforts with local residents to reassert territorial control in areas where the state faced resistance from drug gangs.[3]

An important novelty that 'democratic pacification' brought was the incorporation of new actors in the design and execution of pacification strategies. Cavalcanti (2020, p.25) referred to this as a contradictory alliance in security policies "between radical social movements, conservative evangelical groups, human rights groups, private-security agencies and property developers". Evangelical actors stand out in this process, and there is a growing body of literature exploring the role of Evangelical churches in the UPPs project, especially through the Army's Military Chaplaincy (Machado et al., 2020). With it, Evangelical conservative ideology was instrumentalised as part of counter-insurgency operations to win the 'hearts and minds' of the local population and justify militarist practices in marginalised urban areas. Thus, while Catholic ideology has traditionally been the "moral weapon of pacification", recent developments suggest that Evangelicalism is emerging as an alternative ideology of order-building in Brazil (Machado, 2016, p. 132).

Very little has been explored on the relationship between pacification strategies and the far-right, either historically or presently. Exceptions are passing comments by Rodrigues and Maciel (2020), who acknowledge the influence of 'pacification rhetoric' in Bolsonaro's government. This is attributed to a portion of the military elite that initially served in pacification operations and later assumed key posts in the government. From a different perspective, Salem and Bertelsen (2020, p.103) argued that policing experiments under the UPPs project in the *favelas* of Rio de Janeiro "became crucial sites that prefigured […] the militarized approach that Bolsonaro later capitalized on", and that this was in turn fuelled by a "neo-Pentecostal political cosmology in his bid to reestablish, in a neocolonial fashion, traditional racial and gendered hierarchies in Brazil".

However, this claim is rather treated as a speculation based on discursive affinities instead of a systematic exploration of how precisely democratic pacification contributed to strengthening the far-right with the mobilisation of Evangelical ideology. To address this issue, I propose a modified version of pacification theory, adding the concept of micro-solidarity networks (Malesevic, 2017b) to capture the ways in which Evangelical MCs construct pacification strategies from below through intense activism. Rather than focusing on the UPPs as a single pacification operation, I focus on pacification more broadly in the policing milieu.

[3] However, the more liberal sensibilities of MINUSTAH and UPPs were in practice overshadowed by a wider counterinsurgency logic of mobilising locals to gather intelligence on enemies, and in preventing the outbreak of protests and collective mobilisation in marginalised urban areas (Salem and Bertelsen, 2020).

1.5 A brief introduction to Evangelicalism in Brazil

Evangelicalism is a global social force and one of the fastest growing religious groups in the world, spanning over a billion followers worldwide, 70% of which live in Asia, Africa, and Latin America (Agensky, 2020; Marshall, 2016). Their growth is the result of prolific use of media technologies (Meyer, 2010) combined with a strategy of "aggressive proselytization across states, societies, and markets" (Murray and Worth, 2013, p. 738). Evangelicals have also thrived in the context of growing social inequalities and intensified ghettoisation in urban landscapes brought by neoliberal adjustment processes in the Global South (Lanz and Oosterbaan, 2016).

Broadly speaking, Evangelicals emphasise the centrality of the Bible as authoritative truth, the need of personal salvation, which is a consequence of accepting Jesus Christ's death as an atonement for humanity's sins, and an active commitment to evangelising the world (McAlister, 2018; Spyer, 2020). In Brazil, the term 'Evangelical' covers mainline Protestants (such as Lutherans, Methodists, Baptists, and Presbyterians), who arrived in the nineteenth century through successive waves of European migration and missionary activism; Pentecostalists (such as God's Assembly, the Brazilian Christian Congregation, Brazil for Christ Church, and Foursquare Church), who arrived in the 1910s also through European missionaries; and neo-Pentecostalists (such as IURD, the International Church of God's Grace, and the Apostolic Church Rebirth in Christ), who emerged in the 1970s through the diffusion of Tele-Evangelism (Leite, 2019; Mafra, 2001).

In contrast to mainline Protestants, which is a more intellectualised and middle class phenomenon, Pentecostalism is a movement of the social margins, emerging within the holiness circles in the early twentieth century in the US (Cox, 2001). Pentecostalists affirm the contemporary experience of agency of the Holy Spirit at the personal, symbolic, or material level, and the practice of spiritual gifts, which can include speaking in tongues, healing, or exorcism (Anderson, 2010). In turn, neo-Pentecostalists emphasise "this-worldly salvation", inverting pentecostalists' ascetic rejection of the world to its affirmation through "prosperity theologies of health and wealth" (Kirby, 2019, p. 577).

In practice, however, the lines between the various strands of Evangelicalism are blurry. Scholars have noted both a 'pentecostalisation' of mainline Protestantism and even of some strands of Catholicism, such as the charismatic movement (Souza, 2014), as well as a 'neo-pentecostalisation' of Pentecostalist churches in Brazil, especially with the diffusion of prosperity theology (Marino, 2014). For this research, such divisions have no direct

consequence to analysis, because the Evangelical MCs covered in the empirical case study, such as *PMs de Cristo* and MPD, are inter-denominational, that is, they do not distinguish types of beliefs within Evangelicalism, and instead target Evangelicals as a broad identity.[4]

Evangelicals grew from 2.6% of the population in 1940 to 6.6% in the 1980s, a growth largely attributed to the process of urban migration (IBGE, n.d). Over this period, Catholicism retained its dominance, falling only from 95.2% to 89.2% (IBGE, n.d). The exponential growth of Evangelicals occurred in the next decades, jumping from 9% in 1991 to 22.2% or 42,3 million people in 2010 (IBGE, n.d.), a growth rate that has been attributed to both re-democratisation in the 1980s and the transition to neoliberalism (Côrtes, 2021; Spyer. 2020). In contrast, Catholics dropped from 83.3% to 64.6% over the same period. While results from the 2022 census are yet to be released, demographic projections expect Evangelicals to surpass Catholics in the 2030s and become the dominant religion (Balloussier, 2020).

The boom in Evangelical growth in recent decades is largely due to the expansion of Pentecostalism (of both strands) in marginalised urban areas and the construction of micro-solidarity networks for people living precariously and in contexts marked by hyper-inequality, violence, and criminality (Dip, 2018). According to Miller and Yamamori (2007, p. 23), the attraction of Pentecostalism is that it "brings order, stability, and hope to people who are living precarious lives [...] Within these churches, it is also possible to have a social role, and identity, as someone who is valued and needed". In the urban peripheries in Brazil, more than 70% of people identify themselves as Evangelicals (Hinz et al., 2020, p. 206). Based on the 2010 census, half of the Evangelical population in Brazil identifies as Pentecostalist (13.3% of the population), while only 4% identify as mainline Protestant (Oro and Tadvald, 2019).

Demographic expansion has also been followed by political growth. Traditionally, Evangelicals tended to stay away from politics, seen as a place of sin and corruption, although the majority of Evangelical churches had lent support to, and even participated in, the military dictatorship (1964-1985) (Lacerda, 2022). However, with re-democratisation and the transformation of Evangelicalism into a mass movement, Evangelicals began competing for public spaces, especially in the *Assembléia Nacional Constituinte* (National Constituent Assembly – ANC) where, in 1986, 33 Evangelical deputies were elected (Gonçalves, 2016). In 1998, 57 Evangelical deputies were elected to the National Congress, a number that rose to 85 in the 2018 elections (Borges, 2009). The *Frente Parlamentar Evangélica* (Evangelical

[4] The only exception is the UFP project from IURD, which is a neo-Pentecostal church. However, during fieldwork I did not encounter any peculiarity in UFP's activism that distinguished them ideologically from other Evangelical MCs.

Parliamentary Front – FPE), created in 2003, received the signatures of 77 deputies in its first year, and 203 in 2019 (Junior, 2020).

The political agenda of Evangelicals in Congress has revolved mainly around the blocking of progressive reforms from the left, specifically from feminist and LGBTQ+ groups; pushing for punitivist and militarist security policies; obtaining financial support from the state; and competing against Catholics (Cunha, 2020; Gonçalves, 2019; Pierucci, 1989). When it comes to the defence of Christian moral agendas and corporate interests, Evangelical deputies tend to vote uniformly, overcoming "party diversity and denominational competition" (Mariano, 2019, p. 127). Despite the existence of progressive Evangelical movements engaged in the fight against poverty and racial discrimination, alongside transnational networks of humanitarian aid (Miller and Yamamori, 2007; Agensky, 2020), the majority of Evangelical churches are conservative, often exhibiting intolerance towards other belief system or liberal and secular values (Cunha, 2020). As will be discussed in Chapter 5, Evangelical politicians became key actors in the far-right turn in the last decade in Brazil.

In the search for order in a chaotically-perceived and insecure world, Evangelicals tend to naturalise the structures of inequality, focusing instead on appeals to personal salvation and strengthening of the family unit (Webber, 2020; Gukurume, 2020). Therefore, crime and poverty are seen as not the result of structural relations of inequality and racism, but of lack of individual faith. Evangelicals tend to assume that the best program for poverty is the patriarchal family (Renfro, 2020). The absence of family, however, perceived as being eroded by welfare state policies, needs to be compensated by punitive security policies and militarism (Lacerda, 2019). This is the most important ideological feature of Evangelicalism for this research.

Evangelical militarism, in Brazil and abroad, tends to assume two forms. First, the incorporation of militarisation of faith and spiritual practices through the doctrine of spiritual warfare, which sees Christians participating in a spiritual battle against Evil forces and spirits that hamper human progress (Olsson, 2019; Mariano, 2014). In this binary framework, inequality, violence, and war are seen as iterations of demonic possessions which require the intervention of a bellicose God, to which militarised tropes, warfare imaginaries, and even the exercise of violence, are justified and called for. According to Marshall (2016, p.93), "the ends of spiritual warfare are a radical transformation of individual and collective existence through the piercing of the phenomenal veil of a material, fallen world with the knowledge acquired by the power and inspiration of the Holy Spirit".

There are different levels of spiritual warfare, from personal to strategic or territorial (Marshall, 2016; Mariano, 2014). Spiritual warfare implies the construction of a militant

religious subjectivity marked by the imposition of self-discipline (Gukurume and Taru, 2021), or to a call to action in the social and political domains as part of a 'cosmic' battle. This can mean anything from charity work, to active participation in advocacy networks (for instance against abortion), to formation of voting blocs and political caucuses (Stoll, 1990; Lacerda, 2019).

The second form of militarism, which can be seen as an extension of the former, is support for processes of social and political militarisation. Thus, Evangelical militarism reinforces the status quo in authoritarian or semi-authoritarian regimes, lending social and moral legitimation to punitivist and militarists practices (Blanes and Zawiejska, 2020; Machado, 2016). This can be seen through active engagement with, and campaigning for, military and security institutions (Griffith, 2021, 2020), as well as participation in military interventions (Salem and Bertelsen, 2020; Machado, Esperança and Gonçalves, 2020).

1.6 Summary of findings

By exploring Evangelical activism with the police as part of a broader phenomenon of Christian militarism, and connecting it to the framework of pacification, this thesis contributes to current debates on far-right politics in the Global South and adds to the pool of knowledge on the intersections between religion and security in Brazil. A summary of research findings this thesis offers are as follows. In terms of the historical inquiry, I was able to trace a persistent synergy between pacification strategies and far-right forces in Brazil. Historically, pacification has conjured reactionary social forces to legitimise top-down, authoritarian solutions to crises and threats to the established order. This is due to how pacification manifests ideologically as Christian militarism - historically of Catholic monopoly - which in turn taps into the far-right's political project of a Christian national identity that violently controls marginalised populations through military force. This synergy reached its highest expression during the military regime in Brazil (1964-1985), where a far-right dictatorship was sustained via a pacification strategy that used repression and political terror to neutralise working class mobilisation in the context of the Cold War.

In the case of democratic pacification, I found that it contributed to strengthening the far-right in one important way: through a military re-capture of politics, as a large portion of the high-ranking military elite that participated in the military occupation of *favelas* enabled the military to take a more prominent role in Brazil's domestic politics. Although democratic pacification did become a laboratory for engaging Evangelical actors via the Army's MC, the

link between Evangelicals' participation in UPPs and far-right mainstreaming is rather weak. As argued by an interviewee, "who empowered Evangelical churches was the PT government", not the UPPs (Lira, ex-military chaplain, 2022). Evangelical growth exploded during the years of the PT in power, which was in part due to the process of incorporation of subaltern classes into a new consumer culture, and in part as the result of the failure to address violence and insecurity in marginalised urban areas. Evangelicals became key mediators in the regulation of violence and provision of safety nets to vulnerable populations, whilst in Congress they became increasingly more articulated with conservative and punitivist agendas. Thus, Evangelical protagonism in pacification operations reflected wider social trends which the military was able to capitalise on for its own goals, but it had no relationship to far-right mainstreaming.

The empirical case study offers another perspective on this issue. By investigating the social base, ideology, and political project of Evangelical MCs in the wider policing milieu, I found that this type of activism is becoming increasingly institutionalised within the police forces, and has become a key ingredient of police politicisation to the far-right of the spectrum. This is not only due to the strength of missionary activism within the police, but because police commanders and security actors increasingly perceive the Evangelical military chaplains as strategic assets in policing. Bolsonaro's government capitalised on this strategic dimension by creating a 'Spiritual Assistance' policy with the aim to expand Evangelical MCs across the country, effectively seeking to officialise Christian militarism as a state ideology.

Further, there are two levels of practices associated with Evangelical MCs, which I take to be a form of pacification from below. At the individual level, I found that chaplaincy activism goes much beyond simple mental health practices as marketed by those organisations. As such, prayer interventions, counselling, and doctrinal activities are also focused in displacing tensions and contradictions associated with police activity, especially in relation to the use of force, and a reinterpretation of the social purposes of policing through theological arguments. Externally, at the level of police-community relationships, I found that chaplains have been used as para-legal 'back-ups' to solve local conflicts, with cases ranging from mediating community relations to some peculiar instances of crimes being addressed by chaplains through exorcism or evangelisation. Moreover, police have used chaplains as a means of building enduring police-community relations in marginalised urban areas where tensions between local communities and police have been historically high.

1.7 Structure of the thesis

This thesis comprises nine chapters, including this introduction and the conclusion. Chapter 2 provides a review on the far-right literature and develops the framework of pacification theory to analyse the Brazilian far-right from the merger of religion and security. By addressing the shortcomings of mainstream, Western-centric far-right literature, the chapter establishes the main characteristics of the far-right in the Global South and uses them as building blocks for the theoretical framework of pacification. The second half of the chapter constructs the pacification framework and spells out its analytical factors, which will be used to guide the inquiry.

Chapter 3 devises the methodological approach to the empirical research which chapters 4-8 will be based on. The work combines two methodologies: qualitative historical analysis (chapters 4-5) and idiographic case study (chapters 6-8). The chapter describes the rationale for using each methodology, the different methods of data collection and analysis, and the sources utilised. The chapter also provides a reflexive analysis about the empirical study of the far-right in Brazil, with some ethnographic observations about the fieldwork experience.

Chapter 4 provides a historical account of the long development of pacification strategies in Brazil and establishes its connections to far-right social forces. The chapter identifies three main cycles of pacification strategies: the colonial cycle (1500-1822), the imperial cycle (1822-1889), and the National Security cycle (1889-1985), which covers from the beginning of the Republican period to the end of the last military dictatorship. The chapter then focuses on how re-democratisation allowed conservative forces to retain leverage over the formulation of public security policies whilst the militarist logic of national security was transferred into everyday policing. This sets the stage for analysing the return of pacification to national politics in the early 2000s.

Chapter 5 contextualises new developments of pacification in the democratic period and its relationship to the rise of the far-right under Bolsonaro. The chapter begins by exploring how *Lulismo*, the guiding ideology of the PT's years in power, became a breeding ground for Evangelical growth and activism in the security sector. The chapter then analyses the construction of democratic pacification with the Brazilian military's leadership in MINUSTAH between 2003 and 2017, and the implementation of the UPPs in Rio de Janeiro from 2008 to 2014, which were both empowered by *Lulismo*. It shows how Evangelicalism was

instrumentalised in UPPs via the MC, and analyses how democratic pacification became a crucial site for the experimentation of security policy ideas that Bolsonaro later capitalised on.

Chapter 6 begins the case study analysis by foregrounding the Evangelical Military Chaplaincy as the main site where pacification from below is constructed, in specific through intense activism with the police forces. By analysing its origins, ambiguous legal status, and strategic role in policing, the chapter demonstrates how Evangelical activism has grown significantly in this area, challenging Catholic hegemony as well as the secular state, which Evangelical chaplains associate with the leftist spectrum of politics. The chapter then pivots attention to Voluntary MCs as one of the main forms of activism, capitalising on issues of career valorisation and providing the groundwork for the politicisation of the police to the far-right of the spectrum.

Chapter 7 analyses the role of Evangelical intellectuals in forging the ideological foundation MC activism and the merger of Evangelicalism and militarism. Focusing on the works of a pioneering Evangelical voluntary MC, the *PM's de Cristo* ('Officers of Christ') in São Paulo, the chapter demonstrates how they grew from a small, grassroots movement to becoming institutionalised in the Military Police of São Paulo and ideologically aligned with its higher commands and conservative political groups in the State Assembly. The chapter then evidences the creation of an Evangelical pacification doctrine that is disseminated nationally, setting a template for other Evangelical MCs and entangling them in a broader web of police politics.

Chapter 8 analyses the process of consolidation of Evangelical MCs at the national level by looking at how the far-right government attempted to institutionalise Christian militarism as an ideology and policy promoted by the state. Based on undisclosed documents acquired through a freedom of information request and fieldwork interviews, the chapter traces how government officials pushed to construct a security policy that would promote MCs during Bolsonaro's government. The chapter then shows the key role of MPD, a transnational Evangelical church that built a structure to support MCs nationally and engage them in a process of professionalisation and standardisation of spiritual assistance services within security organisations. It further shows that by having its activism based on *PMs de Cristo's* doctrine, MPD became an important player in the institutionalisation of spiritual assistance as an official state policy under Bolsonaro's government. The chapter then analyses the fall of the policy after a series of scandals that coincided with the end of Bolsonaro's government and shows evidence of how the process of consolidation continues by other institutional means.

The conclusion presents a discussion of the main findings, answers the research questions, and points to future venues of research.

Chapter 2 - The Far-Right as Pacification: A Theoretical Framework

Introduction

This chapter develops the theoretical framework to analyse the Brazilian far-right from the merger of religion and security - what I have called Christian Militarism. I argue that this merger can be understood more broadly as a project of pacification. Pacification is a political process crucial to the fabrication of social order, both in terms of state-making and the development of capitalism. The theoretical framework has two important consequences for this research: the first is to consider the far-right as a long-term feature of Brazilian politics, developing historically as pacification processes are shaped and reshaped (i.e.: the changing relationship between pacifiers and pacified populations). The second is that, in a democratic context, pacification relies more on seeking to achieve legitimacy in civil society compared to authoritarian forms of ruling, which opens the space for new actors to construct their own pacification strategies from bottom-up articulations. This is a key factor to address the issue of Evangelical activism within police institutions.

The framework derives from a critical reading of the far-right literature. I begin by identifying two main weaknesses in this sub-field: the lack of engagement with the far-right in the Global South, and the lack of a framework to conceptualise far-right agency, especially within Marxist accounts. I address this, first, by establishing the main features distinguishing the far-right in the Global South from the North. These are, respectively, a radical restructuring of capitalism after a period of crisis, religious fundamentalism, and militarism. Then, I propose that the far-right in the Global South articulates a security project that combines those three elements. To explain this security project, I mobilise pacification theory and specify the analytical factors that will be used to research the historical process and empirical case study. The factors are: coercion, ideology, and micro-solidarity networks. The first two are top-down factors articulated by a centralised and authoritarian state, while the third factor is bottom-up and accounts for recent changes in pacification under a democratic setting. I expect that the framework will enhance our collective understanding of the historical relationship between Christian Militarism and the far-right, and how Evangelical actors mobilise influence with the police forces.

Before addressing the literature, a basic definition of the far-right is warranted. The far-right is here understood as an umbrella term – covering political parties, social movements, leaderships, and discourses – that drags the left-right ideological split towards the right end of the spectrum and away from the mainstream right, that is, economic liberals and traditional conservatives. Far-right politics tends to present itself as anti-systemic and hostile to liberal democracy, appealing to 'the people' conceived in racialised and gendered hierarchies, and obscuring class divisions in favour of a homogeneous national identity (Davidson and Saull, 2017). The far-right can be divided into two sub-groups: 1) the extreme right, which is revolutionary and rejects the essence of democracy, understood as popular sovereignty and majority rule (fascism being the utmost example); and 2) the radical right, which is more reformist in nature, thus while accepting the essence of democracy, it opposes fundamental elements of liberal democracy such as minority rights, the rule of law, and the separation of powers (Mudde, 2019). In both instances, the difference with traditional conservatives is a commitment to *transform* state-society relations rather than to *preserve* it, as far-right ideology is beset on a conspiratorial worldview that demands "the reconfiguration of political society to 'cleanse' the body-politic" from alien and corrupting influences (Saull et al., 2015, p.5).

2.1 A Review of the Far-Right Literature

This literature review focuses on three sets of interrelated conceptual divisions that have marked research on the far-right. For each division, I outline the strengths and weaknesses of the debate, and identify the gaps from which my theoretical, historical, and empirical investigation will develop. The first division is about the analytical scale of the far-right, with a debate centred around methodological nationalism on the one hand and internationalism on the other. The second is about periods of crisis, pitching liberal against Marxist accounts on the emergence and mainstreaming of far-right politics. The third is on the demand and supply of the far-right, with two competing Marxist narratives on the 'function' of the far-right to capitalism.

2.1.1 The problem of scales

According to Anievas and Saull (2022), mainstream far-right studies cover two broad sub-fields: comparative political science and the history of political ideas. Comparativist

approaches have focused largely on radical right populism, providing explanations on party competition and dislocations, public opinion indicators, electoral performances, and parliamentary compositions (Mudde, 2007; Mudde and Kaltwasser, 2018; Norris and Inglehart, 2019). In the history of political ideas, research has focused on the ideological characteristics of the far-right across different historical manifestations, including pre-fascist, fascist, and post-fascist experiences (Deutsch, 1999; Casassas-Ymbert, 2011; Iordachi, 2010; Mann, 2004; Paxton, 2004). Mainstream studies have been defined for their methodological nationalism, that is, the idea that the nation-state should be regarded as the principal unit of analysis - a self-enclosed system of social relations that can be compared with similar units to generate theories and test hypothesis about the social phenomenon being studied (Koos and Keulman, 2019; Wimmer and Schiller, 2003).

However, the current cycle of far-right politics has also been marked by claims that the far-right has become a 'global phenomenon' (Finchelstein, 2019; Pasieka, 2017; Worth, 2019). For an increasing number of scholars, the prominence and success of far-right movements and parties across the world cannot be "explained with reference only to domestic politics", insofar as it has "an international agenda and a vision for a radically transformed world order" (Abrahamsen, 2019), and a distinctive "international theory" (Drolet and Williams, 2018, 2022). According to Robinson (2019, p. 178), the novelty lies not in the particular manifestations of nationalist discourses and authoritarian regimes, but the way in which social forces such as Trumpism in the US and *Bolsonarismo* in Brazil are "decidedly not national but global".

Given the far-right's radical nationalist discourse, those claims may seem counter-intuitive: what the far-right usually offers is an alternative political framework of strong national borders that aims to restrict immigration, tight regimes of surveillance against the 'undesirable' classes at home, and enhanced constitutional majority privileges that protect the 'elected' people from either minority threats or from 'globalist elites'. Despite this, in recent years the far-right has also been successful in expanding its actions through cross-national links and transnational cooperation among party and non-party organisations, connecting "through information sharing, repertoires of contention, discourse, ideology, learning, and norm diffusion" (Stengel et. al., 2019, p. 8).

Mainstream studies have consistently overlooked the international dimension of the far-right. This is evident not only in the way in which international matters are marginalised in all-

encompassing edited volumes (Davies and Lynch, 2018; Rydgren, 2018; Bosworth, 2009), but also in the downplaying of how international factors may impact either the demand or supply side of far-right politics (Mudde, 2019). In recent years, a burgeoning literature aimed at understanding the far-right from its own international dimensions has begun to emerge, questioning the methodological nationalism of mainstream studies (Cowan, 2021; Saull et. al., 2015). The main claim proposed by this literature is that the international, transnational, and global scales are constitutive of the far-right.

On the one hand, scholars have claimed that a shift in the nature of far-right politics can be observed which owes to the intensification of globalisation and changes in the structure of global capitalism (Robinson, 2020; Harris, 2021). As such, internationalisation processes such as the deepening of the European Union have not stood as a barrier to the growth of the far-right, but actually helped fuel its dynamism and expansion, especially through transnational activism (Caiani, 2018; Caiani and Weisskircher, 2022). On the other hand, scholars have provided historical and methodological insights to the international ontology of the far-right not only in its present but also in past manifestations, claiming that rather than a novelty, the far-right has always been a transnational and international phenomenon (Durham and Power, 2010; Dafinger and Florin, 2022; Saull et al., 2015).

While innovative at the historical and theoretical level, this international turn is beset with conceptual limitations. Despite widening the analytical scope of the far-right to consider other scales of analysis, it continues to share with mainstream studies a Western-centric approach to the study of the far-right. This bias can be seen from two angles: first, the range of case-study focus is narrowly European and US-based, often with extensions to other countries regarded in the 'West' category such as Canada, New Zealand, and Australia. While it is common in articles and dedicated volumes to refer vaguely to the Global South - such as Bolsonaro in Brazil, Modi in India, and Duterte in the Philippines - in order to make the claim that the far-right has gone global, analysis tends to quickly narrow down to studies of Western liberal democracies and to intellectual trajectories of the far-right that are markedly European (Abrahamsen et. al., 2020; Drolet and Williams, 2022).

Second, the mechanisms that typically account for the emergence and dynamics of the far-right are mainly fit for analysing the experience of consolidated Western liberal democracies, that is, core countries of the international system (Kumral, 2023; Pinheiro-Machado and Vargas-Maia, 2023). The literature has very little to say about whether the

specificities of postcolonial periphery countries - where far-right politics appears as much more structural to the political system (de Oliveira, 2019) - are commensurate to the far-right in the North and, likewise, if those experiences disprove theoretical claims about the existence of a global far-right altogether.[5]

In this sense, far-right studies lack a framework to shed light on specific dynamics of far-right forces in the Global South, which also connects to the methodological issue of scales (national, transnational, international, global). This poses a challenge to the study of the Brazilian far-right, as navigating between methodological nationalism and internationalism runs the risk of either reifying the nation-state on one extreme or overlooking particularities on the other. As will be shown, a Global South perspective on the far-right that emphasises relationality between scales has the potential to overcome these limitations.

2.1.2 The problem of crisis

Discussions on far-right politics have been generally filtered by a debate about contexts of crisis. The crisis associated with the current cycle of far-right politics has been characterised as economic (the near-collapse of the financial system in 2007-8), political (erosion of legitimacy in liberal democracies), social (sweeping global inequalities), and environmental (ecological limits of reproduction and climate change) (Robinson, 2019; Fraser, 2019). Whereas the left appears, with some exceptions, to be in retraction, it is the far-right that was able to capitalise on, and offer a radical alternative to, the current crisis (Mouffe, 2018; Worth, 2019). Moments of crisis are important because they allow us to conceptualise and rethink the building blocks and contradictions of an existing social order. The channelling of the far-right into mainstream politics has historically been a symptom of crisis in the modern era (Trebesch, 2016). The literature offers two alternative frameworks for conceptualising the relationship between crises and the far-right, broadly identified as liberal and Marxist accounts.

Liberal theories suggest that the rise of far-right politics emerges from the outset of the crisis of the liberal international order in general and of liberal democracy in particular. (Levitsky and Ziblatt, 2018; Ikenberry, 2018; Muller, 2017; Norris and Inglehart, 2019). In this strand, the analytical backdrop for conceptualising the far-right is liberal democracy, the former

[5] The same could be applied to far-right cases in the periphery of the Global North such as in Hungary and Poland, which can hardly be described as consolidated liberal democracies.

threatening the latter, as something diametrically opposed: “liberal democracy itself appears in retreat, as varieties of ‘new authoritarianism’ rise to new salience in countries such as Hungary, Poland, the Philippines and Turkey” (Ikenberry, 2018, p. 7). To claim this means to pose assumptions about the inherently pacifist, democratic, and pluralistic nature of liberalism, as well as the US-led international order, which can be contrasted to the new authoritarianism:

> The American hegemonic organization of liberal order is weakening, but the more general organizing ideas and impulses of liberal internationalism run deep in world politics. What liberal internationalism offers is a vision of open and loosely rules-based order. It is a tradition of order-building that emerged with the rise and spread of liberal democracy (Ikenberry, 2018, p. 8).

Evolving since the Enlightenment under the banner of reason, science, and progress, this value-driven order is based, among other things, on the shared values of openness, rules-based relations, security cooperation, mutual gains among members, and the spread of liberal democracy (Ikenberry 2018, p. 11). In this sense, the current context of crisis is seen as creating a binary distinction between institutional normalcy (a function of liberal democracy) and exceptional policies (undemocratic and illiberal parties/regimes) (Halperin, 2021). This distinction, however, is fragile and often non-existent in the wider Global South, plagued by hyper-inequalities and highly militarised societies. As Bello (2019, p. 3) suggests, while the rise of far-right forces “evinces surprise if not shock” in the case of stable democracies of the North, “they are familiar and recurrent phenomena for people in the South”.

In Latin America, for instance, the far-right has been historically not limited to political parties or social movements but played a decisive role in state-sponsored terrorism during the era of military dictatorships between the 1960s and 1980s. While this is not exclusive to the Global South experience, the fact that these regimes were backed by US interventionism and received support from other Western powers like France and the UK does bring into question the persisting relations of dependency between the core and periphery countries (de Oliveira, 2019; Webber, 2017). Particularly in Brazil, far-right forces have been present in state institutions ever since the beginning of the Republican period, achieving quasi-hegemonic status throughout various junctures of crisis to offset democratic pressures from society (Gonçalves and Neto 2020).

Critical theorists have explored the continuities between the far-right and the ontology of liberalism, especially in terms of the abstraction of liberal political philosophy from the records of violence, slavery, and colonisation justified in its name and that were crucial to its

political foundations (Losurdo, 2014; Seth, 2011). By understanding politics as deliberation (conflict over opinions and worldviews rather than conflict of interests) and rationality (presuming equality of conditions and human perfectibility), liberalism sees violence and conflict as something external: "within the liberal world, conflict is primarily an expression of a dysfunction, of a breakdown of an order that always ontologically precedes that conflict (Bishai and Behnke, 2007, p. 108).

Moreover, liberal accounts understate the significant role of far-right forces in shaping the post-world war II liberal international order, or what Anievas and Saull (2019) call its 'fascist legacies', which include: the absorption and rehabilitation of former fascist officials and counter-revolutionaries in the US-led transition governments of West Germany, Japan, and Italy; and the support of NATO to the right-wing authoritarian dictatorships in Greece, Spain, and Portugal throughout the Cold War, not to mention US militarist policies in the wider Third World. In short, "the contradictions and limits of what constitutes freedom and 'civilized life' in the liberal universe continues to offer an ontological opening for a far right imaginary" (Saull, 2018, p.592).

Opposing this value-driven conception of politics stands the Marxist tradition of capitalist critique and its emphasis on concrete social formations and class conflict, which offers an alternative to conceptualising the far-right and crisis. Here, the analytical backdrop is capitalism, specifically, the contradictions of the process of capital accumulation, rather than a universally and undifferentiated conception of liberal democracy. There is an extensive Marxist and neo-Marxist literature on the relationship between far-right forces and capitalism (for an overview see Saull, 2013). In this school of critique, both categories - capitalism and far-right - cannot go separate ways as the former is productive of the latter, that is, the far-right emerges in connection to the violent reorganisation of social relations derived from the contradictions of capitalist accumulation and crisis (Holloway and Picciotto, 1979, p.8).

According to the Marxist literature, far-right forces articulate a distinct response to periods of crisis by seeking to compensate for the intense social dislocations it causes with the construction of mythical narratives that reify and fetishise cultural, ethnic, and racial differences which *appear* as the causes for the crises (i.e. the figure of the Jew as representative of 'abstract financial capital') (Postone, 2003; Fuchs, 2018). While the far-right may appear as an anti-hegemonic social force in face of the legitimation crisis of the collapsing order, the appeal to transcend class divisions through national identity and homogeneity ultimately plays

not against the reproduction of capitalism, but indeed through securing the foundations of market economy and property relations. Historically, the success of the far-right in transforming itself from a social movement into a state form depended on its association with the dominant classes that were confronted with the threat of revolutionary upheaval or reformist challenges to the dominant political order (Saull, 2013). Therefore, the far-right can offer an "alternative ideological legitimation of capitalist social orderings from that of liberalism" (Anievas and Saull, 2019, p.7).

The emphasis on periods of crisis, however, can be analytically misleading. This is because of the issue of presentism, that is, overlooking the long-term historical development of far-right forces in any given country and focusing solely on how it manifests at a given juncture of crisis. While much attention has been given to the 'global far-right' and the unique moment of crisis that spawned from 2008 onwards (Worth, 2019; Norris and Inglehart, 2019), research tends to lack engagement with broader historical trajectories that help to explain the origins, continuities, and transformation of far-right discourse and practice. In fact, such historical sensibilities have been generally lacking in studies about the Brazilian far-right, which have been more inclined to focus on the 'new right' and the originality of *Bolsonarismo* at the expense of its longer history (González et al., 2021).

To study the far-right, then, requires a sensibility to the long-term historical patterns of change that are variegated and multilinear in nature. According to Saull et. al (2015), differences in the historical manifestations of the far-right can only be understood by reference to the antecedent socioeconomic conditions from which it emerged and not from an idealised model built with reference to a specific national experience (for instance Nazism in Germany or Fascism in Italy). This does not mean that fascist elements may not be present in some of the far-right's current expressions, but that the contemporary era is defined by a set of distinct socioeconomic conditions which were not present during the interwar era (such as neoliberal ideology). Hence, there are "structural aspects of the capitalist system at any time which are likely to be adopted by far-right parties: nationalism is a defining characteristic of the far-right, but nationalization is not" (Saull et. al., 2015, p. 2). This thesis engages with the premise that the far-right is constitutive of capitalist development and therefore needs to be studied in tandem with the longer history of social processes of accumulation and crisis (Anievas and Saull, 2019).

2.1.3 The problem of agency

Given the primacy of capitalist critique in defining the identity and orientation of the far-right, Marxist accounts tend to be reductive when it comes to conceptualising far-right agency. This is especially true in relation to capitalist restructuring, that is, the political solutions envisioned to restore the dominant order after a period of crisis. The Marxist tradition tends to attribute a functionalist and predetermined role to the far-right, seeing it as a kind of 'support actor' providing ideological legitimation to emerging authoritarian structures, but seldom having any agency of its own. Thus, the question of what the far-right is doing or attempting to construct is usually left untouched or is deducted from theoretical premises (Davison, 2014).

An example is given by Liodakis (2010, p.26), who considers that "we are indeed witnessing an epochal shift in the development of capitalism during the last three decades, and that a new stage of capitalism is emerging". What is significant about this process of restructuring is that far-right politics is actually built into the "organizational and qualitative characteristics of contemporary capitalism" (Liodakis, 2010, p.51). Thus there is a difference between the far-right being an organic "pathology of capitalism and liberal democracy" (Saull et al., 2015, p.8) and the idea that it becomes *internal* to its contradictions, that is, "part of the very logic of the system, how it functions and is reproduced" (Robinson, 2014, p.130).

Analysts have pointed out that since the War on Terror, and especially after the post-2008 economic restructuring, there has been an intensification of the coercive and authoritarian elements of capitalism (Bruff and Tansel, 2019; Davies, 2016; Fuchs, 2015; Harris, 2019). In this perspective, there is a "shift from social welfare to social control or police states", as governments resort to a series of "mechanisms of coercive exclusion which are increasingly integrated in transnational systems of social control" (Robinson, 2014, p. 64). The result is the abandoning of efforts to integrate the popular sectors via redistributive policies (Heller, 2020) or active consensus (Klein, 2008), and the adoption instead of repressive policies that find vast market opportunities and reinforce the mobilisation of nationalist and sometimes supremacist narratives (Harris, 2022; Yeros and Jha, 2020;). This is due to the growing inability of political elites to tackle the crisis arising from processes of neoliberal market reforms (Chacko and Jayauriya, 2018).

The novelty, according to this literature, is that there is an increasing convergence between the deployment of repressive systems of population control, the militarisation of the

global economy, and its legitimation by far-right ideological forces, an interrelated process that Robinson (2020; 2018) has termed Global Police State (GPS) (see also Graham, 2011). The GPS emerges as a response to the structural crisis of overaccumulation that besets capitalism and a fraction of transnational capitalist elites, who turn to repression and war economies as a strategy to offload capital in face of stagnation (Robinson, 2019). Far-right ideology provides legitimacy to this by conjuring enemies and scapegoating minorities and marginal groups as responsible for the crisis, whereas the military-security-industrial complex is contracted to open up markets and secure investment opportunities while being themselves venues for profit (Rigakos, 2016; Harris, 2019). In this sense, Robinson sees a triangulation of

> Far-right, authoritarian, and neo-fascist forces in civil society, reactionary political power in the state, and transnational corporate capital, especially speculative finance capital, the military-industrial-security complex, and the extractive industries, all three of which are in turn dependent on an interwoven with high-tech or digital capital (Robinson, 2018, p. 855).

Although there may be some exaggeration to the scale of this process (Harris, 2021), it nevertheless underscores how the expansion of this global violence industry finds political form in the current cycle of far-right governments. These accounts, however, tend to override differentiation among individual cases in favour of a unified theory of spatial convergence that spans the whole globe. The problem with such accounts is that we are left without understanding why particular societies develop strong far-right movements while others do not, aside from downplaying the continuous significance of the North-South divide (Kiely, 2016).

Further, how far-right social forces might have shaped this process of restructuring has received no historical or theoretical importance. Far-right agency is left untheorized, appearing as a natural response to the crisis or a side effect (Robinson, 2014, p.163; Bruff, 2014, p.126; Fuchs, 2019, p.65). Liodakis (2016, p.344) argues that far-right ideology "may have a feedback effect on the material conditions of social reproduction and a significant impact on the evolution of international relations and the world order", but this is not further explored. Thus, in such accounts of emerging structures of capitalism, the far-right is guided by a predefined role attached to the 'needs of capital', representing nothing more than a response to the crisis and serving the ruling classes' interests (Davidson, 2014). This functionality ascribes an instrumental rationality to the agency of the far-right, ultimately reducing its actions to economic interests.

Recently, the Marxist-inspired historical-sociological literature on the far-right has provided a backdrop for conceptualising far-right agency. This is based on the "analytical importance of specific historical conjunctures of crisis from which longer-term historical trends and tendencies can be sourced […] but where contingencies of social agency are also recognized" (Saull et al., 2015, p.7). This approach seeks to avoid reducing the far-right to socio-economic determinism, and rather to see it as "a product of the cumulative socio-historical developments that have both preceded it and provided the possibilities for its success" (Saull et. al., 2015, p. 8)

Methodologically, then, there is a need to avoid the extremes of either a "historically under-specified causality" where the far-right is read off from abstract sociological laws, or a "radically contingent historicism" where it acts within a self-enclosed temporality (Saull et al., 2015, p.9). As such, in junctures of crisis, the far-right can serve both as a challenge and possible solution to reconsolidating the political hegemony of capital, as illustrated in the contemporary existence of both pro and anti-neoliberal far-right movements across Europe (Worth, 2015) – but never amounting to challenge the foundations of capitalism as such. In other words, despite being organic and constitutive of liberal-capitalist orders, the far-right has an "independent agency" which is "*active* and *autonomous*" and which can contribute to order-building (Anievas and Saull, 2019, pp.2–3). Despite this theoretical recognition, the conceptual framing of agency in this literature is not fully realised, and in most of their work the downward pressure of structural shifts receives more attention than the upward shaping of agency.

For instance, working from this tradition, Worth (2019) has attempted to take up the challenge of the agential mechanisms of the far-right in shaping structures. He asks if the contemporary global far-right can be considered to represent a hegemonic challenge to the neoliberal international order. With a neo-Gramscian theoretical framing, Worth considers contemporary far-right politics as a form of war of position, a process where an "alternative hegemonic project is presented within civil and political society at large. It is also here where a prolonged historical struggle can occur in order for norms and ideas to be built, challenged and debated" (Worth, 2019, p.12). In this perspective, he considers that it is feasible for the far-right to have a structural effect "on the nature and sustainability of capitalism", and that a collusion with dominant classes in times of crisis might represent a solution that causes "wider friction within international capitalism, which can lead to a change in the way it is oriented" (Worth, 2019, p. 181).

In his empirical assessment, the far-right is seen as having cumulatively succeeded in mainstreaming its discourse in politics, but lacking a solid economic programme which would be essential for a successful war of position and the construction of a new hegemonic bloc. This is because, according to him, neoliberalism has managed to adapt itself to the challenges of the far-right, as observed in the presence of a neoliberal economic agenda across many far-right political platforms. Thus,

> in terms of wider questions of hegemonic transformation, it is difficult to claim that neoliberalism is on its last legs and that the nationalist right are necessarily geared towards its eradication. Yet they are geared towards **re-defining the way it operates** (Worth, 2019, p.190 emphasis added)

Worth, however, does not engage with this interesting puzzle. How does the far-right 'redefine' the way neoliberalism operates? While recognizing the relevance of structural transformations within capitalism, he stops at the point where the far-right represents no essential challenge to the neoliberal order. I consider the issue of agency to be a key component for any theoretical framework attempting to understand the far-right. Rather than ascribing an instrumental rationality to the far-right in terms of its 'function' to the needs of capital in periods of crisis, I will build on Worth's idea that the far-right may redefine the way a political order operates, or what Davidson (2015) calls 'emerging symbiotics'.

2.2 The Far-Right in the Global South

The previous section has identified three key issues that emerged from the literature review that must be taken into account in the theoretical framework: the issues of scales, crisis, and agency. In this section I will partially address these issues by looking at the far-right from a Global South perspective. This calls for the de-provincialisation of far-right studies by qualifying the specific types of relationships between spaces.

The issue of relationality is crucial here, for not only does the far-right exist and claim its identity in relation to cross-border movements and forces it negates (socialists, feminists, globalists, immigrants, etc.), but it is also equally shaped by, and dynamically engaged with, complex colonial, postcolonial, and imperialist entanglements that permeate the geopolitics of North and South divides (Said, 1979; Stoler, 2016). Thus, if relations of dependency between core and periphery are co-constitutive (Buzan and Lawson, 2017), then so are far-right political actors constituted by these relations. For instance, in Global North countries, the far-right

shares a political commitment to reconstruct the self-attributed superiority of its nations in a context of perceived threats arising from China and 'Islamification' of the 'Judeo-Christian West', which is expressed in racialised, cultural assumptions (Foster, 2017) as well as to neo-colonial modes of engagement with former colonies (Namusoke, 2016). According to Stewart (2020 p. 2), far-right elites "seek to refurbish the ideological superstructure that serves to legitimise both the global capitalist system and the supremacy of the transatlantic bloc within it".

This is not to suggest isolating both spatial realities as bifurcated analytical units but to instead acknowledge how social hierarchies are (re)produced in uneven capitalist relations between core and periphery. The issue here is to pay attention to how postcolonial structures - "the inherited legacies of 'race', 'religion', and 'nation' that continue to shape the politics and socio-economic behavior of individuals, the attitudes of collectivities, the implicit hierarchies of/within international institutions" (Kaul, 2019, p. 6) - affect the ideological and material pathways of the far-right in the Global South. Below I explore three distinctive factors that seem to shape the far-right in Global South countries.

First, far-right governments in the Global South tend to undertake a more violent and widespread capitalist restructuring compared to their Global North counterpart. This is due to the structurally dependent position of periphery countries in global capitalism, which pushes economic and political elites to reinstate conditions of highly exploitative accumulation after failed reformist or revolutionary attempts (de Oliveira, 2019; Patnaik, 2020; Bello, 2019). There are many mechanisms sustaining relations of dependency in the peripheries, both through economic and extra-economic means, such as: over-reliance on foreign capital and technology associated with late industrialisation, which precludes catch-up strategies with advanced economies (Kiely, 2016); military interventions, often leading to fractured or occupied states (Yeros and Jha, 2020; Amin, 2014), and super-exploitation of labour, which refers to payment below the value of labour or of its social reproduction, a strategy used by elites to compensate for the transfer of value from the periphery to core countries in face of the deterioration of the terms of trade and lack of dynamic consumer market.

In Latin America, this structural position has persisted throughout the major cycles of economic development, from the agricultural and resource-intensive oligarchies through to late industrialisation and neoliberal globalisation (Marini, 2000). The diffusion of production and finance in globalisation has not led to a process of dispersion, but instead to heightened concentration of capital and centralisation of political and military power in the Global North,

while poverty and income inequality still grows at disproportionately high rates in the Global South (Suwandi et al., 2019; Kiely, 2016).

These conditions have often precluded the emergence of democratic elites engaged in class compromises (Bambirra, 2013; Martins, 2018). In fact, antidemocratic forces have shaped the process of capitalist development in what has been called 'conservative modernisation' (de Oliveira, 2018; Freire, 2009; Saad-Filho and Morais, 2019). In times of economic crises, when the model of accumulation comes under duress in face of the advance of popular opposition and the breakdown of political legitimacy, ruling classes in the Global South have resorted to authoritarian measures or the instalment of military dictatorships (Marini, 1977; Klein, 2008; Bello, 2019). In the case of Brazil, far-right forces have emerged in these periods seeking radical and violent solutions to what was perceived as the menaces of modernity: the destruction of the bonds of family and property, the separation of state and church, and the disintegration of natural hierarchies such as gender and social status (Cowan, 2018). Conservative elites were often drawn to solutions proposed by the far-right, adopting features of its ideology and practice, especially in terms of conspiracy theories and the spread of moral panic (Bertonha, 2020).

The contemporary far-right cannot be disconnected from such previous iterations insofar as the conditions giving rise to them are still relevant in the Global South reality. This is why across the Global South far-right movements have been much more consistent in adopting sweeping neoliberal reforms compared to the Global North (Bello, 2019; de Oliveira, 2019; Patnaik, 2020). Scholars have interpreted this as 'retrenchment populism', a reaction from elites against previous policies aiming at the expansion of democratic rights and social inclusion (Vargas-Maia and Pinheiro-Machado, 2023). As such, in countries like Brazil and India, "the assault on democratic institutions and practices is much more severe because they are not just a response to perceived failures of liberal democracy but also concerted efforts to reassert traditional configurations of elite power" (Heller, 2020, p. 591). The main difference with the past, however, is that the violent ways through which capitalist restructuring occurs is rearticulated in countries that have transitioned to democracy.

Second, far-right forces tend to take advantage of the semi-proletarianized social formation in the peripheries, aggravating gender, race, caste, or communal hierarchies by capitalising on, or scapegoating against, such divisions. Semi-proletarians are a workforce that has "sought refuge in the expanding service sectors" but which remains "insecurely employed,

underemployed or unemployed, in constant flux between town and country and, most precariously, across international borders (Moyo et al., 2012, p. 7). In the Global South, market forces push this surplus population into relations of personal dependence, "often mediated through powerful social hierarchies that either fuse with class (e.g. race, caste), or cut across it (gender)" (Moyo and Yeros, 2005, p. 33). Such divisions are heavily politicised and serve as the backdrop of processes of both domination and resistance. Often, religious ideologies filter these divisions and operate as normative regimes regulating social relations and violence at the margins of state order, providing protection networks or micro-states of precarious welfare provision (Côrtes, 2021; Feltran, 2019). Yeros and Jha (2020, p. 90) interpret this as a process where "the Bandung nationalism of the past is being overtaken by fundamentalist Christianity, Islam and Hinduism - across Africa, Asia and Latin America". This is substantively different to far-right nationalism in the Global North, which emphasises racial purity and ethnic homogeneity. Instead, religious fundamentalism in the Global South is mediated by the complex entanglements of race, gender, and class (Vargas-Maia and Pinheiro-Machado; 2023, p. 7).

The third dynamic is related to militarism, that is, the idea that social problems can be solved by militarisation and state violence. In the Global South, the far-right tends to be actively organised in groups that seek support from repressive state agencies such as the police or the military, and attempts to co-opt or indoctrinate them in a particular ideology of violence targeted against social demographics deemed 'dangerous'. For instance, in the Philippines, police forces and vigilante groups have carried out extrajudicial killings targeted at poor communities under the war on drugs, which victimised 7,025 people between June 2016 and January 2017 alone (Amnesty International, 2017). In India, reports of extrajudicial killings, mob violence and custodial torture against Muslim minorities and lower-caste Hindus abound. In 2019 alone, 1,731 custodial deaths had been registered in the country, 60% of whose victims belonged to poor and marginalised communities (National Campaign Against Torture, 2020).

Those three factors - capitalist restructuring, religious fundamentalism, and militarism - may interact in varying degrees, and the strength of their influence can differ across Global South countries.[6] Global North countries may also share some of these characteristics, however

[6] In Latin America, those factors shaped the far-right in the context of the Cold War, fuelling anti-communist activism that lent support to military dictatorships in places like Chile, Argentina, Uruguay and Brazil between the 1960s and 1980s (Durham and Power, 2010; Roulin and Scott-Smith, 2014). Perhaps the most consequential case was Guatemala, which in the 1980s witnessed a brutal domestic counter-insurgency led by General Efrain Ríos Montt, resulting in the death of approximately 85,000 people in just a few months. Montt's campaign was

as Vargas-Maia and Pinheiro-Machado (2023, p. 9) remind us, the difference between the Global North and South is a matter of intensity and scale: for instance,

> sectarian religious politics will find a more fertile ground to disintegrate democracy in countries when secularism is still an unfinished project. The consequences of cultural wars, and the interference of religion in politics in countries where democratic and civil rights are fragile, result in normalized forms of religious persecution and criminalization against civil society.

Those three factors can also manifest independently or entwine. In countries with already limited or weak democracies, the entwinement of those factors can indicate a trend toward the construction of hybrid regimes. In this case, formal representative institutions, political parties, and elections exist while some sectors in the state and society undergo a process of fascistisation or radicalisation (Robsinson, 2019; Roy, 2020). Likewise, if ruling far-right forces are ousted or lose elections in those countries, this may imply that the far-right survives through other means than party politics or elite-level articulations, such as in subnational institutions and organised groups in civil society.

Thus, the analytical focus for the theoretical framework should be on how the far-right attempts to mainstream its project in a way that may be blended and legitimised within liberal democracy. I take this idea from Roy (2023, p. 42), who uses the concept of "fascist democracy" to highlight how the BJP under Modi "entwines key elements of fascism with democracy to not merely consolidate its hold over Indian politics but to instigate a fundamental reorientation of political culture in India". The concept recognises the inter-connected role of state violence, widespread neoliberal reforms, and Hindutva fundamentalism in the creation of an "ethnic democracy and associated two-tiered citizenship, with the Hindu majority enjoying more de jure and de facto rights than the Muslim minority" (Roy, 2023, p. 45).

Now I turn to one of the ways the far-right attempts to achieve this. Such a framework should strive to balance both structural and agential factors, that is, acknowledge the far-right's long-term embeddedness in capitalist development and crisis *and* the ways in which articulates alternatives to capitalist reordering through the merger of religion and security. I claim that one possible way of capturing this form of agency is through employing pacification theory, which refers to the "coercive reordering of social relations" (Baron et al., 2019, p. 203). My analytical

sustained by an Evangelical political theology, which envisioned a "new Guatemala formed through the convergence of religion, racism, national security, nationalism, and capitalism" (Traverso, 2019, p.171). More recently, manifestations of militarised faith have led to violent mob actions in cities with a majority Evangelical population, targeting minorities or individuals deemed as criminal offenders (Garrard, 2020, p.8).

take is that we can understand the Brazilian far-right as a strategy to pacify marginalised populations through the imperative of social control of surplus labour and 'dangerous' others.

2.3 The Far-Right as Pacification

The category of security underscores a logic of domination and exclusion at whose endpoint lies a fascist potential (Neocleous, 2009). It refers to a realm of friend-enemy distinction that can intensify to the point of conjuring supremacist conceptions justifying mass killings and even genocide (Aradau, 2004; Huysmans, 2002). As enmity is a guiding rationale of far-right politics (Saull et al., 2015; Fuchs, 2018) and as the distinction between friends and enemies lies at the heart of the security sector (Behnke, 2013), security politics plays a fundamental role for the far-right, for the exposure to difference is regarded as existentially threatening to the unity of the body-politic (Magcamit, 2017). This is why far-right governments have been engaged in the acceleration of punitivist, law-and-order projects, the militarisation of social life, exceptional policies against minorities, and private armamentism (Fekete, 2018; Ribeiro and Oliveira, 2021).

In the Global South, the far-right is more likely to involve a security project where the distinction of friend and enemy reaches particularly intensified levels of dissociation: "Hitler massacred three million Jews. Now, there's three million drug addicts. I'd be happy to slaughter them", remarked Duterte on his anti-drugs campaign in the Philippines (Holmes, 2016), while Bolsonaro called demonstrators against his government "criminals" and "terrorists" whilst demanding for the police to have "juridical protection" to violently crackdown on opposition (G1, 2020). Framed as existential threats, then, to fence off enemies ultimately calls for authoritarian notions of social control, the assertion of exceptional policies of majority rule (ethnic or otherwise), and even eliminationist strategies. What about the relationship between security and capital?

This requires considering the process of restructuring as both a form of control (security) and exploitation (capital) with varying degrees of intensity. Marx's analysis of primitive accumulation[7] already contains this duality, in that the creation of labour as a commodity that enables the extraction of surplus value (and hence capital accumulation) is based on a process of differentiation – of the class of owners and the class of non-owners –

[7] Primitive Accumulation is the process in which capitalism commodifies labour through the use of force, effectively separating people from any form of subsistence other than wage so that surplus value can be extracted, and capitalist development can take off (Marx, 2018, chap.24).

mediated by violence (Marx, 2018, chap.26). The 'freeing' of labour (its commodification) is followed by a process of its capture and control through political and juridical mechanisms – namely the role of the law and the police in disciplining wage labour (Neocleous, 2013). This becomes the precondition not only for the accumulation of capital, but for the ordering of the institutional framework of society, that is, the "accumulation of differences, inequalities, hierarchies, divisions" within a capitalist society (Walker, 2011). Thus, for capitalism to be possible, there must first exist a process of differentiation or 'othering' through extra-economic coercion that, on the one hand, dispossesses populations and, on the other, founds social order through state apparatuses aimed to secure expanding capital-labour relations of exploitation.

If we follow the understanding that primitive accumulation is not only the historical point of departure of capitalism but a permanent feature of its cycles of expansion and crisis (Bonefeld, 2011; Neocleous, 2013), and that it is specifically more intensive in the Global South (Moore, 2004), then we can begin to understand the structural role of security for capitalist accumulation.[8] By framing the far-right through the lens of security, we need to understand its discourses and practices in relation to the violent powers of security through which social order is fabricated around the administration of wage labour. Pacification is a concept that captures this dimension of security politics well. Since the Roman Empire, the term pacification has signified not the achievement of peace between warring parties but its imposition or domination by one over the other and maintained by arms (Baron et al., 2019; Morley, 2010). According to Neocleous (2017, p. 18), a "declaration of 'peace' as the constitution of the *pax* (in the sense of *Pax Romana, Pax Britannica, Pax Americana*) implies not an agreement between equals but the unconditional surrender of the conquered, who are thereby 'pacified'". Under capitalism, however, Neocleous (2013) highlights that pacification signifies the permanent deployment of violence to secure the foundations of accumulation – that wage labour must exist, must be constant and regular – and which variously manifests itself as a form of warfare and policing:

> 'Pacification' is intended to capture the way in which war and police are always already together, the way they operate conjointly under the sign of security, and the way in which this operation is entwined with the process of accumulation. In other words, 'pacification' is intended to grasp a nexus of ideas – war-police-accumulation – in the security of bourgeois order (Neocleous, 2013, p.9).

Seen in this light, "pacification" highlights how capitalism is a form of social war or

[8] According to Marx (2010, p. 50), "security is the supreme social concept of bourgeois society".

class war (Neocleous, 2013; McMichael, 2017), not as a metaphor for class struggle, but in the concrete sense of the need for capital to permanently pacify peoples, however violently, into productive labour, and to create an environment where opposition (or insurgency) against this social order does not occur or is incapacitated (Rigakos, 2016; Neocleous, 2011). Contrary to liberal formulations pointing to the blurring of police and military mandates – the "militarisation of the police" thesis (Pereira and Vilella, 2019) – pacification captures how "the dual historical formation of the nation-state and capitalism saw military and police forces enrolled in shared projects of conquest and control" (McMichael, 2017, p.125). This acknowledges the foundational role of pacification to modern capitalist societies in general and to (post-)colonial contexts in specific (Wall et al., 2017).

In the context of Global South countries, however, such a veiled war can become in fact a racialised war.[9] In Brazil, for instance, the marginalised black demographic, accounting for nearly half of the population, is systematically stigmatised by structural racism – living in highly militarised and confined slums known as *favelas* and being targeted by a punitive judicial system. This strata is the main victim of police brutality (between 2017 and 2018, 75.4% of the 7,952 victims of police lethality were blacks, who represent 55% of the population, whereas 24.4% of the victims were whites, who represent 44.2% of the population), and is overrepresented in prisons (in 2016, there were 726,712 people incarcerated, a number that grew 707% since 1990; of this sum, 64% were blacks) (Cerqueira et al., 2019; Soares, 2019).[10]

In a globalised world, pacification strategies cannot be reduced to a nation-state project, and this affects pacification strategies in two broad ways. First, under globalisation, decision-making shifts to a decentralised style of governance, fostering new spatial arrangements in security provisions that are increasingly standardised in transnational circuits. This involves cooperation, training, sharing of knowledge and intelligence, transfer of technology, and infrastructure networks among security agents and institutions engaged in pacification strategies (Graham and Baker, 2016). Müller (2018, p.225) describes this as a process where

[9] I consider 'race' to be a social construct that reflects colonial and imperial forms of classifying groups of people based on physical or biological features to justify systems of hierarchy and oppression (Chowdhry and Nair, 2002). Racialisation is a social and political practice through which race and racial inequality are (re)produced, reflecting forms of direct or structural violence against marginalised social groups and the "uneven distribution of life chances within specified geographic space-time continuums" (Isoke, 2015, p. 743).

[10] In Brazil, the classification of the *população negra* (black population) encompasses both *pretos* (blacks) and *pardos* (browns).

domestic pacification experiences are adapted and refined by "globally circulating pacification 'best practices'".

Second, there is the process of the commodification of security, with the emergence of a global market of for-profit security providers in a wide range of areas and fields of expertise, from warfare through to border patrolling, counter-insurgency operations, and consultancy. This underlies the existence of a global pacification industry (Halper, 2015; Robinson, 2020) that spans an articulated war economy and builds on experiences of occupation, repression, and population control in various places around the world. Thus, in terms of scaling, pacification theory bridges the gap between methodological nationalism and internationalism by acknowledging that pacification practices have their own national trajectory but are increasingly entwined in transnational circuits that form a "transmission belt" of technology, know-how, and practices that travel from the peripheries to the centre and back (Stockmarr, 2016).

Further, pacification can never be about brute force alone, especially in the context of countries that have transitioned to democracy. Although pacification does involve the violent crushing of opposition, it must be seen in broader terms as a productive force linked to the fabrication of social order (McMichael, 2017; Rigakos, 2016; Neocleous, 2014). According to Bricken and Eik (2017, pp.49–50), pacification is a "constitutive power and a technique to allow for (re)constituting states of discipline". Accordingly, pacification involves

> the shaping of the behaviour of individuals, groups and classes, and thereby ordering the social relations of power around a particular regime of accumulation. In other words, what is at stake in pacification is the kind of security measure that lies at the heart of the fabrication of social order (Neocleous, 2011, p.201).

Given the imperative to incorporate marginalised populations into the economic system, pacification combines both coercive and ideological factors to shape individuals into states of discipline and morally accepted behaviours that are deemed compatible to a particular regime of accumulation (Briken and Eick, 2017; Neocleous, 2011). Thus, pacification strategies usually entail the 'iron fist of repression' and 'velvet glove' campaigns to win the hearts and minds of specific social groups (McMichael, 2017; Kienscherf, 2016). Moreover, pacification often comes in the form of a 'civilising mission' where the state first intervenes to (violently) pacify forms of resistance, and later engages with targeted communities to impose a process social transformation, justified as a sign of progress or modernisation against their previous 'backward' or 'barbarian' social condition (Hoff and Blanco, 2020). This ideological

dimension is a key factor to connect the far-right as pacification. Throughout history, the process of pacification in Brazil has consistently evoked reactionary social forces to validate authoritative, top-down responses to crises and challenges to the prevailing order. This occurs because, as will be shown in Chapter 4, pacification aligns with the far-right's vision of social harmony, conceived as a civilizational endeavour rooted in Christian nationalism and morality, and under the political tutelage of the military.

2.3.1 The analytical factors of pacification

Pacification is a political strategy that restructures social relations in ways that are particularly violent, deterring social groups from engaging in violent or non-violent contestation against the political order, and co-opting them into a pacified state of "liberal docility"[11]. Because pacification can be a diffuse social phenomenon, it is hard to pinpoint if such a strategy is ever successful or not. Rather, it should be considered that "pacification is never complete; it is a permanent process" (Neocleous, 2017, p. 25), not least because of resistance from marginalised or colonised populations (Fanon, 2001). As such, my empirical interest is to analyse *how* the far-right attempts to put pacification in motion, that is, the means of pacification. This requires looking into the empirical factors of pacification. Before proceeding, it is important to distinguish between two forms of analysing pacification.

The first can be called 'thin pacification'. By thin I refer to a more descriptive account related to a set of pacification doctrines and operations explicitly put into practice by military actors. Pacification operations can be targeted interventions held in well-defined geographical areas[12] or nation-wide, where the full apparatus of the state (or a foreign state) is used to engage in a long-term pacification of marginalised populations, notably colonised peoples or racialised and inferiorised social groups.[13] The objective of pacification operations is to impose or restore

[11] A state which Neocleous (2013, p.18) describes as the "[c]apital and police dream of pacification: a dream of workers available for work, present and correct, their papers in order, their minds and bodies docile, and a dream of accumulation thereby secure from resistance, rebellion or revolt".

[12] An example of this is the *Unidades de Polícia Pacificadoras* (Pacifying Police Units – UPPs) in the Rio de Janeiro city's *favelas* as part of a broader security operation in preparation for the 2014 FIFA World Cup and the 2016 Summer Olympics. See Chapter 5.

[13] Examples are US counterinsurgency efforts to control Vietcong insurgents in Vietnam in the 1960s (Jacobsen, 2010; Neocleous, 2011) and modern-day Afghanistan (Westerman, 2008) and Iraq (Neocleous, 2013), French pacification operations in Algeria against native anti-colonial uprisings (Brower, 2009), British pacification of Arab revolts in Palestine (Hughes, 2019) and Myanmar (Aung-Thwin, 1985), and more recently the *Mission des Nations Unies pour la stabilisation en Haïti* (United Nations Mission for the Stabilisation of Haiti - MINUSTAH), which introduced nation-wide reforms in the form of "humanitarian intervention", seeking to alter the whole political structure of the country to a more business-friendly environment (Müller, 2018). In all of these examples,

state sovereignty, usually after it has been challenged by a well-defined enemy, and engage locals in the process through various consensual mechanisms such as assistance programmes and infrastructure projects, or what Neocleous (2017, p. 24) calls "armed social work". The latter is typical of community-oriented policing projects that are implemented after the occupation/intervention phase of pacification operations, and despite their legal grounding in liberal-democratic principles and the idea of building trust relationships with the population, they are still embedded in counter-insurgency tactics (Toews, 2017; Muller and Steinke, 2020).

The second can be called 'thick pacification', which is the more analytical approach I am adopting in this thesis, underscoring how pacification is an ongoing process mobilising police and military power in the (re)production of social order (Wall et al., 2017; Neocleous, 2014). Here the analytical gaze is not limited to pacification operations - though they remain important - but as the wider strategy of governing marginalised populations in an attempt to project a society "harmonically structured and regulated by norms and principles established and guarded by the ruling elites" (Chirio et al., 2017, p.17).[14] The 'thick' qualifier implies how this process of structuring and restructuring of social relations is always mediated through state violence,[15] and that this violence in turn needs to be ideologically legitimised. Empirically, thick pacification is a strategy affecting two forms of power that have structured organised violence over time: the coercive and ideological capacities of repressive state organisations (Malešević, 2017b, 2010).

Coercive capacity refers to the ability of bureaucratic organisations to generate discipline and acceptance of external control through coercive threat, that is, the use of coercive means to penalise the lack of compliance with established rules (Malešević, 2017a). This is a process that is historically cumulative, tending towards greater accumulation of concentrated force used to "pacify the social environment under one's control" (Malešević, 2017b, p.49). As organisational capacity grows, so does the ability to develop deeper social penetration and wider territorial scope in the pacification of subjects. According to Neocleous (2011, p. 200), this coercive dimension of pacification indicates "the construction of elaborate security

the term pacification was not randomly used in public discourse but systematically adopted as a military and policing strategy. The construction of pacification doctrines that circulated transnationally in colonial and post-colonial contexts is a testament to this (Kinscherf, 2011; Schrader, 2016).

[14] In practice thin and thick dimensions overlap, but I believe it is useful to distinguish them because of the historical use pacification has had in official discourse and practice. My main concern in making this distinction is to point out that pacification is not limited to these official pacification operations - although they are analytically useful - but need to be seen as an ongoing process.

[15] "Violence is always presented as part and parcel of a *productive* or *constructive* or *reconstructive* application of politics in general" (Neocleous, 2017, p. 23).

structures targeting civilian populations in general and 'suspect communities' or the 'enemy within' in particular".

Ideological capacity, in turn, is the "social glue" that holds organisations together in order to secure legitimacy and mobilise popular support for violent undertakings, working centrifugally from the centre of a particular organisation outward to reach ever-larger sectors of the population. Ideologisation necessarily accompanies the growth of organisational capacity as it needs to "provide believable justificatory mechanisms for the deployment of coercive action" (Malešević, 2017b, p.55). Here, the ideology of the "common interest", as something standing supposedly above class and other societal divisions in defining a good and orderly society, adds to the materiality of the state an "idea of the state", thereby legitimising coercive mandates. In the words of Abraams (cited in Albernaz, 2015, p.96),

> armies and prisons, the Special Patrol and the deportation orders as well as the whole process of fiscal exaction […] are forceful enough. But it is their association with the idea of the state and the invocation of that idea that silences protest, excuses force and convinces almost all of us that the fate of the victims is just and necessary.

Hence, the cold rationality of bureaucratic organisations specialised in the sanctioning of violence against targeted risk-groups or enemies of public order, cannot survive without an ideological narrative that legitimises this violence as righteous and morally acceptable. In the words of Malešević (2017b, p.66), because

> soldiers, police officers, paramilitaries, terrorists and revolutionaries are regularly involved in violent encounters, they need to know that their actions are legitimate and morally acceptable. This means that their respective organisations have to devise and implement effective and believable ideological mechanisms capable of bringing together organisational aims and micro-level attachments.

Together, coercion and ideology form the backbone of the practice of modern mass-scale organised violence and the pacification of social relations. These factors have been at the heart of different pacification cycles in Brazil's history, which has been pursued in a top-down style via a centralised and authoritarian state, and having the military as its main stakeholder. As will be shown in the next chapter, since the Republican period, pacification has been closely interwoven with the far-right's ideology.

However, pacification can also be a bottom-up strategy in addition to top-down. I take this cue from Machado (2016, p. 121), who claims that "pacification projects are not implemented by the state alone. They pass through a variety of social agents who invent and

reinvent pacifications in their interface with official projects". I add, however, that in Brazil this is a condition exclusive to the democratic context, which has provided a relative opening for other actors from civil society to contribute to pacification. In a democratic setting, pacification "must be legal as well as liberal" (Neocleous, 2017, p. 18) As such, it needs to include 'the people' in the architecture of security. This means creating mechanisms of democratic participation to confer "legitimacy on counterinsurgent state projects" (Schrader, 2017, p. 37). Toewn (2017, p. 56-57) provides an interesting reflection on this shift:

> the goal of legitimacy shifts the focus from an insurgent enemy to the population in which the insurgent is embedded [...] It is only secondary to killing the enemy, and far more about winning the population over the legitimacy of the governing occupation authority [...] It is worth asking what the population is asked to participate in? The answer to that is of course a new order built around a legitimate authority, legitimate because of its commitment to the rule of law, stability, and the market.

To capture pacification from below, I propose an additional, mediating factor: micro-solidarity networks. Micro-solidarity networks are attempts to penetrate the micro-scale universe of everyday life and small groups of kinship ties in organisations engaged in collective violence. These networks bridge the gap from macro-level factors of coercion and ideology by fostering what Malesevic (2017b, pp.62–63) refers to as "hubs of close emotional attachment", highlighting that it is the "emotional commitment, moral obligation and similarity of lifestyles that transform a functional/operational unit into something much more: an almost sacred community where individual members are willing to sacrifice for each other". This is a mediation factor not only attuning individuals in their concrete reality to macro-level organisational and ideological aims but developing principled virtues to resolve the main paradox of coercion among security actors: the contradiction between achieving just ends with coercive means (Muir, 1979).

Thus, micro-solidarity networks provide the base-building work that seeks to instil in security agents a "morally integrated attitude" towards violence that may dissipate "feelings of guilt and conflict" (Albernaz, 2010, p.530). This is achieved by "attempting to project the image of organisations as those resembling one's family and friends", and by articulating a language of life preservation *vis-à-vis* the existentially threatening "others" posed as dangerous (Malešević, 2017b, p. 64). I contend that far-right micro-solidarity networks within police forces may contribute to shaping hybrid forms of democratic governance, where appropriations of democratic principles - which have been at the centre of democratic pacification - are re-mapped onto dominant forms of police culture that are historically racialised and violent.

Considering that the police are often viewed as 'street-corner politicians' due to their informal community interactions and influence on law-and-order politics (Muir, 1979), this type of activism within police institutions can exert a considerable influence, potentially enhancing authoritarian methods of social control.

Conclusion

This chapter has provided a literature review on the far-right and devised a theoretical framework to analyse the far-right in Brazil from the perspective of Christian Militarism. The literature review has focused on three conceptual divisions that have marked far-right studies: the issue of scales, crisis, and agency. I have argued that the theoretical framework should address these three issues.

With relation to scales, I found that far-right studies are overly Western-centric, lacking an engagement with conceptualising the far-right in the Global South. The issue of crisis distinguished liberal and Marxist accounts in accounting for the emergence of far-right politics. Liberal accounts emphasise the role of anti-democratic values espoused by the far-right which are seen to be threatening liberal democracy and liberal international order. Marxist accounts, on the other hand, emphasise the far-right's long-term embeddedness in capitalist development and crisis, and the ways in which it articulates alternatives to capitalist restructuring of social relations. Although I adopt the perspective of the latter, I consider that in terms of agency, there is a persisting functionalist view of the far-right within Marxist accounts, which tend to ascribe a predetermined role to the far-right in times of crisis. I proposed that any discussion on the role of the far-right in providing alternatives to capitalist restructuring needs to accompany an account of agency of what the far-right is trying to construct and how it attempts to do this.

The first building block to address these gaps was to unpack the main characteristics of the far-right in the Global South. This implied a de-provincialisation and rescaling of far-right studies, focusing on the types of relationships between scales that affect far-right politics. I pointed to three factors that shape the far-right in the Global South: widespread and violent capitalist restructuring, religious fundamentalism, and militarism. While the interaction and intensity of these factors can vary greatly across the Global South, their combination can indicate the construction of hybrid regimes, where formally liberal and democratic institutions exist while some sectors of state and society undergo a process of far-right radicalisation.

In order to address how the far-right in Brazil pursues the project of restructuring, I proposed that this is sought in the security sector and employed the theory of pacification as a

strategy of the "coercive reordering of social relations" (Baron et al., 2019, p. 203). Pacification is a political process crucial to the fabrication of social order, one that combines coercive and ideological factors. For this thesis, the political-historical phenomenon I called Christian Militarism will be analysed in light of these two factors. Moreover, I proposed an additional empirical factor to capture pacification from below: micro-solidarity networks.

I expect that the framework will relate to the far-right in three different ways. First, that the far-right can legitimise and support pacification strategies; second, that the far-right may be empowered through pacification strategies; and third, that the far-right may construct its own pacification strategies. The first two pathways seem to rely more on coercion and ideology, and hence imply a top-down approach to pacification based on an authoritarian and centralised state. I expect this to be more in line with the historical tradition of pacification which chapters 4 and 5 will delve into. The third pathway relies more on micro-solidarity networks, implying a bottom-up approach based on decentralisation, where a range of actors from civil society participate and construct their own pacification strategies under a democratic setting.

For the case study (chapters 6, 7, and 8), Evangelical activism with the police forces in Brazil will be framed from the perspective of micro-solidarity networks. I expect this type of base-building factor to be constructed within security institutions, but with an outreach to marginalised communities affected by violence. Because they operate within law-enforcement institutions, these micro-solidarity networks may serve as the conduits of the blending between far-right ideology and liberal democracy, in specific, the cross-fertilisation of Evangelicalism and policing. As such, through these networks, it is possible that Evangelicals may be constructing their own pacification strategies from below. The empirical strategy to assess this will be to look at how these micro-solidarity networks operate on two fronts: 1) police mandates broadly understood, which relates to notions concerning the role of state violence in the making of social order; and 2) and police-community relations, which reflect key elements of democratic politics, such as participation, justice, and citizenship. The next chapter specifies the methodology for both the historical inquiry of pacification and the contemporary case study. It also outlines the methods, data sources, and offers a reflexive analysis of the fieldwork experience.

Chapter 3 - Methodology

Introduction

This chapter outlines the methodological approach to the empirical research which the next five chapters will be based on. In particular, it devises an analytical strategy to answer the research questions specified in the introduction and connects it to the theoretical framework. In the last chapter, I argued that pacification theory can be employed to explain how the far-right tends to manifest in Global South countries. In the case of Brazil, I expect that pacification can aid in understanding an important dimension not only of the contemporary far-right but also of its historical evolution: the combination of Christian ideology with state violence - what I have called Christian Militarism.

Methodologically, this research combines two forms of inquiry: qualitative historical analysis and idiographic case study. Regarding historical analysis, this work seeks to understand how Christian Militarism has developed historically in Brazil and the more contextual form it has manifested in recent years. In line with the theoretical framework, this will be framed as a history of pacification in Brazil. Regarding the case study, the research turns attention to the social base, ideology, and political project of Evangelical activism with the police, which I consider to be a contemporary form of Christian Militarism, and which is relevant to understanding far-right politics. The case study will also be explored from the perspective of pacification, that is, I expect that Evangelical actors engaged in base-building with the police may be constructing a pacification strategy from below.

In terms of research design, this work relies on a combination of analytical and data collection techniques. The main methods utilised are observations from academic literature, thematic analysis, document analysis, and semi-structured interviews. Section 3.1 outlines the methodology of qualitative historical analysis and idiographic case study. Section 3.2 explores the rationale for using each method of data collection and analysis and describes the different data sources collected. Section 3.3 provides a reflexive analysis of the fieldwork experience and limitations.

3.1 Methodology

Methodology is the bridge between research questions, the theoretical framework, and analytical techniques or methods (Barkin and Sjoberg, 2017). This bridging, however, depends on a series of ontological and epistemological assumptions about how we conceive the relationship between mind and world, that is, the hook between researcher and subjects under study (Jackson, 2017). This research is grounded on the interpretivist framework of social knowledge, which acknowledges the centrality of cultural and historical interpretations of the social world as opposed to the positivist or empiricist tradition that emphasises objectivity, replicability, and falsification (Blaikie and Priest, 2017). In the interpretivist approach, there is an assumption that "we cannot know the world as an entity that is entirely separated from us" (Lai and Roccu, 2019, p. 68).

In this sense, this research does not posit causal powers between theory and the phenomena under purview, instead it uses the theoretical framework to provide a basis to explore, orient, and interpret social and political problems (Skocpol, 1984). If the findings of this research are applicable to the far-right in other Global South countries, this is entirely dependent on further investigation and the framing of new research questions, not on the generalisation of formal theoretical models. Concretely, I use pacification theory not because it discloses some 'undetectable logic' of how capitalist social orders function, but because it provides a critical examination of an actually existing phenomenon in capitalist societies: pacification strategies and operations - labelled as such - and which are typically devised by military organisations.[16]

The framework of pacification emerged as plausible to help explain Christian Militarism because, on the one hand, pacification has had a historically strong purchase among political elites in the state-making process in Brazil and, on the other, has been revitalised by the military in recent years. The reemergence of pacification under a democratic setting has also brought to light the instrumentalisation of Evangelicalism in pacification operations, most notably under the *Unidades de Policias Pacificadoras* (Paciying Police Units - UPPs) project in Rio de Janeiro between 2008 and 2016. In the words of Oosterbaan and Machado (2020, p. 112), in the UPPs project, "[r]eligious belonging was activated as a meaningful strategy of

[16] I do not use pacification, however, in the way intended by military strategists, that is, as a military operation to create the 'conditions of peace' in a context of conflict and violence. Following Cox's famous formulation, to do this would be paramount to problem-solving theory, that is, "serving particular national, sectional, or class interests" (Cox, 1981, p. 128). Rather, my use of pacification theory follows the logic of critical theory, which for Cox "stands apart from the prevailing order of the world and asks how that order came about" (Cox, 1981, p. 129)

military tracking during the military's presence at *Complexo do Alemão* [a local *favela*], and religious leaders were identified as 'trustful partners', not contaminated by crime and violence". Those two elements, the historical and the contemporary uses of pacification, provided me with an insight that the theory of pacification could be mobilised to understand Christian Militarism and its relationship to the far-right.

Having clarified the assumptions revolving the use of theory, I now elaborate on the specific methodologies chosen to operate this research. This work combines qualitative historical analysis with idiographic case study methodology.

3.1.1 Qualitative historical analysis

As argued in Chapter 1, the phenomenon I described as Christian Militarism is not new but historical. The first two research questions - what are the social bases of the far-right in Brazil, and what is the relationship between security concerns and religious activism in the Brazilian far-right - open the possibility of researching Christian Militarism from a historical perspective. This is useful because, in order to understand contemporary developments, or more precisely the current form Christian Militarism assumes, it is important to backtrack to see if similar trends were present in the past and how they developed over time.

Qualitative historical analysis is a methodological approach that "employs qualitative instead of quantitative measurement and the use of primary historical documents or historian's interpretations thereof" to aid illuminating a small number of cases or a single one (Thies, 2002, p. 252). What does the history of Christian Militarism look like in Brazil? According to Thies (2002, p. 253), the "facts we find are dependent upon the facts we seek based upon our explicit theoretical orientation". As stipulated in Chapter 2, pacification offers the conceptual vocabulary to analyse the far-right from the merger of religion and security, and hence the historical analysis will be of the history of pacification in Brazil. According to the historiographical record, pacification can be traced back to the beginning of colonialism in the sixteenth century (da Souza et al., 2017).

Historical analysis is not value-free and depends on methodological assumptions about the sequencing of events and the relationship between agency and structure. I take for granted that pacification is not a 'master narrative' that explains the far-right in Brazil, nor that it has always looked the same nor been applied by elites historically with the same political purpose. Instead, I am interested in pacification as a 'robust process', that is, as "sequences of events

that have unfolded in similar but not identical fashion in a variety of different historical contexts" (Aminzade, 1992, p. 458).

I borrow from historical sociology the key methodological considerations for the historical analysis of pacification in Brazil. Historical sociology is a tradition of historical analysis that aims to trace and examine "slow-moving processes, sequences, and developmental paths" of change (Lawson, 2006, p. 415). In terms of agency, historical sociology sees actors not responding to predetermined outcomes but to contingency and uncertainty under broad structural constraints (Go and Lawson, 2017; Hobden and Hobson, 2002). According to Skockpol (1984), there are three main methodological approaches to history in Historical sociology. First is the application of general models to history in the explanation of social change; second is the exploration of alternative hypotheses about regularities in history, and third is the use of conceptual models to interpret history.

The first two are more akin to comparative types of research seeking to test variables for generalisation. The third approach is more appropriate for interpretivist social science, seeking to "use concepts to develop meaningful interpretations of broad historical patterns" (Skocpol, 1984, p. 368). This type of approach has two aspects. First, "careful attention is paid to the culturally embedded intentions of individual or group actors in the given historical settings under investigation", and second, "both the topic chosen for historical study and the kinds of arguments developed about it should be culturally or politically 'significant' in the present" (Skocpol, 1984, p. 368).

Regarding the first, I divide the history of pacification in Brazil in different cycles (Aminzade, 1992). For each cycle of pacification, there is a different configuration of actors ('pacifiers' and the 'pacified' populations), and their forms of agencies are interpreted from the range of discourses, legislation, and institutionalised ways pacification manifested as well as to the broader processes of state-making and development of capitalism in Brazil. Chapters 4 and 5 will provide the historical analysis of pacification throughout the following major cycles: colonial (1500-1822), imperial (1822-1889), National Security (1889-1985), and democratic (1985-present).[17] These cycles were sourced from the historical and anthropological literature of pacification in Brazil (da Souza et al., 2017; de Oliveira, 2010; Machado, 2016). Regarding the second, the historical analysis of pacification seeks to provide answers not only about questions that are relevant for the present (the relationship between security and religion in the

[17] The demarcation of specific dates served simply as a guide to interpretation of cycles rather than fixed parameters attached to historical events.

Brazilian far-right and its social bases), but as a preliminary stage to situate the empirical case study of Evangelical activism in the police as a present-day manifestation of Christian militarism. As such, the historical analysis of pacification is relevant not only for unpacking discrete cycles but understanding it as a historical trajectory, that is, a cumulative sequence of linked events that informs and enables interpretations of the present (Aminzade, 1992, 459).

3.1.2 Case study methodology

To answer questions 3 and 4 - how do evangelical groups mobilise influence with the police forces, and what are the political implications of this activism - I utilise idiographic case study methodology. Simply put, case studies aim to generate in-depth insights into a particular case. A case is generally considered a single instance of an event or phenomenon (Ragin, 1992). In the case of this research, I consider the Evangelical Military Chaplaincy to be an instance of a broader phenomenon, Christian Militarism, which in turn has a particular relationship to the far-right. Discussions about case study methodology have been dominated by positivist epistemologies, specifically the notion that the study of a single, few, or multiple cases should test causal mechanisms to evaluate comparative or generalising inferences (Bennett, 2004).

There are many types of case study methodologies, such as idiographic, hypothesis-generating, and hypothesis testing (Levy, 2008), and associated research designs, such as process tracing, congruence testing, counterfactual analysis, least and most-similar case comparisons (Bennett, 2004). I side with Lai and Roccu (2019, p. 70) on the key assumptions for case study methodology from an interpretivist perspective. First, the idea of unveiling causes, effects, and mechanisms that are objective and independent of the researcher's own position clashes with the logic of facts as social and historical products. Second, that the pursuit of parsimonious models and the controlling of independent variables, although valid pursuits of knowledge, risks reducing contextual awareness.

For this research, I choose a modified version of idiographic case study. According to Levy (2008, p. 4), the aim of an idiographic case study is to "describe, explain, interpret, and/or understand a single case as an end in itself rather than as a vehicle for developing broader theoretical generalizations" (Levty, 2008, p. 4). The term idiographic stands for the interpretation of something concrete and unique, as opposed to nomothetic case studies, which "attempts to generalise beyond the immediate data" (Levy, 2008, p. 4). This, however, does not fall into a descriptive, atheoretical type of research design. Unlike an inductive approach to idiographic case study, commonly associated with historians, I take on a theory-guided type

of idiographic case study, which is "explicitly structured by a well-developed conceptual framework that focuses attention on some theoretically specified aspects of reality and neglects others" (Levy, 2008, p. 4).

I borrow from Lai and Roccu's (2019) discussion of 'extension' to modify the idiographic case study. In their view, the extended case study is a "theoretically informed approach to the study of local contexts that links everyday practices that researchers observe to the 'broader economic and political forces' shaping the specific context studied" (Lai and Roccu, 2019, p. 73). As such, the 'case' is not a natural setting that exists independently but is both theoretically constructed and analysed in relation to the social forces that shape it (Lai and Roccu, 2019, p. 75). Thus, the extended idiographic case study seeks to describe, explain, interpret, and/or understand a single case not as an end in itself but to apprehend its constitutive relations in the interplay between macro processes and local contexts.

The construction of the case proceeded as follows: the pacification framework oriented analysis of pacification processes in Brazil. In specific, contemporary pacification operations evidenced the relationship between security concerns and religious ideology. When exploring the anthropological literature on pacification in Rio de Janeiro, I came across the role of the Military Chaplaincy, which was instrumentalised by the military to win the 'hearts and minds' of the local population and justify militarist practices in marginalised urban areas. Was there any relationship between this instance and far-right mainstreaming? As I argue in Chapter 5, I could not find any correlation, despite the existence of analogies in the literature (Salem and Bartelsen, 2020). However, as shown in the theoretical framework, pacification can be divided conceptually into thin and thick dimensions, and instead of looking at specific pacification operations (thin), I decided to look at the thicker notion of pacification as the fabrication of social order through police and military powers. I began questioning if the Military Chaplaincy also acted within police institutions, and preliminary analysis suggested this type of activity was in fact intensive.

The case was selected for being a highly organised movement in civil society and with the potential of having political impacts. As discussed in the introduction, it does not exhaust the universe of cases, rather it can help to generate insights about Christian Militarism as a political-historical phenomenon and its connections to the far-right. Moreover, I limit the temporal analysis from the outset of the political and economic crisis in the 2010s to the end of Bolsonaro's government in 2022.

Having selected the case, I organised analysis based on research question 3 - how do Evangelicals mobilise influence? For this, it was important to investigate the case around three

key aspects: its social base, ideology, and political impact. To understand its social base, I conducted analysis of the origins, practices, and recent growth of the Evangelical MCs by interviewing both institutional and voluntary military chaplains from a wide range of organisations. My main interest here was to understand the material foundations that allowed the exponential growth of MC projects and how it is perceived as a strategic asset by police institutions.

Second, in order to uncover the ideological basis of this type of Evangelical activism, I analysed one specific organisation which has set the template for similar MCs: The Association of the Evangelical Military Police Officers of the State of São Paulo, better known as *PMs de Cristo*. This organisation was selected because they are the most influential and highly organised Evangelical MC in Brazil. Specifically, through semi-structured interviews and thematic analysis of their own publications (printed and online), I sought to identify how they ideologically address two issues: police mandates broadly understood, which relates to notions of the role of police violence in the making of social order; and police-community relations, which reflects key elements of democratic politics.

Next, to understand the political project of Evangelical MCs, I traced the development of the partnership between the transnational church *Ministérios Pão Diário* (Our Daily Bread Ministries -MPD) and the *Ministério da Justiça e Segurança Pública* (Ministry of Justice and Public Security - MJSP) under Bolsonaro's government from 2019 to 2022. Given that MPD is largely influenced by *PMs de Cristo*'s ideological doctrine, this cooperation agreement has the potential to indicate the degree of institutionalisation of Evangelical MCs at the national level and their political impact. As far as I am aware, no other MCs were engaged in partnership projects with the government, which made it the only possible selection to study this aspect of MCs. Further, MPD was acting not only to represent its own interests but to create the conditions for other MC organisations to expand across the country.

The next section explores the rationale for using each method of data collection and analysis and describes the different data sources collected.

3.2 Methods and data

The methods were chosen as a way of collecting data and orienting analysis. The first method used was literature review, which consisted of familiarising with the concepts and debates of a given theme, systematically organising and classifying schools of thought, authors, and sub-fields, and identifying the main gaps in the literature (Knopf, 2006.). Apart from its more

conventional use in Chapter 2, literature review also informed the preliminary stage for planning and drafting other chapters: historical analysis on Brazilian pacification for chapters 4 and 5; historical and legal issues around the military chaplaincy for Chapter 6; and public security in Brazil for all empirical chapters (4-8).

The second method used was thematic analysis, which is one of the most widely used methods in qualitative research (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Thematic analysis is intended to identify recurring ideas within a dataset which can be used to categorise themes and orient analysis (Riger and Sigurvinsdottir, 2016). Categorisation proceeds from a systematic re-reading of the data and its coding to find themes that form a pattern (Bowen, 2009, p. 39). This is an inductive process that grounds themes from implicit or explicit ideas found in the data. I used the qualitative software NVivo to code and organise the data, and followed Braun and Clarke's six-phase approach to generating themes: 1) familiarising with the data through annotation or transcription in the case of interviews; 2) generating initial codes from the more interesting features that appear in the dataset; 3) searching for themes by collating codes into potential umbrella themes and sub-themes; 4) reviewing the themes by going through the codes a couple of times over and re-defining them where necessary; 5) defining and naming themes by establishing the specific elements pertaining to each theme; and 6) producing the report, which is equivalent to drafting the analysis of each chapter by selecting extract samples and relating them to the research question (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p. 87). Two lists of codes were generated in the Nvivo software, one to guide analysis on Evangelicalism and policing for chapters 5-8, and another to analyse the ideological doctrine of *PMs de Cristo* in Chapter 7. The full list of codes and sub-codes can be seen in Appendix 1. Codes included data from interviews, fieldwork materials, relevant annotations from the specialised literature.

The third method used was document analysis, which is an analytical procedure to systematically evaluate institutional documentation (Bowen, 2009; Morgan, 2021). For the historical analysis, document analysis was used to select, organise, and interpret official discourses and state legislation on pacification in Brazil, in line with historiographical debates on pacification found in the literature. I also used this method in combination with thematic analysis for the idiographic case study. While the latter identified high-level themes underlying Evangelical doctrine in MCs, in Chapter 8 the objective was to trace how the core of this doctrine developed as a public policy in the Spiritual Assistance policy at MJSP under Bolsonaro's government. The policy was being developed with some degree of secrecy, and knowledge about its existence came from interviews with two participants. Access to this documentation was only possible with the mediation of one participant working in the

government, who aided me in drafting a freedom of information request in June 2022 (I explain the details of this in the next subsection). The materials obtained consisted of hundreds of documents (meetings notes, technical studies, projects, ordinances, legal analyses, etc.) spanning from 2018 (when the policy was being planned) to 2022 (when the policy ended).

I followed Cardno's (2018, p. 635) step-by-step guidelines for the analysis of policy documentation: 1) define orienting questions for analysing documents; 2) preparation for analysis; 3) decisions about the approach to categorisation; 4) description of context; and 5) dealing with the document text and inferences. The guiding questions were to understand how the public policy was created and how it evolved, hence the documents could provide key insights into the planning of the policy by government officials, the justificatory process, and its implementation. Moreover, documents could be used to ask if the content of the document reflected the key concepts and ideological worldview of the Evangelical doctrine analysed in Chapter 7. The second step involved skimming through the documents and determining what was relevant or not for analysis. It quickly became clear that some key information about the implementation process was missing, which prompted me to file a second freedom of information request in August 2023, already under Lula's new government (2023-2026). The new documentation obtained was more comprehensive and allowed me to fully trace the development of the policy.

The third step involved categorising the documentation. I created a spreadsheet to trace the evolution of the policy and triangulate information with the interviews. With this general mapping, I proceeded to carefully read and interpret the selected documents, highlighting specific passages that matched the themes described by the Evangelical pacification doctrine. This way of organising documentation allowed me to define the wider context within which government agents were operating (step 4). I re-worked the mapping spreadsheet by using hyperlinks to specific news sources and academic literature related to the period each document was published. This was helpful to maintain a critical gaze when drafting the chapter and not treat the data as "necessarily precise, accurate, or complete recordings of events that have occurred." (Bowen, 2009, p. 33). Further, analysis of the documents generated more questions about the policy, which I was able to clarify in follow-up interviews or informal conversations with participants. The last step, inference, was the actual drafting of the chapter, where I interpreted the meaning of the documents in relation to the issues being explored.

The fourth method was semi-structured interviews, a method used to impart "expert knowledge about the research field", and record and analyse "informants' subjective perspective" (Hopf, 2004, p. 203). Interviews consisted of a sample of 17 participants, two of

which took part in follow-up interviews to follow on key developments (for instance, one participant was interviewed before, during, and after the 2022 presidential elections as he was one of the managers of the Spiritual Assistance public policy under Bolsonaro's government). Recruitment was separated into two groups: first, people with academic expertise or specialist knowledge on the interface between religion and security in Brazil. For this group I was able to interview:

- Four leading academics with extensive ethnographic experience on Evangelicalism and militarism in Brazil;
- One analyst from the largest public security think tank in Brazil, *Fórum Brasileiro de Segurança Pública*, who had coordinated a survey on the role of religious belonging in online radicalisation among police professionals.

The second group consisted of people related to the Evangelical military chaplaincy milieu. For this group I interviewed

- Three coordinators from voluntary military chaplaincy organisations (*PMs de Cristo, Pão Diário Segurança Pública* (Our Daily Bread Public Security – MPDSP), and *Universal nas Forças Policiais* (Universal in the Police Forces – UFP)
- Three voluntary military chaplains, two of them regional coordinators for *PMs de Cristo* and UFP
- One institutional Evangelical military chaplain from the *Polícia Militar dos Distrito Federal* (Military Police of the Federal District – PMDF);
- One federal police chaplain responsible for implementing a chaplaincy project in the Federal Police;
- One government official managing the Spiritual Assistance public policy under MJSP;
- One former Evangelical military chaplain in the Army who abandoned the career and became a critical of the military; and
- Additionally, two Evangelical pastors active in the *Pró-Armas* ('Pro-Guns') social movement, which despite not being related to any of the chaplaincy projects, provided helpful insights on the relationship between Evangelicalism, public security, and policing.

Regarding this second group, roles often overlapped, that is, participants were pastors, military chaplains, and former police officers.[18] Interviews included open-ended questions meant to allow participants to elaborate on details they considered important. They were conducted from January 2022 to January 2023 and lasted between 45 minutes to three hours. All interviews were conducted in Brazilian Portuguese, which is my native language. Ethics approval for this study was granted by the Economics, Law, Management, Politics, and Sociology Ethics Committee (ELMPS), of the University of York, on November 9, 2021. Of the 17 participants, only three asked to be anonymised. However, given the change of the political context since the elections in 2022, I have decided to attribute a randomised pseudonym to every interviewee. All interviewees are cited in the following way: "(surname, profession, year of interview)". The full list of participants can be found in Appendix 2.

Most interviews were held over Zoom or Google Meets due to the Covid-19 pandemic, which is also why the fieldwork occurred over such a long timespan. In July and August 2022, when covid restrictions were partially lifted, I travelled to Brazil and conducted visits to the headquarters of two organisations, *PMs de Cristo* and *Universal nas Forças Policiais*, in São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro respectively, and interviewed some of their members. Interviews were transcribed and coded in NVivo. For chapters 5 and 7, interviews were used as complementary data, whereas for chapters 6 and 8, interviews guided much of the analysis as they provided key information unavailable elsewhere.

The practical difficulties I encountered when conducting fieldwork were mostly related to the Covid-19 pandemic: lockdowns made it harder to access contacts and limited the number of places I could visit. For instance, I had planned to conduct overt ethnographic observations of Evangelical military chaplains conducting their work, but lockdown restrictions in 2022 made this impossible. The limited time I had to conduct fieldwork in Brazil also limited my capacity to build my network and expand the number of participants. Another constraint was limited departmental budget (£1,500), which only covered for a conference attendance and flight tickets for fieldwork in Brazil.

[18] Out of the 17 participants, three were female, with one being an MC coordinator and the other two being academic experts. From the fieldwork experience it was clear that Evangelical MCs were gendered organisations largely led by men, although women also actively participate in chaplaincy activities, as seen routinely in the organisations' social media profiles. The lack of female representation among participants reflects wider gender inequalities within public security in Brazil. In the Military Police, for instance, women constitute 13% of officers, while only 59 women (5.3%) have reached the highest rank of the corporation, that of colonel, compared to 1,051 men who reached the same rank. In terms of race, 12 participants were white, five of them from the first group of experts (there were no black participants in this group), and seven from Evangelical MCs. The remaining five participants from the latter group were black, and occupied varied roles as chaplains, project coordinators, and government officials.

3.2.1 Data sources

The data collected for this research is largely qualitative, and data sources can be divided into primary, secondary, and fieldwork data.[19] The types of primary sources are:

- News articles from widely circulated media outlets (such as *O Globo, G1, Folha de São Paulo, Estadão, Brasil de Fato, BBC Brasil,* and *El País Brasil*. The digital historical archives of *Folha de São Paulo* and Estadão were also used to research the history of *PMs de Cristo* in the 1990s.
- Institutional websites, blogs, and social media pages (Instagram, Facebook, and Youtube) from Evangelical MC organisations. These were very useful to find interviews and follow their ongoing activities;
- An Evangelical mobile app developed by MPD for police officers containing daily Biblical meditations, podcasts, videos, and courses tailored for the security sector;
- Official government documents published either on institutional websites or in the *Diário Oficial da União* (Union's Official Gazette);
- Digital archives for Brazilian colonial and imperial documentation (*O Governo dos outros: Imaginários Políticos no Império Português* and the *Arquivo Histórico Ultramarino*)[20]. These were used to aid in reconstructing the history of pacification in Brazil;
- Datasets for socio-economic and violence indexes in Brazil, especially from *Instituto de Pesquisa Econômica Aplicada* (IPEA), Banco Central do Brasil (BCB), *Instituto Sou da Paz* (ISP), and *Fórum Brasileiro de Segurança Pública* (FBSP).

The types of secondary sources are:

[19] Although fieldwork material can be classified as primary and secondary, it is useful to distinguish it given the uniqueness of the material obtained.
[20] The first archive is available at: http://www.governodosoutros.ics.ul.pt/?menu=inicio and the second at: https://ahu.dglab.gov.pt

- Brazilian and Anglophone academic literature, covering themes such as far-right studies, Brazilian political economy, pacification theory, the history of pacification in Brazil, and Evangelicalism in Brazil;
- Reports interpreting aggregated data from security sector variables such as violence, crime, and incarceration rates, mainly from *Instituto Sou da Paz* (ISP), and *Fórum Brasileiro de Segurança Pública* (FBSP).

The fieldwork sources are:

- Textualised materials from semi-structured interviews;
- Official documentation accessed through two freedom of information requests, in June 2022 and August 2023, to MSJP;
- Grey literature materials such as manuals for military chaplains, marketing material for chaplaincy projects, pedagogical projects for chaplaincy training, and books published by Evangelical military chaplains.

Having explained the methods and data sources utilised in this research, I now turn to a reflection on the fieldwork experience and the strategies I used to overcome challenges associated with researching the far-right.

3.3 Reflexive considerations: researching the far-right in Brazil

Empirical research on far-right movements is a complex endeavour due to the difficulty in accessing sources and potential risks involved (Ashe et al., 2021). In Brazil, most empirical research on the far-right has been conducted through social media monitoring and discourse analysis from publicly available information. Overt ethnographic observations and interviews exist but are rarer (Teitelbaum, 2020; Wink, 2021). This is due to the strength of conspiracy theories about so-called Cultural Marxism supposedly infiltrating institutions such as academia. The far-right sees academics stereotypically as ‘communists’ preparing a silent takeover of state institutions and eroding traditional Christian values. Under Bolsonaro’s government, academics were persecuted and even illegally surveilled by the intelligence service (APUB, 2023; de Souza, 2023).

Given this hostile context, and as a Brazilian academic, any contact with far-right groups would be a difficult task, not the least because information about my identity as a leftist activist can be easily found online. However, colleagues with extensive fieldwork experience told me that given my affiliation to a UK university, I could be able to break through the access barrier. This is because of popular imagination, particularly strong within far-right circles, which sees the Global North, and Europe in particular, as a culturally superior place where things 'work' and are not 'corrupt' like in Brazil (Souza, 2018). In fact, it is commonly acknowledged within academic circles to note that white European scholars have much easier access to difficult fieldwork settings in Brazil. This *complexo de vira-lata* ('stray dog' inferiority complex) could theoretically work in my favour to offset the burden of being a Brazilian national - and it did.

My strategy to reach out to potential contacts was the following: first, I turned all my social media pages to private. I was not trying to hide my identity but to avoid my public posts and opinions (which invariably included criticism of Bolsonaro's government and antifascist content) becoming the first filter through which contacts could decide to participate or not. I agreed with my supervisor that in case anyone asked about my political inclinations, I would not hide it but instead would seek to explain the difference between my personal opinions from the task of understanding why their actions were becoming more and more relevant in present-day Brazil.

Second, I prepared a formal invitation letter and a document containing all the relevant information about the research. Although details were kept at high-level, I did not shy away from concepts like pacification or the entwinement between religion and security, as these are very present in Evangelical discourse. Except for academics and experts, no one from Evangelical organisations replied. My third strategy was to try to reach out to them via social media, where they are very active, or directly through the application WhatsApp, where telephone numbers were available on official websites. This strategy proved more successful. Some participants asked for informal chats before doing interviews, which were important steps to opening the doors to conduct fieldwork visits to their organisations. For instance, in the case of UFP, from the *Igreja Universal do Reino de Deus* (Universal Church of the Kingdom of God – IURD), I visited their headquarters in São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro in July and August 2022 respectively. This was quite an immersive experience, as I managed to attend worships, visit the insides of Latin America's largest religious temple, and speak informally to employees working in the chaplaincy project.

Snowballing was a very efficient strategy for reaching out to more contacts. One participant mediated contact with several people from different institutions, such as the MC of the PMDF, the MC of the Federal Highway Police, *PMs de Cristo*, and a government official from MJSP. In the case of *PMs de Cristo*, this had been referred to by other participants as the most consolidated MC, setting the template for all other similar organisations in both ideology and practices. Media coverage of *PMs de Cristo* was generally negative given their public support to Bolsonaro, and this probably played a role in their silence to my first request. However, after one of the participants contacted them on my behalf, I was readily invited to visit their headquarters in São Paulo, which happened in August 2022.

In the case of the government official, it opened a new venue to research into Evangelical MCs. Originally, I had been aware that MPD had signed a cooperation agreement with the Ministry in August 2021, which stipulated the creation of an online application for public security officials with a range of services such as an online Bible, daily religious meditations, courses about religion and policing, and a Christian web radio. The agreement received some criticism by the media and the left and was eventually suspended after an investigation by the prosecutor's office in late 2022, but it did not make much of a headline. There had also been no scrutiny on MJSP: who was behind this agreement, what was the intention of the agreement, and was it an isolated public act? When I asked a participant from MPD about the agreement, it was revealed that MJSP was actually working on a public policy to deliver 'religious assistance' to police organisations across the country. I was probably the only person outside the government, and within academia, to learn about this.

In my three interviews with the government official, Castro, he openly spoke about the government's project and emphasised how it had followed all the protocols of a typical public policy (formulation, evidence-gathering, debate, implementation, and evaluation). I asked if I could access the documentation and he directed me to file a freedom of information request to the Ministry and send it to him for revision. I sent him the draft and he made edits to it. According to him, he wanted to make sure the team that would decide on my request would not feel suspicious about my intentions with the document. About two weeks after submitting the request, he asked for an informal meeting with me. He told me he had been asked about me from "people above", meaning superiors within the Ministry, and mentioned that they were probably scared of official documents leaking during an electoral year, which could be used against Bolsonaro's government. In his view, the media was "thirsty" for manipulating evidence that Bolsonaro was instrumentalising Evangelicals to push for a "fanatical agenda"

in government. Then he concluded: “so I must ask you: what side are you on politics?”. My response was straightforward: “I have voted before for the PT [Workers’ Party], but I have become increasingly critical of their establishment politics”. I believe he felt this answer was satisfactory and he did not question me further. Within a week the information request was accepted and I gained partial access to the documentation pertaining to the ‘Spiritual Assistance’ public policy.

Having explained how I gained access to participants, I will now make some ethnographic observations about my fieldwork experience. I believe these are valuable insights for anyone planning to do similar type of research, as they provide an opening into the worldview of Evangelical chaplaincy organisations. First, these organisations tend to be very self-enclosed. Project coordinators often think that the ‘mainstream’ world of media and academia is hostile to them and that despite being the fastest growing religious group in society, they are still a persecuted minority. While Evangelical leadership from larger churches tend to be more outspoken about their objective to transform the state and society, most MCs avoid drawing too much attention because of how controversial the entwinement of religion and security is.

It was very common to hear participants complaining about ‘leftist’ media and academics who ‘distort’ information or ‘spread fake news’ about their work. On a visit to one of the organisations, I was given a tour of their office and my guide opened the door to a seemingly expensive piece of IT equipment. He said they were forced to hire a top-of-the-line data protection company after being hacked by a news portal (I could not find any information about this), and that since they “completely shut communication with the media”. The guide continued: “we cannot trust them, so we stick to our own channels, we have partners. But with you it is different. You were sent by our friend [...] so we believe you were sent by God”. During my visit to another organisation, I had to go through a security check that resembled that of an airport. All my belongings were thoroughly scrutinised in an underground car park, and I had to leave my phone in a locker as photos and recordings were prohibited.

However, being self-enclosed does not mean these organisations operate ‘in the shadows’. To the contrary, they rely on alternative means of communication that draw large audiences, such as Evangelical TV and radio channels, websites, YouTube channels, podcasts, blogs, books, and social media. Sifting critically through these alternative sources was very rewarding, as they provided me with a much deeper understanding of how these organisations

function and pointed to new clues to follow during interviews. They also made me aware of how deeply embedded I was in my own academic bubble.

Second, something must be said about how much Evangelicals believe in, and in fact live by, their missionary purpose. The more I delved into their worldview, the more I understood the difference between manipulation of faith for electoral or political gains to everyday manifestations of faith-based activism. This is not to say that I was ever dismissing their belief system or downplaying it to uncover its 'functions' or 'deeper logic' not accessible to the objective eye. Evangelicals *live* their religion with *intensity*.[21] Faith is not of secondary importance to other manifestations of modern life (i.e. work, education, politics, science), as can be seen with secularised Catholics, that is, non-practising Catholics who identify as religious but only practise their faith in religious ceremonies, and which comprise 51% of the Catholic population in Brazil (Balloussier, 2022). In contrast, for Evangelicals missionary activism is a not an option, but a mandate: "our vision is to obey Jesus' order in the Bible: Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature', right?", said bishop Garcia during my visit at IURD's Temple in Rio de Janeiro. For Evangelicals, the whole world is animated by God's Spirit which actively influences all domains of life.

Because of the intensity and the truth by which Evangelical activists experience their reality, they do not feel the need to hide what they do. This is different to them being self-enclosed, which is more about self-protection than to 'hiding'. Once the accessibility barrier was overcome, participants were very open about their objectives and activities, in ways that I often found strange (i.e. 'why are they disclosing this information to me?'). For instance, I heard stories about Military Police chaplains doing things that were clearly unconstitutional, such as providing back-up to police operations in which the lines between legal procedures and religion were blurred. I also found that one of the participants had engaged in political campaigning for Bolsonaro in a church while wearing a military uniform, which is a violation of the police's code of ethics. Theological justifications of police violence, and even killings, are often found in the books published by these Evangelical actors. None of this, however, seems out of the ordinary to them.

[21] I affirm this not only academically but also by first-hand experience, as I was converted as a born-again Christian during a period in 2007, after an encounter with US missionaries. The most impressive social dimension of Evangelicalism is the experience of community and solidarity, which is relatively lacking in secularised societies. For an Evangelical, the identity of the individual is attached to a sentimentalised form of belonging in a spiritual brotherhood represented by the body of Christ, and there is a clear subjective distinction between the 'fallen' individual prior to conversion and the rise of a 'new person' who has accepted the truth of the Word.

Another dimension of this relates to how they carry out their activities with professionalism. Evangelical MC organisations are not a movement of angry protesters or fanatics one meets at family lunch. Although some of them do engage with, and believe in, far-right conspiracy theories, their activities are sophisticated, highly rationalised, and well articulated. Most of the participants came from career backgrounds in the Military Police, and some have extensive experience in business management and public administration. To one interviewee, there was a need to distinguish their activities from proselytism: "it is more or less what we study at university, and we try to do what is more correct, to work scientifically" (Castro, government official, 2022). Many Evangelical chaplains pursue MA degrees (often in Evangelical universities) and carry out research about chaplaincy projects. *PMs de Cristo* routinely conducts their own surveys to measure the impact of their activity within the barracks.

Costa, one of the organisation's founder, spoke to me extensively about those studies and concluded: "what is modern in public security is this religious dimension, focusing on the individual and on community policing [...] this is what will strengthen the police institution and all crime prevention projects" (Costa, MC coordinator 2022). By modern he meant something efficient, tested, and this is not only an endogenous perception among chaplains. As will be seen in Chapter 6, police commanders are becoming increasingly convinced of the positive impacts of Evangelical chaplaincy projects, and some have become institutionalised within the barracks. This commitment to transforming public security with professionalism was perhaps one of the main factors that made them so willing to participate in this research with me. Every participant (who was not an academic) repeated the same thing: 'what you are doing is very important and will help us to improve our work'. Although I never stated that my intention was to measure or test the effectiveness of their work, they nonetheless interpreted it this way. Again, this is possibly related to the fact of being affiliated to a UK institution, which could have evoked an image of prestige and 'seriousness'. An illustration of this was that in one of my interviews, I was offered a job by a participant, to help implement an MC project within the Military Police of a state in Brazil.

This positive acknowledgement towards my work was also entwined with faith: at the end of my visit to *PMs de Cristo's* headquarters, two members asked if they could do a prayer for me, to which I agreed, despite feeling somewhat awkward. They stood up, raised their hands, and prayed with intensity. One of the things I recall them saying was: "We ask the Lord to protect Rodrigo and bless his wonderful project, how many incredible gifts you are giving us, Lord Jesus, and his work is one of them, it will raise our work to a new level, so please

protect his soul, let no Evil come near him, and allow him to find the path of Christ once again. Amem?".

In all, fieldwork was a very productive experience for my research. It not only complemented the work in terms of added material, but it significantly changed the direction of research. Interviews were originally planned to provide complementation to descriptive observations and analytical propositions. However, after I learned about the public policy that was being implemented, I realised there was an investigative lead to follow that connected all organisations. This allowed me to grasp the empirical work as a single narrative instead of isolated case studies with different organisations. These organisations were speaking the same conceptual language, borrowing ideas from one another, developing partnerships together, and exchanging at chaplaincy events.

Conclusion

This chapter outlined the methodological approach to this research. Grounded in the interpretivist paradigm of social science, the empirical work is based on a combination of two methodologies: qualitative historical analysis and idiographic case study. The methods for data collection and analysis chosen are literature review, thematic analysis, document analysis, and semi-structured interviews. The data collected range from primary, secondary, and fieldwork sources. The chapter also provided a self-reflexive analysis about researching the far-right in Brazil, the intricacies of access to self-enclosed movements, and ethnographic observations about researching Evangelical MCs, which may be useful for future research. The next five chapters are empirical and follow from the methodology described above. Chapters 4 and 5 are inquiries based on qualitative historical analysis and chapters 6, 7, and 8 are based on case study of the Evangelical MC.

Chapter 4 - The Long History of Pacification in Brazil: From Colonialism to Re-Democratisation

Introduction

In Chapter 2, the concept of pacification was suggested to account for the merger of religion and security in far-right politics. In this chapter, I set out to specify the historical trajectory of pacification in Brazil and the cumulative function it performed in the country's political development. The main argument to be developed is that Christian Militarism has a long history in Brazil, one which can be read as a series of pacification strategies and campaigns consciously adopted by political elites in the state-making process and development of capitalism, and variously combining the factors of coercion and ideology.

From colonialism to independence, from empire to the first republican regimes, and all the way through to the military dictatorship, pacification has been a fundamental political rationale deployed to neutralise, control, integrate, and sometimes eliminate political enemies – be they natives, rebels, enslaved peoples, or organised labour – with the aim to secure the dominant model of capitalist development (de Souza et al., 2017). In addition, pacification has promoted a "civilising mission" through moralising, religious discourses and practices aimed at disciplining marginalised populations, and which can be grasped as "the need to force people to work, educate and moralise them" (Kraay, 2017, p.171). As such, Christian ideology has been a key ideological element of pacification strategies throughout this long history.

With the transition to democracy in the 1980s, pacification virtually disappeared from the mainstream political vocabulary. This was in part due to the relative retrenchment of the military from political affairs, as well as the adoption of a new Constitution in 1988 that emphasised citizenship rights and democratic principles. Re-democratisation brought short-lived optimism that civilian oversight would lead to a renewed notion of citizen security as opposed to national security (Macaulay, 2005). However, conservative forces retained leverage over the formulation of public security policies, and the militarist logic of national security was transferred into everyday policing. Despite attempts at democratic reforms, civilian rule implied persisting militarisation of social life, which created the conditions for the emergence of a new pacification strategy in the early 2000s, which will be analysed in the next chapter.

Three cycles of pacification can be distinguished in Brazilian history, each covering distinct periods of crisis and perceived threats to the established order. Section 4.1 covers the colonial cycle from 1500 to 1822. Section 4.2 covers the imperial cycle from 1822-1889. Section 4.3 covers the National Security cycle from 1889 to 1985. Finally, section 4.4 offers a contextualisation of the transition to civilian rule and analyses developments in public security policies.

4.1 The colonial cycle

The first cycle of pacification in Brazil was the colonial period instituted by Portugal from 1500-1822, and which was based on the export of primary goods produced by slave labour. Slavery began with the capture of native Indians and, as early as 1538, of Africans brought through the Transatlantic slave trade[22]. Initially performing a purely mercantile role with the extraction of Brazilwood timber, the colony rapidly evolved into a productive enterprise in the 1530s with sugarcane plantations. The administration of the colonial system was instituted with the creation of *Capitanias Hereditárias* (Captaincies), a private transfer of land from the crown to nobility entrepreneurs whose main tasks were to found settlements, exploit, and protect the territory (Furtado, 2007).

At the start, the Captaincy system was very unstable. The main issues revolved on the threats posed by foreign powers, especially France and the Netherlands, and from resistance of native societies to colonial domination (Schwarcz and Starling, 2015). Portuguese settlements were initially limited to coastal areas in the Northeast which were incapable of expanding due to the large presence of hostile natives in the surroundings, who also regularly engaged in alliances and trade with the French. The solution to this was the implementation of a General-Government, with its capital in the Captaincy of Bahia, seeking to centralise the colonial administration and outlining a "civilising project" to win the wars against natives (de Oliveira, 2010, p.18). The Regiment of 1548, taken to Brazil by Tomé de Souza, the first General-Governor, presents the first explicitly articulated strategy of pacification, attempting to reconcile repression and enslavement of rebellious natives with appeasing measures such as the formation of alliances with those who accepted the Catholic faith:

[22] For three centuries, Brazil was the largest destination of slave trade in the world – 5.85 million out of the estimated 12.52 million enslaved peoples of the African continent arrived at Brazilian shores (Schwarcz, 2019, p.17). Brazil was the last country in the Western hemisphere to formally abolish slavery, in 1888.

> […] In the Captaincy of Bahia, thou shall settle the peace and work toward conserving or sustaining it, so that in the lands where they [natives] inhabit, Christians may live there in security and enjoy it; and when any upheaval succeeds, thou shall help with this and work towards pacifying them, as best as thou can, punishing the guilty (Dom João III, 1548).

This Regiment laid the foundation for the state-making enterprise in three aspects that were key to land occupation and colonisation over the next three centuries: militarisation, labour availability, and fiscal oversight (Paraiso, 2011). With it, a broad security reform was introduced whereby the Crown expanded the defensive powers of existing settlements and deployed military troops to wage wars of conquest against 'upheaved' natives, ordering to destroy "their villages and settlements, and killing and captivating the ones that thou understand to suffice for their punishment and example to others, and from there on, concede them peace when asked […]" (Dom João III, 1548).

Three categories of natives were introduced by Portuguese colonial legislation: Allies, enemies, and 'Indians of peace' (Perrone-Moisés, 1992). Allies were the indigenous nations with which the Portuguese could temporarily negotiate in war efforts against foreign powers or other hostile natives. The category of enemies was subsumed under the Just War doctrine that was repeatedly used by the Crown in the effort to consolidate its domain over the territory[23]. To 'upheaved' enemies, the Portuguese would have "just reasons of right", according to colonial legislation, to enslave them after being captured in war (Perrone-Moisés, 1992).

In all Just Wars declared against natives, a striking continuity can be seen in the way violence and peace were regulated. For instance, the second general-governor, Mem de Sá (1558-1572), instructed that enemies,

> constrained by necessity, shall ask for mercifulness, and concede them peace upon the condition that they shall become vassals to His Majesty and pay tribute and [work] in the mills […] and everything [they] shall accept and make, and the land becometh peaceful (cited in Moreira, 2017, p.133).

[23] The Portuguese Just War tradition had been adopted since the 13th century in the effort to combat the expansion of Islamic Caliphates in the Iberic Peninsula. It was influenced by mediaeval philosophy and dictated that war was divinely justified against infidels. The 16th century Navigations forced the Portuguese to reinvent this tradition to the colonial setting where the encounter concerned not an Islamic infidel, but a "Barbarian Indian" or a "wild heathen" who were to be tamed (Freitas, 2014).

In this sense, the term 'peace' in colonial administration was coterminous with violence because in the Lusitanian Just War tradition, the war against Barbarian natives – often described by settlers as so "ferocious" and "cruel" that "nothing nor anybody can bring them to reason or to civilisation" (Perrone-Moisés, 1992, p.125) – was the only means to maintain the peace of the state (Freitas, 2014, p.138). For instance, in the Just Wars declared against the *Tupinambás* – a large ethnic group from the Northern coast that resisted Portuguese domination – between 1554 and 1558, the general-governor would report at the end of each campaign their "complete and definitive 'pacification'" to the Crown (de Oliveira, 2017a, p. 57).

The causes for declaring Just War varied throughout the colonial period, producing often contradictory legislation that accommodated the needs of the colonisers, while also serving as arbitration in disputes among settlers in deciding upon which Indians should be enslaved or deemed 'free'. Four criteria emerged from colonial documents as legitimate causes to declare Just War (and hence enslavement) against natives: 1) refusal to accept, or boycott of, Christian preaching; 2) acts of hostilities against settlers or allies; 3) obstacles to the trade and circulation of settlers; and 4) the rescue of Indians condemned to death in rituals of anthropophagy (Freitas, 2014, pp.135–137).

The Just War tradition lasted throughout all period of colonisation, with a short-lived interruption during the reign of the Marquis of Pombal (1750-1777), chief minister of King José I, who prohibited enslavement of natives in 1758. However, a drastic backlash to this occurred when the Portuguese Crown moved to Brazil to escape the Napoleonic invasion in 1807. The Regent prince Dom João VI repeatedly declared Just Wars to natives, such as the *Botocudos* and the *Kaigang*, who resisted economic developments in the *Rio Doce* and *Guarapuava* regions, claiming that "pacification" and "civilization" were the only solution alongside armed struggle. The prince expected that

> moved by just terror […] they will ask for peace, and upon subjugating themselves to the sweet subjection of Laws and promising to live in society, they may come to be useful vassals, as already are the immense varieties of Indians that in these vast States of mine in Brazil find themselves *aldeados* [settled] and enjoy the happiness that is the necessary consequence of the social state […] (cited in Moreira, 2017, p.140).

The reference to natives that have been *aldeados* (settled) makes for the more complex phase of pacification – when, after being defeated and subjugated, natives could become 'Indians of peace'. To pacify, then, implied a civilising process carried out by Jesuit missionaries, responsible for converting natives and incorporating their labour in the colonial

settlements (de Oliveira, 2010, p.27). This was achieved through the methods of *Redução* (Reduction) and *Descimento* (Descent). *Redução* implied the creation of missionary settlements aimed at policing 'barbarian' customs and imposing a new social and linguistic order through catechization. Whereas *Descimento* had the practical meaning of approximating (or attracting) natives to plantations and colonial settlements, whilst also forcing them to abandon their nomadic culture (Pompa, 2017, pp.79–80; Erthal, 1992). The Regiment of 1686, for instance, which regulated the missionary tutelage of Jesuits over captured natives, ordered that "Indians inhabit settlements […] that they be many, both to the security of state and defence of the cities, as well to the treat and service of settlers […]" (cited in de Mattos, 2012, p.118) .

The *aldeamentos* were at the heart of the colonial project as a 'civilising mission': by forcing natives to abandon their cultural practices, it assured "conversion, occupation of the territory, its defence, alongside a constant reserve workforce for the economic development of the colony" (Perrone-Moisés, 1992, p.120). The whole colonial project was impregnated with Christian cosmology, from which sixteenth-century Navigations were seen as a civilising mission ordered by divine rights: "the expansion of the Portuguese Catholic monarchy moved *pari passu* with the fulfilment of its merciful and salvific role to integrate Indians to the community of the Church and State" (Freitas, 2014, p.121). Portuguese colonialism is rich in references of transforming natives into "useful vassals", preparing them to become labourers of the nascent civilisation (Santos, 2014), and Christian theology was essential to this project, particularly through catechisation (Perrone-Moisés, 1992, p.122).

That settled Indians were entitled to 'freedom' implied no less coercion. Freedom in the colonial world was equivalent to becoming catechised and was severely disciplined by missionaries (Schwarcz and Starling, 2015, p.62). To be free was conditioned to abandoning native self-determination, accepting Catholic faith, and living under the constant threat of violence if rules were disobeyed. Rejection of such obligations became legitimate causes for Just War, which for natives meant either extermination or enslavement. Throughout colonial history and beyond, such outcome was rather the rule and not the exception. Demographic data from the National Indian Foundation (FUNAI) shows that the indigenous population fell from three million in 1500, to 360.000 in 1825, reaching as little as 70.000 in 1957, before it began growing again (FUNAI, n.d.).

4.2 The imperial cycle

The second cycle of pacification corresponds to the imperial period stretching from Brazil's independence in 1822 to the proclamation of the Republic in 1889. Brazil's independence is a chapter apart in the history of Latin America – where, by the mid-nineteenth-century, the four viceroyalties of the Spanish crown had been transformed into 17 independent Republics through anticolonial struggles. Instead, the local slave-owning elites in Brazil longed for stability of the system bequeathed by colonialism (Freitas, 1982). In the early 1820s, at least 30% of the population – estimated between four and five million – was enslaved (Bethell; de Carvalho, 1993, p. 45).

The process of independence was anticipated by the end of Brazil's colonial status in 1815 with the formation of the United Kingdom of Portugal, Brazil and the Algarves, having its capital in Rio de Janeiro. Following a series of clashes with Lisbon beginning in 1820 after the Liberal Revolution in Portugal, the landowning classes alongside Brazil-born bureaucrats favoured rupture with Portugal in 1822, but with the maintenance of the monarchy and the coronation of D. Pedro I, son of the king of Portugal, as emperor of Brazil (Schwarcz and Starling, 2015). The state-making process of the independent nation, however, was wrought with instabilities and conflicts that placed pacification as a centrepiece strategy to overcome threats to the territorial and institutional unity of the state.

Some provinces, especially in the North and Northeast regions, became entangled in wars of independence, and distinct political projects with centrifugal tendencies had been under dispute for years, such as the Pernambuco Revolution (1817) and the Confederation of the Equator (1824) (Bethell and de Carvalho, 1989). This exposed the inherently difficult task of creating centralised structures in such a large and poorly integrated territory, but also of controlling uprisings of the enslaved and 'popular anarchy', as riots and acts of insubordination among the free poor were often called (de Souza, 2008). A major concern of the Pacifying Army immediately after independence was of maintaining 'social peace', which for the landowning classes meant assuring the flow of agricultural exports and availability of slave labour (Filho, 2004).

In addition, the economic crisis of the first half of the nineteenth-century, related to the adoption of economic liberalism and subordinate relations with Britain, acted as a further element of disaggregation. The "Opening of the ports to friendly nations" decree of 1808 and the Strangford Treaties of 1810 had placed Britain as a privileged power, with extraterritorial

rights and preferential tariffs set at 15% of imported goods, which for some time was less than that paid by Portuguese vessels (Furtado, 2007, p.143). This situation significantly undermined state revenues – largely dependent on import tariffs – and would ultimately contribute to state failure (Mazzuca, 2021). This critical juncture culminated in the abdication of the emperor D. Pedro I in April 1831, after long clashes with liberal factions that opposed his absolutist measures and favoured decentralisation of power.

After the abdication, a series of regencies ruled the country until the son of the emperor, D. Pedro II, reached the majority age. From 1831 to 1837, liberal regents put in motion a series of decentralising reforms that gave more political autonomy to provinces, diminished the power of the monarchy, and created a new type of military organisation – the National Guard – controlled by regional oligarchs as a counterweight to the Imperial Army (Gomes, 2014, p.120). According to Mazzuca (2021, pp.738, 776), liberal "institutions and policies pushed the Brazilian state to the brink of collapse" as "the new resources available to the local legislatures became a prize to be intensely disputed between rival local oligarchies. Disputes often turned violent and morphed into full-scale rebellions".

A conservative reaction known as *Regresso* ensued in 1837, with the new regents spearheading centralising policies and reversing liberal reforms. This was consolidated with the enthronement of D. Pedro II in 1840, anticipating his majority age, and new reforms bringing the administrative and legal apparatus back to the central government (de Souza, 2008). It was in this polarisation between Liberals and Conservatives that political elites found new opportunities to establish absolute authority of the central monarchy over provinces, a situation considered irreversible by 1850 (Bethell and de Carvalho, 1989). However, this was the outcome of a long series of armed conflicts stretching from 1831 to 1850 between the capital and provinces, known as the Regency Revolts.

Over 20 minor revolts and seven large revolts with the potential for fragmentation took place in this period (de Carvalho, 1982). The causes of the Revolts are varied and do not fit into a single framework, as each was based on local conditions and social structures. Most, however, were fuelled by disputes between provinces and central government over issues of autonomy and instigated by reactions to both liberal and conservative reforms (Fausto, 1999). Table 1 provides an overview of the most important revolts of this period, their nature, composition of rebel groups, position on abolitionism, and casualties. What stands out most among them is the varied social composition of rebel groups, where enslaved peoples and the free poor often conjoined forces with landowners to form troops and occupy cities or wage guerrilla warfare in rural areas. However unstable compromises were regarding abolition, these

types of alliances pointed not only to territorial fragmentation but to breaks in social hierarchies (Mazzuca, 2021).

In this period, pacification re-entered national politics as an official imperial policy and became a top slogan in party politics debates, with Conservatives defending more violent means of repression and Liberals defending amnesty for rebels. In contrast with the colonial cycle, pacification acquired a more everyday meaning of "restoring peace" by "making insurgent or rebels obey" - as a widely circulated Portuguese dictionary defined at the time (Kraay, 2017, p.152).

Table 1 – Summary of the main pacified revolts (1831-1850)

Name	Years	Province	Nature	Composition of rebel groups	Abolitionist?	Fatal Casualties
Cabanada	1832-1835	Pernambuco and Alagoas	Restorationist – demanded Emperor's return	Engenho lords (at outset), small landowners, peasants, Indians, slaves	Yes – as movement split from Engenho lords to popular guerrilla in the forests	~15,000
Cabanagem	1835-1840	Grão-Pará	Secessionist	Public servants, military men, priests, slaves, Indians, *mestizos*	No – slave insurrection was repressed by rebels	~30,000-40,000
Revolt of the *Malés*	1835	Bahia	Abolitionist – establishment of Islamic Monarchy	Hausa Muslim slaves and free blacks	Yes	77
Sabinada	1837-1838	Bahia	Republican – would re-join the Empire once d. Pedro II achieved majority age	Military men, merchants, public servants, slaves and free blacks	Partially – native-born slaves would be manumitted	1,852
Balaiada	1838-1841	Maranhão and Piauí	Republican	Liberal politicians (at outset), peasants, cowboys, artisans, runaway slaves	No – abolition was debated but rebels who received amnesty from the Empire turned slaves in	~12,000
War of the *Farrapos*	1836-1845	Rio Grande do Sul	Republican	Cattle ranchers, urban middle class, military men, slaves	No – slaves who fought alongside rebels in exchange for freedom were betrayed	~3,000
***Praieira* Revolution**	1848-1850	Pernambuco	Federalist	Liberal politicians, military men	No	900

Pacification of the revolts combined both repressive and conciliatory measures, but the more "popular the revolt, the greater the degree of repression and violence deployed by public powers to fight it" (Hoff and Blanco, 2020, p.15). Given the widespread fear of enslaved uprising, a large effort of institutional transformation was put in motion to reform the coercive

branch of the state in order to allow designated plenipotentiaries to mobilise resources and centralise authority, often accumulating the Command of Arms and Presidency of a Province. Although termed "pacification" to designate internal affairs of the empire in contrast to military intervention against external enemies, pacification campaigns were regulated by the Ministry of War, and were generally portrayed by officials on the ground not as 'civil war' or 'internal conflict' but as actual warfare (de Souza, 2017).

After a successful campaign of pacification, it was common for many Army officials to claim the title of 'pacifier' and join the nobility (de Souza, 2017, p.193). Army officials accumulated long trajectories in pacifying rebels. For instance, one official, Major Antonio de Sampaio, was deployed in the pacification of the provinces of Ceará, in 1832, in Pará in 1835, in Maranhão in 1839, in Rio Grande do Sul in 1841, and in Pernambuco in 1850 (de Oliveira, 2017b, p. 209). Methods of pacification and knowledge of terrain, peoples, and culture circled across the empire as officials were deployed to repress rebellions, which also aided in the identity categorisation of 'inferior others' (Hoff and Blanco, 2020; Gomes, 2014). Knowledge about international pacification also travelled to Brazil during this period, with many Army officials seeking inspiration from methods of social control undertaken in places such as Hungary, Russia, Australia, and Algeria (de Oliveira, 2017b). However, it was one Army official who developed the most systematic formula of pacification for the period and whose interventionist actions helped to "consolidate a state policy aimed at controlling territories and administrating segments of the Brazilian population" (de Souza, 2017, p.179). This was Luís Alves de Lima e Silva, the Duke of Caxias, commonly known as 'the Pacifier'.

Caxias' actions as pacifier of the *Balaiada* revolt in the province of Maranhão, between 1839 and 1841, became a model for political repression and rearticulation of social hierarchies (de Souza, 2008). Finding the province worn out by war and under deteriorating economic conditions with the occupation of key towns by rebels, Caxias took advantage of the political polarisation to present his actions as neutral, standing above any divide between Liberals and Conservatives – although himself a Conservative acting on behalf of centralising policies of the *Regresso* reforms. In Maranhão, he claimed his only concern was with the goal of 'civilising' the *Maranhenses* who had fallen to a level of 'barbarity' (Rodrigues; Maciel, 2020). In his own words, war was a "means of civilisation for the future" (de Souza, 2008, p.297). To achieve this, pacification would need to "implement long-lasting and continuous control mechanisms […] Only in this way could it civilise (de Souza, 2008, p.297). Caxias' strategy in fighting the *Balaiada* revolt involved a blending of repressive and moralising interventions that

would simultaneously seek to restore the political order *and* incorporate defeated enemies into the social and economic order of the empire.

He proceeded in two stages. First, on the repressive side, he created the Pacifying Division of the North, carrying out military operations to siege rebels and re-open trade flows alongside the *Itapicuru* River, the main connecting point of the capital to the rest of the province. With the reestablishment of economic activities, Caxias was able to win trust over the landowning elites that had previously supported the revolt. In his opinion, it was up to the elites to "cultivate peace, precondition for the wealth and prosperity of peoples" (de Souza, 2008, p. 298). Reconciling measures with the elite would be essential for returning power to them once pacification had been achieved.

This led to the second stage, concerned with re-establishing the social borders that had been shaken off by alliances between elites, rebels, and enslaved peoples during the revolt. It implied, first, separating rebels – peasants, cowboys, small landowners – from the enslaved in order to contain the radicalisation of the revolt and return the latter to their owners. For Caxias, there was a clear difference between the war waged by rebels – a "political war" – and the one waged by the enslaved – a war of "banditry" (de Souza, 2017, p.187). His solution for this was to offer amnesty to rebels with the condition that they, in his own words, "beat the black", and hand them in to government forces (de Souza, 2008, p.319). Where this was not possible, he would recruit spies to, again in his own words, "awaken the old malaise against blacks" and "introduce weeds among rebels" in order "to undo this alloy" (de Souza, 2017, p.185). [24]

This stage of pacification also implied, secondly, establishing reforms of the educational and religious institutions in the province with the aim to "'tame' the Maranhenses' bodies and souls" (de Souza, 2008, p.307). 'Moral pacification' was an overall concern across the empire in this period, as it pointed to not only overcoming internal strife, but a long-term prospect of integrating rebels into economic development (Rodrigues; Maciel, 2020). As the widely circulated newspaper, *Diário do Rio de Janeiro*, reflected in 1839,

> The pacification of the empire does not depend only on the triumph of Imperial arms: this is the first step needed to suffocate factions, but afterwards, it is necessary to fix victory and law, **obliging people to work, providing them with instruction adapted to their intelligence, proper to the different professions, and fomenting**

[24] Such strategies were highly successful and would be repeated in other pacification operations led by Caxias, most notably in the southern province of Rio Grande do Sul, where a group of rebel leaders agreed to sacrifice the enslaved in exchange for imperial amnesty. Enslaved groups had been promised freedom after joining the ranks of the rebel Army, but in November 1844, over a hundred 'black lancers' were ambushed and massacred by imperial forces in the Battle of Porongos, which had been concerted between Caxias and the rebel leader, David Canabarro (Gandia, 2016).

> **and protecting enterprises that can entertain the souls from exaggerated ideas of which they find themselves dominated**: towards this end, **religion will be of much use**, and the government should as soon as possible serve itself with soldiers of faith as one of the **first elements of moralisation and pacification** (cited in Kraay, 2017, p.171; emphasis added).

This view was aligned with the ideological motto of the empire: for a country whose national identity was still being constructed, Conservatives understood that the only 'social glue' capable of maintaining the state from fragmenting was the union of Catholicism – the official religion of the state – with the sacralised representation of the emperor, D. Pedro II, as a fatherly figure of an indistinct 'greater family'. The period of the Second Reign, which began with the majority age of the emperor declared in 1842, coincided with the pacification of the Maranhão province. In a public proclamation, Caxias hailed both events as a new era of the "great Brazilian family", with the emperor becoming a "symbol of peace, union and justice" that puts an end to any regional strife (de Souza, 2008, p.321).[25]

Over the next decades, pacification became an institutionalised practice across the empire, especially with the establishment of military colonies throughout the territory to deal with issues of social control of marginalised populations – Indians, runaway slaves and so-called 'bummers'. Military colonies were a project seeking to enable "the circulation of commodities, trade, as well as the settlement of 'interiors' through agriculture, attacking nomadic habits of many who lived there" (de Oliveira, 2017b, p.201). Pacification was also an important policy which projected the military as a central actor in the consolidation and centralisation of state power in the country. The increasing influence of the military in the political landscape became even more pronounced with the emergence of the Republican movement, championed by military officials. It was the strategic involvement of the Army in political affairs, particularly following the gradual decline of the empire in the aftermath of the Paraguayan War (1864-1870), that culminated in the formal declaration of the Republic in 1889 (Schwarcz and Starling, 2015; Gomes, 2014).

[25] In 1962, Caxias was officially considered as the patron of the Brazilian Army. Historical research has uncovered the myth-making aspects surrounding his name, especially in the construction of a shared imaginary of Caxias as one of the founding fathers of Brazilian national identity (de Souza, 2017).

4.3 The National Security cycle

The third cycle of pacification corresponds to the National Security period spanning from the foundation of the Republic in 1889 to the end of the Military Dictatorship that ran from 1964 to 1985. In this century-long cycle, we can observe the consolidation of the military as a politically 'moderating force', acting as guarantor of the social order of capital throughout distinct political regimes, and overseeing the transition from a rural economy based on export-led primary products to urban industrialisation. While practices and discourses of pacification were still applied to native Indians in this period (Erthal, 1992; Langfur, 1999), the main novelty was its blending into a National Security Doctrine in the 1950s after a series of cumulative political experiences such as the Pacifying Movement of 1930, the enactment of the first National Security Law in 1935, and the intervention of 1937 leading to the *Estado Novo* dictatorship. Consolidated in the 1964 military coup, the National Security Doctrine defined a new internal subject to be pacified – the working class. Repressive measures based on this doctrine radicalised to the point of revocation of political rights, torture, and extermination of enemies: unionists, left-wing populists, and communists.

As the Brazilian economy developed and social demographics shifted at the beginning of the twentieth century, pacification became attached to the process of industrialisation and the formation of new social classes arising from the interplay between fast urban transformations and persistent rural backwardness (Marini, 2000). The impulse towards industrialisation in the first years of the Republic was based on surpluses generated from exports from agricultural goods, and for this reason the period from 1889 to 1930 is known as the Oligarchic Republic. In this period, the political ruling classes were tied to the coffee oligarchs from São Paulo and Minas Gerais who ran the country on a system of rural patronage (Wirth, 1964) and political decentralisation, transforming the "central Government into the projection and instrument of coffee-making states" (Furtado, 1968, p.5).

The crisis of the agrarian-export model began during the First World War, with the contraction of international demand, and became irreversible with the Great Depression in 1929. It created the first opportunities for a model of industrialisation run by reformist nationalist currents, through what is known as 'imports substitution industrialisation', a process whereby the low capacity of imports (either from market unavailability or currency crisis) created incentives for industrialists to produce and sell cheaper, lower-quality products without competition (de Oliveira, 2013, p.48). Such a process, however, developed under strong

political tensions created by new class realities, bringing the military to the centre stage. Internal strife within the Army and intense social agitation in urban Brazil created the conditions for overthrowing the rural oligarchy from power, crystalised in the Revolution of 1930, which took Getúlio Vargas – a southern landowner and politician – to the presidency. In this context, pacification began developing into a comprehensive security doctrine, institutionalised as the 'right' of the military to utilise moderating powers to neutralise domestic enemies and protect the status quo.

The backdrop of the 1930 Revolution was the pressure of the new urban middle classes aspiring to modernise Brazil against the backward policies of oligarchic rule, and to be incorporated to the political system through democratic reforms. With the system closed to transformations, the military became the main instrument of change by the middle classes (Weffort, 1968). The leap of modernisation had engendered new social forces with organised movements struggling on opposing ideological fields. On the one hand, the European-originated urban proletariat unionised under the flag of Anarchism and radicalised to the point of a general strike in 1917 and 1919, later converting to Bolshevism with the foundation of the *Partido Comunista Brasileiro* (Brazilian Communist Party - PCB) in 1922. On the other, sectors of the middle class and the petty bourgeoisie, influenced by 'social Christian' philosophy, developed in the 1920s conservative and authoritarian movements tied to a reaction of the emerging left.

Ever since the beginning of the Republican period in 1889, influential Catholic reactionaries and pro-monarchist movements campaigned against modernisation tendencies and what was perceived as the erosion of traditional forms of authority. Under the umbrella of Integrism, an ideology influenced by European Restorationism, the far-right pushed for a totalising project where the Church should be present in all spheres of state and society (Wink, 2021; Deutsch, 1999).This was reflected in organisations such as the Centre Dom Vital and the *Liga Eleitoral Católica* (Catholic Electoral League - LEC), who rejected materialist and secularist values and denounced "behavioural deviations" related to gender and sexuality (Bertonha, 2020; Quadros, 2013). A key element of this Catholic reaction was intense social activism in the military, where the Church pushed for a 'Christian-soldier' ethos of incorruptible, God-fearing soldiers tasked to protect a divinely-sanctioned political order (Coelho and Romera, 2016; Baldin 2012). The climax of this reactionary trend came with the creation, in 1932, of the largest fascist party outside Europe, the *Ação Integralista Brasileira* (Brazilian Integralist Action - AIB), organised under the slogan "God, fatherland, and family" (Gonçalves and Neto, 2020).

In a climate of growing political tension and economic deprivation, the higher echelons of the Army began devising the doctrine of the 'moderating force', to be used in critical junctures to protect the established order and assert internal discipline within the Armed Forces. General Berthold Klinger, one of its formulators, claimed that "the Army must be equipped for its conservative and stabilising function of the social elements in march, and [be] ready to correct internal perturbations […]" (cited in de Carvalho, 2005, p.41). This moderating intervention was put in place by the Generals of the *Estado-Maior* (High Command) at the height of the 1930 Revolution, in October, with Klinger becoming the Commander of the Pacifying Junta that deposed Washington Luís, last president of the Oligarchic Republic.

4.3.1 The 1930 Revolution

The Pacifying Movement, as the movement of Generals was called, had as its first objective to take power – effectively acting as a dictatorship, and solve the stalemate between legalists (Oligarchs who had won the 1930 elections) and revolutionaries of the Liberal Alliance, led by Vargas, who had the upper hand in the armed struggle. Initially seeking to present itself as a neutral movement "intended to remain as a nonpolitical government until 'the unity and peace of Brazil' were reestablished" (Wirth, 1964, p.168), it was soon pressured to concede to revolutionaries as they pushed towards the capital, and as Vargas assured the military a role in the new government. According to de Carvalho (2005, p.51), "the Pacifying Movement was the first rehearsal of a more powerful Army and organised in the sense of acting with more independence in the political arena".

With the revolution, coffee oligarchs, although still economically powerful, were substituted by a new elite: military men, technocrats, young liberal politicians, and later, industrialists (Weffort, 1968). However, given the unstable composition of forces supporting the new regime, neither the industrial bourgeoisie, nor the dissident oligarchies that supported the revolution, nor the more progressive middle class groups, were able to consolidate political rule, and instead all factions were entangled in struggle for power that paved the way to a shift to state authoritarianism personified by the populist Vargas (Wirth, 1964). If the revolution marked the aspirations of the urban middle classes to gain access to public goods, the 1930s signalled the rise of the urban masses and the pressure to become incorporated in the economic and political system. Between 1920 and 1940, the urban proletariat grew from 275,512 to 781,185, then reaching 1.256,807 in 1950, a reflection of both rural migration and industrialisation (Weffort, 1968, p.68).

Vargas attempted to curb working class mobilisation by creating innovative labour legislation, assuring some gains in terms of social security provision, but organising unions under strict control of the state (Fausto, 1999, p. 200). The period from 1931 to 1936 was of great civil unrest: clashes between fascist "green shirt" militias of the AIB – spanning hundreds of thousands of supporters and with a strong presence from the Church and the military – and anti-fascist movements became regular, and a series of riots and strikes took place across the country (Gonçalves and Neto, 2020). Repression of the strikes by the state led to a far-left reaction with the creation of the *Aliança Nacional Libertadora* (National Liberation Alliance - ANL) in March 1935, seeking to unite the organised left, which was attracting wide popular support and massive demonstrations.

The response by the state was the enactment of the National Security Law in April 1935, whose effect was to frame the issue of working class mobilisation as a threat to national security (Barreto and Parada, 2009). The first of its kind, the legislation considered as crimes against the political and social order activities such as: inciting hatred between social classes and within the armed forces, strikes in the public sector, subversive propaganda, and promoting organisations whose "activity is exercised in the sense to subvert or modify the political and social order" (Brazil, 1935). With this law, "communism became not only an enemy of the government, but a threat to society as a whole" (Pandolfi and Grynszpan, 1997, p.14).

The ANL was shut down by the government in July, and in November its members attempted an armed *coup* against the regime, which failed. What followed was an escalation of authoritarianism against the organised left. A series of repressive measures ensued, such as the declaration of a state of war in 1936 and the invasion of the Military Police in Congress to arrest congressmen allegedly linked to the ANL; the creation of a National Commission of Repression against Communism, and the implementation of a permanent National Security Court, designed to sentence people accused of promoting activities against the military, political, and social institutions of the country (Fausto, 1999). In only one year, 1,420 people were tried for acts of subversion (Ri Júnior, 2013, p.529). Meanwhile, all liberal opposition to Vargas became engulfed by state propaganda of the 'communist threat', and a conspiracy orchestrated by the fascist AIB with the High Command of the Army in September 1937 – where a fictitious Communist plan of 'imminent revolution' was purportedly intercepted – became the backdrop for Congress to approve a new state of war and suspension of constitutional guarantees for 90 days (Fausto, 1999). On 10 November of the same year, the Military Police besieged the National Congress and, later, Vargas announced a new

Constitution inspired by Italian fascism, opening a new phase that became known as the *Estado Novo* dictatorship, lasting until 1945 (Fernandes, 2007).

4.3.2 The *Estado Novo* Dictatorship

The state that was born in 1937 with the *Estado Novo* dictatorship was much more centralised both politically and economically. Three main factors stand out: 1) economic policy gradually focusing on the promotion of industrialisation; 2) the consolidation of a modern labour legislation for urban workers, attracting them to form an alliance with the state; and 3) a new central role of the Armed Forces in the promotion of industrialisation and maintenance of internal order (Fausto, 1999, p.196).

What stands out in the *Estado Novo* is a new alignment of the regime with the Armed Forces, opening a new phase in the 'moderating interventions' which projected the latter to a hegemonic position within the state (de Carvalho, 2005). The orientation of the new regime followed the guidelines presented by General Góes Monteiro – who had been involved in the Pacifying Movement in 1930 and was now Minister of War (Skidmore, 1967). Monteiro called for a 'de-politicisation' of the state, which should envisage a centralised authority closed to participation for both the masses and political parties, so that state-led industrialisation could take off. Without disregarding the reality of the working class, the idea was to "incorporate these new actors, emptying the political content of their vindications, as well as eliminating its more radical organisations" (Pandolfi and Grynszpan, 1997, p.17).

'Pacification of the streets' became a priority of the dictatorship, which coupled extensive police powers with the dissemination of "self-contention behaviours and discipline" through the implementation of state rituals, national celebratory days, and widespread use of state propaganda (Barreto and Parada, 2009). This was an attempt to bolster a unified "Brazilian culture" capable of overcoming ideological and class divides (Fausto, 1999). The ideology of the *Estado Novo* regime, based on the synergy of the concept of order, patriotism, and faith, combined elements of conservative Catholicism with fascism, though it lacked the mobilisational nature of the latter (Azzi, 1980; dos Santos, 2008). Although the AIB had been purged from the regime after attempting a coup in 1938, Vargas was able to co-opt many of its former militants and welcomed fascist intellectuals to build the doctrinal framework of the dictatorship (Bertonha, 2020).

With a populist style of politics claiming to speak in the name of the people, Vargas sought to create a broad class alliance between the industrial bourgeoisie and the working class

– above all the less technically skilled categories incapable of self-organisation (dos Santos, 1994). Once again, labour legislation implied gains coupled with discipline and neutralisation of working class mobilisation (Marini, 2000). For instance, the Labour Justice was created to arbitrate labour disputes, and a systematisation of protective legislation came with the Consolidation of Labour Laws in 1943. Additionally, Vargas established the minimum wage in 1940, intended to satisfy the basic needs of workers, without incorporating any productivity gains, therefore functioning as a reserve Army of labour mechanism (de Oliveira, 2013, p.38). At the same time, strikes and lockouts were banned, and dependency of unions to the state was strengthened (Fausto, 1999, pp.222–223).

The end of the regime was partly due to Brazil's participation in World War II alongside the Allies, the aftermath of which triggered massive mobilisation by the opposition, the press, and student movements pressuring for democratisation (Skidmore, 1967). The campaigns for amnesty for social movements and leading opposition figures that had been persecuted by the regime – especially communists linked to the 1935 uprising – was generally portrayed in the press as a plea for the "pacification of the Brazilian family". Speaking in terms of "national unity", the need to "forget resentments of the past", the nation-wide campaigns represented the peace of the defeated groups and the abandonment of a radical agenda in order to become integrated into the state framework (Rodeghero, 2017, p. 351).

Besides popular pressure, another factor contributed to the end of the regime: the divorce between Vargas and the military. With the introduction of the new labour legislation, Vargas' ideological reorientation as leader of the working class and his constructed image as 'father of the poor' generated concerns among the High Command of the Armed Forces that Vargas was seeking to consolidate a new social force under his leadership which would be autonomous from the state – and hence from the military's oversight (de Carvalho, 2005). A proposal for a new constituent assembly under the leadership of Vargas, defended even by the PCB, raised the alarm of General Goés Monteiro (one of the leading architects of the *Estado Novo*) who, fearing a new communist threat, mobilised the anti-communist faction of the military to depose Vargas, which occurred in October 1945. Like the 1930 Revolution and the 1937 coup, "it was the military, not the politicians, who were the immediate custodians of power" overseeing the transition to democracy (Skidmore, 1967, p.53).

4.3.3 The first democratic experiment

From 1945 to 1964, Brazilian politics experienced a divide between nationalist-populist forces advocating for state regulation of the economy and improved working conditions, and liberal-conservative groups supporting the internationalisation of the economy and opposing working class mobilisation. This division intensified as international economic groups, coupled with US interventionism in Latin America, gained prominence in the context of Cold War rivalries (Bielchowsky, 2012; Saad Filho and Morais, 2019) The political landscape during this period was dominated by three main parties: the *União Democrática Nacional* (National Democratic Union - UDN), a right-wing opposition party aligned with regional oligarchies and foreign interests; the *Partido Social Democrático* (Social Democratic Party - PSD), a centre-right entity formed by Vargas and government bureaucrats; and the *Partido Trabalhista Brasileiro* (Brazilian Labour Party - PTB), a centre-left group also inspired by Vargas and associated with the Ministry of Labour and trade union (Fausto, 1999; dos Santos, 1994). The new liberal democracy was thus constructed with the strength of Vargas' populism, with the PSD and PTB governing together for most of the democratic period under a popular-nationalist platform.

The first signs of radicalisation in politics came with the second Vargas government (1950-1954), democratically elected under the PTB. Now running a progressivist agenda, Vargas promoted a statist economic policy prioritising national investments in the industry. The results of this were, for instance, state monopolisation of oil with the creation of the *Petrobrás* company in 1953, and proposals to limit extraordinary profits and foreign remittances. Vargas sought support from unions by conceding a 100% increase in the minimum wage, which had been frozen since 1945. This was followed by a strong right-wing reaction by the UDN and sectors of the military that had begun its approximation with the US. Vargas tried to appease the opposition by offering a series of measures, such as decreeing a new National Security Law in 1953 – now concerned with external powers, namely the USSR, seeking to subvert the political order (Brazil, 1953) – the extension of a military agreement with the US, and a currency reform which allowed greater capital mobility in and out of the country (Marini, 2000, p. 77).

With the export crisis and reduction of the international prices of coffee, however, an inflationary process took place, making way for a series of working class strikes that triggered Vargas' radicalisation of the nationalist agenda. After an attempted murder of Vargas's main opposition leader, a manifesto signed by 27 Army Generals pressured Vargas to resign, escalating the climate of a coup against him. The final blow came on 24 August, 1954, when

Vargas made his final political move by committing suicide, an act considered by many to have protracted a military coup by a decade, given the mass demonstrations in his favour and the blame he addressed in his suicide letter to international capital colluding with domestic forces against workers' rights (dos Santos, 1994).

The dilemmas faced by Brazilian society would take a markedly radical step from the end of the 1950s. The left became much more autonomous and organised in an array of different movements, both revolutionary and nationalist (dos Santos, 1994). The shift in political mobilisation was reflected in the fact that in 1958, there had been 31 strikes registered, whereas in 1963, the number increased to 172 (Fausto, 1999, p.268). Popular pressure from the left became a defining characteristic of João Goulart's government starting in 1961, which represented the second phase of radicalisation of politics since Vargas.

Goulart was a trade unionist politician from the PTB who had served as Minister of Labour under Vargas. The economic situation of the country during his office was disastrous: the rate of investment had steadily fallen since 1962, and inflation soared: the annual index registers 33.35% in 1961 and 54.8% in 1962, and GDP dropped from 7.7% in 1961 to 1.5% in 1963 (Fausto, 1999; Marini, 2000). Despite this reality, Goulart's political base had grown considerably with the creation of a Popular Front represented by the Workers' General Command union, the progressive aisle of the military, and the PCB, leading him to announce a plebiscite for the return of the presidential system and the implementation of 'base reforms', a series of measures aimed at changing the economic and social structures of the state and nationalising strategic sectors. Goulart signalled with this a radicalisation of his agenda in 1963, first by winning the plebiscite to return to the presidential system, then by making concessions to the working class: 70% increase of the minimum wage alongside the sanctioning of the Rural Workers' statute, which regulated work hours, secured minimum wage, and provided weekly day off and paid vacations (Fausto, 1999).

Right-wing reaction to such measures grew fast. Rural and urban elites began arming militias and forming vigilante groups, such as the Patriotic Action Group, the Anti-Communist Militias, and the Brazilian Assisting Patrol (dos Santos, 1994). Far-right groups, such as the Tradition, Family and Property (TFP) – a transnational, anti-communist Catholic movement – and the Party of Popular Representation (PRP) – born from the fascist AIB and promoting a Christian concept of democracy – began mobilising the middle classes by nurturing the idea that the economic crisis was due to working class strikes and a communist plot (Gonçalves and Neto, 2020). After the rally of 13 March 1964, where Goulart gathered around 150 thousand supporters, the far-right organised the "Family's March with God for Freedom", mobilising

half a million people in São Paulo against Goulart and the 'decay' of Christian morality represented by the threat of communism (Quadros, 2013). The march became the legitimising act for the military coup shortly after.

The climax of the crisis came, however, when the Sailor's Association gathered 2,000 navy recruits to organise an event in a metal worker's union Rio de Janeiro and vindicated for better working conditions, which the High Command of the Armed Forces interpreted as a subversion of the hierarchy principle (Skidmore, 1988). This gave the military the justification it needed to intervene. On 31 March, military troops mobilised in the state of Minas Gerais and headed for Rio de Janeiro. The same ensued the next day with the troops of São Paulo. At night, Congress consummated the coup by declaring the office of the presidency vacant. Although it was a military operation, the coup was effectively orchestrated and supported by the mainstream media, big business, think tanks, and the US – which had dispatched a naval task force to Brazil in case of a prolonged conflict (Skidmore, 1988).

Building on the previous intervening experiences, the far-right military regime opened the way for the most radical phase of pacification in Brazilian history. This strategy was based on the construction and implementation of the National Security Doctrine, which provided both the legitimation of the coup and the ideological orientation of the regime.

4.3.4 The National Security Doctrine and the military dictatorship

The National Security Doctrine was elaborated by the *Escola Superior de Guerra* (Superior War College - ESG), founded in 1949 to serve as an ideological diffusion network between the military and civilians (Gomes and Lena, 2014). It was inspired by the US National War College, which would guide the Cold War military doctrine of the US and its dissemination to Latin American countries, especially after the repercussions of the Chinese (1949) and the Cuban (1959) revolutions. Between 1961 and 1977, 33,147 Latin American military officials were trained in the School of the Americas in Panama – from where the Doctrine originated and was applied in places such as Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay, Chile, and Bolivia (Fernandes, 2009, p.837; Müller and Steinke, 2020). The National Security Doctrine became the ideological fulcrum for the military dictatorships in those countries.

The Doctrine provided both a program for the restructuring of capitalism from the crisis and the definition of a threat – the construction of a communist enemy allegedly attacking both externally and internally. The Doctrine reflected ideological transformations in the Armed Forces since the 1930s which created a vision of their superiority in steering economic

development. ESG officials assumed that only a global and organicist view of society, standing above individuals and party interests, could lead to a strong government providing the necessary order for modernising the economy (Dreifuss and Dulci, 2008). According to its leading theorist and the man responsible for devising the security and information systems of the regime, General Couto e Silva (cited in Ri Júnior, 2013, p.530), "Development and Security are intimately mingled, reciprocally condition each other, and are sharply interdependent, at times leading to even confound each other".

This nexus between security and development implied that threats to national security were due to under-development, whose effect was to create poverty which would be in turn instrumentalised by communists (dos Santos, 1994, p. 97).[26] ESG officials understood that only association with international capital could provide the necessary catch-up strategies of development given the lack of technology, scarce capital availability, and existing management deficiencies (Dreifuss, 1989; Gomes and Lena, 2014). Thus, ESG ideologues sought to extend the Security-Development nexus to strategic social actors, mainly big businesses, in order to create a legitimate ground for military intervention. Industrialists actively participated in courses and seminars promoted by ESG, and ESG officials also collaborated in industrial associations – such as the Federation of the Industries of the State of São Paulo – on debates around national security and the 'threat' represented by labour movements (Weinstein, 1996). On the political economy side of the Doctrine, therefore, "security, associated with development, proposed the social control of workers in order to assure foreign companies a domesticated and cheap workforce" (Fernandes, 2009, p.851).

Since the beginning of the 1950s, ESG defined national security as the "relative degree of assurance that, through political, economic, psychosocial and military actions, a state provides to the human group that inhabits it for the persecution and safeguard of the national objectives" (Oliveira, 2010, p.149). According to ESG's Basic Manual,[27] the national objectives were: territorial integrity, national integrity, democracy, progress, sovereignty, and social peace (Escola Superior de Guerra, 1988). "Social peace" is a key concept, by which ESG supposes "harmony, solidarity, and conflict resolution through Law, social justice, and moral and spiritual values" (Lentz, 2019, p.55). In turn, harmony should be understood as the harmony between capital and labour, seeking to supplant class divisions and conflict. As the manual proceeds:

[26] For a broader discussion on the development-security nexus, see Duffield (2001).
[27] The Basic Manual enshrines the main tenets of the National Security Doctrine, which has been published in many consecutive editions since 1975 (Lentz, 2022).

> In the cosmovision of a society that cultivates the values of Christianity, Peace constitutes the **necessary condition and the desired effect**. Social Peace reflects a life value which is not imposed but stemming from **consensus**, in the pursuit of a society characterised by **conciliation** among groups and people, **mainly between capital and labour**, and by a feeling of Social Justice that benefits all and each Men (ESG, 1988, p.28; emphasis added).

Thus defined, the Doctrine became the ideological instrument by which the 'peace' of the military order was to be imposed upon the working class in order to create "the necessary social and political conditions to the reproduction of capitalist accumulation" (Duarte, 2011, p.11). With the popular-nationalist bloc defeated in 1964, the idea of "social peace" was ironically characterised as "consensus" and "conciliation", which was only tenable to the extent that the repressive apparatus of the state has neutralised any autonomous labour organisation[28].

This can be further evidenced by the way in which the Doctrine became incorporated into the legislation of the dictatorship. For instance, the Decree-Law n. 314 of March 1967, which updated the National Security Law of 1953, established that:

> Article 2: national security is the guarantee of the achievement of the national objectives against both internal and external antagonisms.
> Article 3: national security essentially encompasses measures destined to preserve external and internal security, including prevention and repression of adverse psychological warfare and of revolutionary or subversive war (Brasil 1967).

In this sense, the achievement of social peace as a national objective was tightly dependent on a vigilant security state. This was translated, on the one hand, into moralising policies aimed at constructing a conforming and obeying civilian subjectivity. An example of this were educational reforms which introduced mandatory modules in schools such as "Civic and Moral Education", whose content was formulated based on the tenets of National Security (Gomes and Lena, 2014, p.98). Civic and Moral Education was a project designed by Plínio Salgado, founder and leader of the fascist AIB, who became the rapporteur of the Education and Culture Commission in Congress. His book "Compendium of Moral and Civic Instruction"

[28] Industrialists actively colluded with the military regime in the pursuit of 'social peace'. For instance, the Social Service of Industry (SESI), an educational institution linked to the main industrial associations of the country, gave financial concessions to support the establishment of the National Information Service – which oriented the repressive agencies. The resolution issued by its executive directors authorising the funding stated that "SESI has as its purpose, among others, to **stimulate action in favour of the public welfare and social peace**", which coincided with the National Information Service, whose purpose, it noted, was "to supervise and coordinate activities related to national security, **which naturally includes [the maintenance of] public order and social peace**" (Weinstein, 1996, p.323; emphasis added).

inspired the enactment of the Decree-Law 869/1969, which made the module mandatory in schools. Among the explicit aims of the decree-law, we find the following:

> a) Defence of the democratic principle through the preservation of the religious spirit, of the dignity of the human being, and the love to freedom with responsibility, under the inspiration of God;
> b) The preservation, strengthening, and projection of the spiritual and ethical values of nationality […]
> d) worship of the fatherland, its symbols, traditions, institutions, and the great figures of its history;
> e) the enhancement of [one's] character, based on morality, in the dedication to family and community […] (Brazil, 1969).

Such religious entwinement with the goals of nationhood were in fact equivalent to the moral underpinnings of the National Security Doctrine, as it defended 'Christian democracy' as opposed to 'Atheist communism'. This implied rejecting class divisions in society which, in the view of ESG, eroded the social cohesion of the "national community" (Gomes and Lena, 2014; Bertonha, 2020). According to a historical survey conducted by Lentz (2022), in all its editions the National Security Doctrine explicitly articulated a Christian cosmovision, with its Basic Manuals - a document that guided official government policies - claiming things like the unavoidable "the existence of a natural and eternal law, whose source is God, which men tends towards to" (cited in Lentz, 2022, p. 246; see also Lentz and Penido, 2021).

On the other hand, social peace could only be brought about by fighting political subversives through enhancing the repressive mechanisms of the state. The Doctrine was built on the idea of permanent counterinsurgency, which combined military operations with civilian-based initiatives designed to dissuade the dissemination of communist ideology in the country. Related to these were so-called *Açães Cívico-Sociais* (Social-Civic Actions - ACISOs), a project for approximating the military to the marginalised population (Müller and Steinke, 2020). Inspired on US Civic Action Programmes and French counterinsurgency doctrine, and initially funded by the Military Assistance Program from the US, ACISOs offered services such as medical treatment, distribution of food, clothes, construction of roads and schools in regions where military operations were being targeted against guerrilla groups (Guimarães, 2015).

Just like the military officials who claimed the title of the 'Pacifier' after defeating revolts in the nineteenth century, so the dictatorship symbolically rewarded agents of repression with the "Medal of the Pacifier" – created in 1953 to celebrate the deeds of the Duke of Caxias. In 1962, the Armed Forces introduced a new modality to the Medal – the 'Palm-tree' – conceded to those who "distinguished themselves in personal acts of abnegation, courage, and

bravery, with risk of life" (Brasil, 2002). Between 1964 and 1988, 10,775 people were retributed with the medal, 233 of which had been identified by the *Comissão Nacional da Verdade* (National Truth Commission - CNV)[29] as members of political repression, that is, nearly a third of all publicly denounced individuals (717) engaged in arbitrary torture and assassinations (Joffily; Chirio, 2017, p.372). The CNV report pointed out that during the military dictatorship there were 191 assassinations, 243 disappeared civilians, and at least 8,350 assassinations of indigenous people perpetrated by the state during the period (CNV, 2014).

4.4 Re-democratisation and public security

With re-democratisation, pacification virtually disappeared from the political vocabulary, although its logic remained active in the public security sector. Re-democratisation was a controlled process initiated by the military regime in the mid-1970s to avoid political rupture and a takeover by radical leftist parties. Several factors led to a loss of legitimacy of military rule, including corruption scandals, discontent with political repression, economic recession, labour strikes, and embrace of globalisation by business elites (Skidmore, 1988; Dreifuss, 1989; Diniz, 1999). The transition period, however, was caught in a tension between political and economic democratisation.

The *Assembléia Nacional Constituinte* (National Constituent Assembly - NCA) was convened in 1986 to vote for a new constitution. The NCA comprised strong mobilisation from social movements, unions, and parties pressuring for citizenship rights and economic equality, as well as from supporters of the military regime and conservative forces (de Moraes, 1989). Despite the conservative majority of the NCA, the constitution approved in 1988 brought substantive new social rights that effectively represented a move away from coercive tutelage by the military towards a welfare state focused on universal provision of rights and social protection (Saltorato and Grun, 2005; Schwarcz, 2019). However, this democratic model was limited by the fiscal limitations imposed by the transition to neoliberalism (Saad Filho and Morais, 2019, p. 83).

In Brazil, as in much of Latin America, the transition to neoliberalism was related to and justified by the need to control inflation (Filgueiras, 2006). A series of economic plans in the 1980s and early 1990s failed to deliver stability and gave way to hyperinflation shortly

[29] The CNV was created in 2011 by a federal law to investigate human rights violations committed by the Brazilian state during the dictatorship.

after, peaking at 2,950% during the presidency of Fernando de Mello (1990-1992) (IMG, 2021). The 1994 *Real* Plan – initiated during the office of Itamar Franco (1992-1994) and consolidated under Fernando Henrique Cardozo (1995-2002) – achieved monetary stability, and in 1999, Cardozo introduced the so-called 'tripod of macroeconomic policy': low inflation targets, floating exchange rates, and primary surplus fixed at 4.25% of GDP (Teixeira and Pinto, 2012). The main impacts of neoliberalism were precarisation of labour and the exclusion of popular sectors from the socio-economic policy-making arena (Rossi and Silva, 2018). Neoliberalism represented the consolidation of a low intensity democracy in parallel with high levels of inequality and wealth concentration (Saad Filho and Morais, 2019), leading to growing pressures from urban and rural social movements and the rearticulation of the militant left, who demanded a new economic policy focused on the social gains enshrined in the 1988 constitution (Webber, 2017).

Developments in the security sector mirrored much of the tensions of the transition period. The 1980s and 1990s represented a period of crisis of public security in Brazil, with record high rates of violence, the expansion of organised crime, and ineffective authoritarian methods of social control (Teixeira, 2014). With the end of the military dictatorship, security policies saw a shift from discourse and practices based on fighting political subversives to targeting urban criminality and narcotics through an almost exclusive attention to militarised police models (de Lima et al., 2016). However, the National Security Doctrine was re-adapted to policing, with techniques of political repression being transferred to the patrolling of everyday criminality by the Military Police (Macaulay, 2017).[30]

In the transition period, conservative forces were able to shield the security sector from external pressures and advocated for a relevant role of the Armed Forces under the new constitution. For instance, in the NCA, the Sub-Commission of Defence of the State, Society and its Security invited members of the ESG – who designed the National Security Doctrine – to debate the validity of their concepts for the new regime. They argued that ESG manuals were applicable to both totalitarian *and* democratic regimes, and that the Armed Forces could still oust a constitutional government in the name of homeland security (Schinke, 2021, pp.10–12). The pro-military lobby managed to maintain the National Security Law of 1983 and amended

[30] In 1969, the military regime created the Military Police, subordinating all state-level ostensive police forces to the Ministry of Defence. According to Pinheiro (1981, p. 67), the "extinction of these forces was to avoid the political use by states and the centralisation and cohesion required for fighting the 'permanent war'", that is, fighting domestic enemies.

a vague definition of the role of the Armed Forces in the new constitution, reopening interpretations on the attribution of 'moderating powers' (Scaletsky et al., 2021).

With ambiguity surrounding its constitutional mandate, the military became increasingly involved with public security policies at the domestic level (Freire, 2018). For instance, many generals have occupied key positions in the security secretariat of different state governments, and security agents continued to participate in electoral politics (Cavalcanti, 2020). Further, the 1988 Constitution states that the military can be internally deployed under a legal instrument named *Garantia da Lei e da Ordem* (Law and Order Guarantee - GLO), which can be summoned by the President of the Republic in the cases of depletion of security forces, severe disturbances of order, or for the security of large events. In GLO operations, the Armed Forces are trusted with police powers for a provisional period and within a limited area to perform "actions of preventive and repressive nature necessary to assure the outcome of operations […]" (Brazil, 1999, Art. 15). In sum, the boundaries of domestic safety and national security/defence have been continuously blurred since re-democratisation, making it difficult to distinguish, for instance, the roles of policing from militarism (Mendonça, 2018).

Policing is another key area where the military retained large influence on the decision-making process. According to article 144 of the Constitution, the police are mainly composed of the Federal, Civil and Military Police forces (Brazil, 1988). The Federal Police functions as a preventative and investigative force for federal and international crimes; the Civil Police performs judiciary and investigative tasks, and the Military Police is the main ostensible patrol force with the task of maintaining public order (Mazza et al., 2021). Because the Civil and Military Police are state-level forces, Brazil has in practice around 90 police institutions with different material capacities, levels of institutional maturity, career structures, and training (de Lima et al., 2021). This has made "federated states both powerful and hard-to-influence actors in the delivery of law-and-order" (Macaulay, 2017, p. 250).

The Military Police is officially an auxiliary and reserve force of the Army and is legally accountable to the Military Court, but its orientation and planning are subordinated to local state governments. The institution is known for its precarious work conditions, low wages, lack of qualification and psychological support, and rigid disciplinary codes. Brazil's Military Police is one of the most violent in the world, with kidnapping, torture, massacres, homicide, and collective punishment being commonplace practices (Magaloni, Franco-Vivanco and Melo, 2020).

In Brazil, security policies are known for their discontinuity, lack of human and financial resources, and variation across different regions of the country that result in

fragmentary outcomes (Cavalcanti, 2020). Although pacification only returned officially to national politics in the early 2000s, I claim that its roots emerged from the interplay between state and federal governments attempting to reform the security structure in a context of persisting tensions between militarism and the requirements of democratic governance. To illustrate this, I briefly look at the case of São Paulo, which in the transition became the spotlight of what was perceived as a national crisis, as similar patterns were observed in other states.

In São Paulo, police organisations are powerful actors, capable of resisting attempts of external control, while many politicians have made careers from opposing human rights policies and defending unlawful killings by the police in the State Assembly (Caldeira, 2000). The number of registered homicides in the state grew from 5,855 in 1983 to 12,638 in 2003, while the police killed on average 522 people each year over the same period, with a peak of 1,470 killings in 1992 alone, which corresponded to 20% of the total number of homicides in the São Paulo metropolitan region. Tough-on-crime media campaigns were promoted in this period to de-legitimise human rights activists as 'privileging criminals' (Novello and Alvarez, 2022).

Two events with large international repercussions forced a change of orientation. First, the Carandiru Massacre in 1992, where following a rebellion in the *Casa de Detenção* - then the largest prison complex in Latin America - the special battalion of the Military Police stormed in and killed 111 inmates, the majority of which, according to Amnesty International, were "executed extrajudicially by the Military Police after surrendering defencelessly in their cells" (Anistia Internacional, 1993). Second, the *Favela* Naval incident in 1997, where police officers were filmed torturing and extorting locals in the Diadema municipality, with a worker being executed by an officer known as 'Rambo'.

Regarding the Carandiru Massacre, it raised the issue of police brutality and penal policies to the national level, prompting closer coordination between state and federal governments. Mário Covas, governor between 1995 and 2001, brought human rights policies and police reforms to the public agenda, which were relatively successful in reducing crime rates and police killings in the beginning of his term (Caldeira, 2000). At the national level, the presidency of Cardozo (1995-2003) introduced the First National Human Rights Programme in 1996, which included a list of extensive reforms to be undertaken to reduce discrimination and violence against vulnerable groups, curb police abuse, include human rights provisions in

police training, promote community policing, and improve the prison system, which in São Paulo alone had a deficit of 80,000 places (Marques, 2017, p. 262).

In the case of the Favela Naval scandal, it prompted the state government to implement a new cycle of reforms, including a proposal sent to National Congress to transfer ostensive patrolling from the Military to the Civil Police, which was rejected given strong resistance from representatives of the security sector. However, the public debate that ensued precipitated the Military Police to start an internal reform at the end of 1997, which was aimed at minimising the risks of external meddling from the government and the loss of institutional legitimacy (Nunes, 2014). The reform introduced three new organising principles for the Military Police which are still valid today: 1) quality management, 2) human rights, and 3) community policing (PMESP, 2021, p. 24). While the first implied institutional changes targeting efficiency gains, with the implementation of a new educational curriculum and a performance evaluation system, the latter two envisioned shifting crime prevention strategies from social control to active engagement of the police with local communities and civil society (Nunes, 2014). According to internal documents, the reform had sought to deliver a police force dedicated to "the protection of citizen rights and human dignity" (cited in Neto, 2008, p. 243).

Additionally, the regulation of the Security Community Councils by the state government in 1998 and the creation of a Community Policing and Human Rights Department in the Military Police in 2000, served to corroborate the idea that a systemic change was in course, adapting the police to the requirements of democratisation. Between 1997 and 2001, the Military Police had implemented the model in 199 of the 386 police units in the state: 67 in the city of São Paulo, 23 in the metropolitan region, and 109 in the interior region (Neto, 2008, p. 255).

While this change of orientation implemented by both the state government and the Military Police did bring positive results, they did not fundamentally alter the problems associated with the militarist and punitivist framework of the war on crime. Rather, the "human rights federalisation policy promoted by president [Cardozo] and followed closely by his brethren in São Paulo, Mário Covas, resulted in the intensification of the expansion of prison and police, especially the militarised one". After a reduction in the rate of police killings in Covas' first term - there was an average of 352 civilian deaths compared to 868 in the former administration - they picked up again from 2000 onwards and police massacres have been regular (Nunes, 2014, p. 78; Ramos, 2012b). This trend had been further supported by a right-

wing middle-class electorate (mostly identified as Catholic but also Evangelical) that emerged in the 1980s and which began adhering to law and order and family moralism as solutions to fighting crime (Pierucci, 1987).

At the national level, despite raising the priority of the public security agenda, Cardozo was unable to meet the challenges given the fiscal constraints and lack of political leadership required to implement reforms (Soares, 2019). Further, neoliberal reforms in the 1990s deepened a punitivist framework, which prioritised individual responsibility, increased mechanisms of repression, and mass incarceration (Camargos, 2021). Incarceration rates jumped from 90,000 people in 1990 to over 232,000 in 2000 (FBSP, 2020, p.288). As a consequence, crime and criminality have become stereotypically associated with poor, predominantly male, and non-white social groups (de Andrade, 2013).

Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated the evolution of pacification strategies and discourses in the state-making process and development of capitalism in Brazil. As I demonstrated, the concept of pacification has had a strong purchase among political elites, becoming institutionalised in state legislation and mutating in the course of centuries to deal with different types of challenges to the dominant order. In all periods analysed, pacification has combined a logic of warfare with moralising, Christian ideology enacted against fear the elites had of revolts from marginalised social groups and the dissolution of social hierarchies. Given the historical continuity of pacification and the urgency political elites attached to it, one can see that the state-making process in Brazil has always been connected to complex strategies of imposing 'peace', often under the rubric of a 'civilising mission', to socially diverse, multi-ethnic, and economically unequal populations.

In the colonial period (1500-1822), pacification emerged as a militarised strategy of neutralising native populations and incorporating them to the social order of the plantation system based on slavery. Colonial legislation devised detailed strategies of pacifying 'upheaved' Indians through spiritual conversion to Catholicism, the resistance to which was met with the Portuguese Empire waging 'Just Wars' of conquest against them. During the imperial period (1822-1889), pacification was utilised as a military strategy to fend off threats from multiple regional revolts against the central authority of the state, and especially to the

slave economy. Once again, pacification was legitimised by Catholic ideology depicting a Brazilian nationality united under the divine figure of the emperor. Moreover, pacification was a key element in the politicisation of the military, who became the main articulators of the Republican movement when the imperial order and the slave economy fell in the late 19th century.

In the National Security period (1889-1985), pacification blended into the National Security Doctrine in the 1950s, consolidating the military as a politically 'moderating force' acting as the main fiat of the social order of capital and overseeing the transition from a rural economy to industrialisation. This doctrine was the culmination of a series of preceding political experiences where pacification of the working class - often with the support of far-right actors - was deemed necessary, such as: the Pacifying Movement of 1930, the enactment of the first National Security Law in 1935, and the intervention of 1937 leading to the Estado Novo dictatorship. Crystalised in the 1964 military coup and the far-right dictatorship that ensued, the National Security Doctrine defined a new internal subject to be pacified – the working class. Repressive measures based on this doctrine radicalised to the point of revocation of political rights, torture, and extermination of enemies, such as unionists, left-wing populists, and communists.

The democratic period beginning in 1985 marked a critical juncture where power was returned to civilian rule, although the military remained politically influential. This political transition was enshrined in the adoption of the 'Citizen Constitution' of 1988, a landmark that granted inclusive social rights that reflected decades of struggle from social movements and oppressed populations. However, elements of the National Security doctrine of the far-right dictatorship were perpetuated in the democratic period. Illustrations of this were the maintenance of the Military Police (the main ostensive police force responsible for public order), the National Security Law, and GLO operations (Mendonça, 2018).

In Brazil, pacification invariably met the economic demands for labour availability through coercion and imposition of reactionary Catholic morality, ranging from forced labour through enslavement, systems of tutelage, and repression of organised labour movements. Historically, then, pacification was mainly applied by a centralised state through a top-down, authoritarian approach to security with the military at its main stakeholder and legitimised by conservative and far-right actors in society.

The next chapter analyses the emergence of 'democratic pacification' in the early 2000s and the blending of militarism with human rights sensibilities, opening way for a relative decentralisation of pacification strategies and incorporating a range of actors from civil society.

As will be seen, the context of *Lulismo*, the guiding ideology of the *Partido dos Trabalhadores* (Workers' Party – PT) in power, was key to the construction of democratic pacification and to growing Evangelical protagonism in security and pacification operations.

Chapter 5 - The Rise of Democratic Pacification and the Growing Protagonism of Evangelicals

Introduction

The last chapter demonstrated how pacification developed historically in Brazil as a strategy to neutralise threats to the dominant order and integrate marginalised populations into the capitalist system. This chapter will contextualise new developments of pacification in the democratic period, the growing protagonism of Evangelicals, and its relationship to the far-right.

In the early 2000s, pacification re-entered public discourse with far-reaching political consequences. This was mainly related to the Brazilian military's leadership in the *Mission des Nations Unies pour la stabilisation en Haïti* (United Nations Mission for the Stabilisation of Haiti - MINUSTAH) between 2003 and 2017, and the implementation of the *Unidades de Polícia Pacificadoras* (Pacifying Police Units - UPPs) in Rio de Janeiro from 2008 to 2014. Despite occurring under the progressive governments of the *Partido dos Trabalhadores* (Workers' Party – PT) (2003-2016) and developed on a ticket of liberal principles that were highly praised by the international community, those two events were key to the (re)capture of politics by the military and the articulation of a far-right agenda under a democratic setting.

The novelty introduced in this phase was the gradual decentralisation of pacification as an institutionalised public security policy that brings together top-down and bottom-up articulations. Although still centred on the military, pacification was nonetheless designed and executed conjointly by a range of actors such as executive powers, the Military Police, NGOs, and churches. Here, the subjects to be pacified are no longer working class mobilisation in general (although this an ongoing political concern), but the threat of poverty and urban marginality represented by young, mostly black *favela* residents – actually or potentially – linked to organised crime and drug dealing (Salem and Bertelsen, 2020).

Pacification acquired a 'democratic' façade as it combined militarism with humanitarian efforts and a liberal rhetoric that became characteristic of the PT years, with contradictory alliances between progressive and conservative social groups. An important dimension of this was Evangelical mobilisation. Evangelical growth exploded during the years of *Lulismo*, which was in part led by the process of incorporation of subaltern classes into a

new consumer culture, and in part as the result of the failure to address violence and insecurity in marginalised urban areas. Evangelicals became key mediators in the regulation of violence and provision of safety nets to vulnerable populations, whilst in Congress they became increasingly more articulated with conservative and punitivist agendas. The main argument to be developed in this chapter is that *Lulismo* created the conditions for growing protagonism of Evangelicals in the security sector and in pacification operations. The main evidence for this was the UPPs project in Rio de Janeiro, where Evangelical actors and morals were activated to support and justify military occupations in the *favelas*. Via the Army's Military Chaplaincy (MC), Evangelical ideology was instrumentalised as part of counter-insurgency operations and as a broader effort of conservative order-building in marginalised urban areas.

Section 5.1 focuses on the political economy and security policies of *Lulismo* from the wake of the commodity boom to the fall of Dilma Rousseff in 2016, a period of exponential growth and political strengthening of Evangelicals at the national level. Section 5.2 explores the rise of democratic pacification under *Lulismo*, focusing on Brazil's role in the pacification of Haiti in MINUSTAH and the implementation of the UPPs in the city of Rio de Janeiro. Then, it shows how Evangelicals were mobilised by the military as part of wider counter-insurgency operations under pacification. Finally, section 5.3 shows how democratic pacification contributed to empowering the far-right and sets the stage for the empirical investigation of the next three chapters.

5.1 *Lulismo*: breeding ground for Evangelical protagonism

The PT was founded in 1980 in the industrial outskirts of São Paulo as a socialist party seeking to represent the destitute and unionise the working class. It was initially engaged in grassroots activism in marginalised areas through leftist segments of the Catholic Church known as Ecclesiastical Base Communities (CEBs) (Fernandes, 2019). Rejecting the slogan of *eleitoreiro* (electorally oriented), the PT emphasised base-building and political education (McKenna, 2020; Keck, 1992), and quickly became the strongest critic of the transition process, which it saw as being led by corrupt and conservative forces (Singer, 2010).

It took take three presidential elections and a dislocation towards the centre of the political spectrum before Luís Inácio Lula da Silva, commonly known as Lula – an uneducated metal-worker union leader – stepped into office backed by fractions of the national bourgeoisie and regional oligarchs (Saad Filho and Morais, 2019; Miguel, 2019). Winning the ticket with

61% of the votes in 2002, Lula chose José Alencar, a businessman from the *Partido Liberal* (Liberal Party - PL) with strong links to Evangelical churches, as vice-President. Unable to secure a majority in Congress, Lula sought support from alliances with smaller and conservative parties by allocating a share of cabinet posts and state agencies, and engaging in clientelist relationships with them (Anderson, 2019).

The "Letter to the Brazilian People", launched on the eve of the 2002 election, signalled the acquiescence of the PT to financial markets in exchange for political stability, as would prove the economic policy of Lula's first term, leaving untouched neoliberal economic policies of the 1990s (Webber, 2017). Lula's first years were characterised by low economic growth and minimal distribution policies (Carvalho, 2020). The contradictory alliances formed by the PT on the road to power became the backbone of an emerging social force that would have lasting effects in Brazilian politics: the ideology of *Lulismo*, which began to take shape in the second half of Lula's first term and was consolidated with his reelection in 2006.

Critical Political Economy scholarship tends to see *Lulismo* as a form of cross-class reconciliation to reform Brazilian capitalism (Braga and dos Santos, 2020), or what Singer (2012, 2018) calls "weak reformism", a contradictory process of arbitrating above class cleavages and regulating social conflict. *Lulismo* was the expectation that slow and gradual reforms could be carried out by the state to reduce the more dramatic symptoms of inequality while not producing confrontation with the dominant order (Webber, 2017). Combining political charisma and gifted skills for negotiation, Lula was able to balance opposing demands and use the state to allocate resources to various social groups under the umbrella of a developmentalist project (de Oliveira, 2006; Montambeault and Ducatenzeiler, 2014).

The political economy of *Lulismo* was based on the expansive cycle of international trade that marked the early 2000s, generating a 'boom' in commodity prices due to growing demand from emerging markets in Asia, especially China (IMF, 2018). Lula seized this opportunity to counterweight the orthodox neoliberalism of his first years by reorienting public spending towards income-transfer programs, creation of jobs, and investment in key social areas such as education, healthcare, infrastructure, and social security (Anderson, 2019; Maringoni and Medeiros, 2017). Poverty was generally reduced by 50% during Lula's mandates (O Globo, 2011), dropping from 60 million or 35% of the population in 2003 to 30 million or 15% in 2012, while extreme poverty fell from 26 million or 15% of the population to less than 10 million or 5% over the same period (Saad Filho and Morais, 2019, p.162). Further, around 20 million jobs were created in the 2000s compared to 11 million in the 1990s (Saad Filho and Morais, 2019).

Lula's first government led to a political-electoral realignment, first observed in the 2006 re-election, and which consolidated the ideology of *Lulismo* as a dominant social force. Since then, a new electoral phenomenon emerged fixing the base support of *Lulismo* among the (predominantly black) sub-proletarian masses[31], especially in the underdeveloped north and northeast regions, while losing the (predominantly white) middle classes to the *Partido da Social Democracia Brasileira* (Brazilian Social Democracy Party - PSDB), with its stronghold in the rich and industrial south and southeast regions, against whom the PT had polarised since the 1994 elections (Singer, 2012).[32]

An important result of *Lulismo* was the integration of the sub-proletarian masses into a new consumer class, which narrowed the base of the social pyramid by giving them access to a market of services and goods previously inaccessible. The promotion of citizenship to the popular sectors under *Lulismo* equated with the rise of a consumer culture as an affirmation of social identity, marked by individualised values of competition and self-success (Alves, 2013; Pinheiro-Machado and Scalco, 2022). In this, the state withdraws from expanding public services, and its relationship with the popular sectors is limited to low-cost, focalised social policies. One of the results of this was a "gradual demobilisation of the PT's popular base as the relationship between the state and the people became more individualised and apolitical, meaning demanding less effort in building the collective" (Pinheiro-Machado and Scalco, 2020, p.3).

A spin-off of this new consumer class was the exponential growth of Evangelicals in marginalised urban spaces, a trend that had begun in the previous decades and was compounded by neoliberalism (Côrtes, 2021). Despite the rise of employment in Lula's years, 90% of these were unskilled and precarious, paying less than two minimum wages (Saad Filho and Morais, 2019). Evangelicals grew from 9% of the population in 1991 to 22.1% in 2010 (González et al., 2021), a growth that corresponds to the informalisation of the world of work among subaltern layers (Alves, 2014). In this period, grassroot base-building and unionism led by the PT in marginalised areas was progressively abandoned (Côrtes, 2021; Fernandes, 2019), and with the lack of universal social policies promoted by the state, the space was filled by

[31] Accounting for nearly half of the population, the sub-proletariat is defined as a "permanently super-impoverished working surplus population" (Singer, 2012, p. 168), unable to overcome informality and even servile labour relations.

[32] In the elections of 1989, 1994, and 1998, Lula had lost the contest with the vote of the poor going to his liberal adversaries, and in the 2002 elections the PT drew support mainly from the unionised working and class and the progressive and middle classes (Hunter and Power, 2006).

Evangelical social activism (McKenna, 2020). This was and continues to be established through networks of solidarity and social assistance that highlight religion and family as the main mechanisms of social aggregation (Lacerda 2019).

Ribeiro, an anthropologist with extensive experience researching Evangelicals in the urban margins, called this a "model of governance of social wellbeing", ranging from things like aiding women who are victims of domestic violence, funerary services to poor families, mental health support to police officers, among others (Ribeiro, academic, 2022). Vieira, a leading sociologist specialised in Evangelicalism, told me there are two complementary sides of this type of social activism: one is through conversion, the belief that if individuals change their religious orientation, this "would result in a moral, ethical transformation"; the other is through social assistance, which to them is part of the mission to evangelise and spread the message of Christ (Vieira, academic, 2022).

Evangelical growth in urban peripheries has been accompanied by greater political influence. In Congress, the *Frente Parlamentar Evangélica* (Evangelical Parliamentary Front - FPE) was founded in 2003, the first year of Lula's presidency, to defend conservative legislation such as opposing abortion and LGBTQI+ rights, while lobbying to secure public funding for Evangelical radio and television channels. Between 2003 and 2015, there was an increase from 77 to 203 MPs affiliated to FPE. Throughout his government, Lula made electoral alliances with political parties dominated by conservative Evangelical politicians, such as the *Partido Social Cristão* (Social Christian Party, PSC), *Partido Progressista* (Progressivist Party, PP), *Partido Republicano Brasileiro* (Brazilian Republican Party, PRB), and *Partido Liberal* (Liberal Party - PL) (DIP 2019). However, Evangelicals continued fiercely opposing the government's progressive agenda in Congress. These alliances were always pragmatic, and crucial to preventing right-wing mobilisation against the government (Martuscelli, 2016; Hinz et al., 2020).

With the favourable economic scenario, Lula left office with an approval rate of 83% of the population (Veja, 2010). The optimism of *Lulismo* was further evidenced by the countercyclical policies promoted by the government, expanding credit consumption and federal investments during a period of global uncertainties following the 2008 financial crisis (Carvalho, 2020). This allowed Lula to anoint Dilma Rousseff, a former Marxist guerrilla fighter who became Minister of Energy and Mines (2003-2005) and Chief of Staff (2005-2010), as successor. Without ever campaigning for office, Rousseff won the ticket in the 2010 elections with 56% of the vote in the second round against José Serra of the PSDB (Singer, 2012).

To secure the election, however, the PT was forced to concede even more to Evangelicals: in 2009, Lula created the National Day of the March for Jesus, and during the electoral period in 2010, the PT donated R$ 4,7 million (~US$ 2,6 million) to the PSC. (Hinz et al., 2020, p. 196). During her campaign, Rousseff was pressed to accept demands presented by FPE, which resulted in a letter stating that, as president, she "would not take the initiative to propose changes in legislation regarding abortion and other themes related to the family and the free expression of any faith in the Country" (Pires, 2010). Rousseff nominated two Evangelical leaders from PRB as ministers, Marcelo Crivella for Fishing and Aquaculture, and George Hilton for Sports. During her time in office, Congress turned "progressively more conservative, expanding not only the number of military, police, bishops, and pastor deputies, but also of sympathisers aligned with conservative projects" (Hinz et al., 2020, p. 194).

Initially, Rousseff sought to deepen the legacy of *Lulismo* and promote a 'strong reformism', expanding federal investments and social policies on the one hand, and leading an anti-corruption agenda, on the other (Singer, 2018). However, with the bust of international commodity prices and a downturn in state revenues, a spiralling crisis took hold beginning in 2013. A series of events that followed, such as the July 2013 mass protests,[33] Operation Car Wash,[34] and the cycle of middle class protests in 2015 and 2016, triggered anti-PT sentiments, fuelling a narrative that was highly exploited by mainstream media equating the PT with corruption and the state with the PT. Economic recession led the government to adopt austerity measures that cost Rousseff's popularity while failing to deliver recovery (Pinto et. al., 2019). Pressured by corruption investigations and the anti-PT tide, the conservative coalition abandoned the government and pushed for radical market reforms. This led to the impeachment of Rousseff in April 2016, marking the end of 13 years of rule of the PT. Rousseff's vice-president, Michel Temer, of the *Movimento Democrático Brasileiro* (Brazilian Democratic Movement Party - MDB) was sworn in and began to put in motion a process of re-alignment to the right by implementing a series of neoliberal economic reforms and strengthening conservative forces in Congress such as ruralists, Evangelicals, and the military (Souza and Soares, 2019; Braga and dos Santos, 2020).

[33] The protests were initiated by leftist social movements against fare hikes in São Paulo's public transport, but it was quickly capitalised by the right with anti-establishment slogans. The protests lasted for three weeks and reached a peak of 2 million people across 120 cities (Singer, 2018).

[34] Operation Car Wash was a judicial investigation which revealed a massive corruption scandal linking bribery by big businesses to state officials at the state-led oil giant, *Petrobrás*. However, the corruption probe soon saw the judiciary adopting a political persecution against the PT by selectively leaking material under investigation to the media (Souza, 2017).

Evangelical politicians were at the centre of this backlash. The first signs of this were the mobilisation to elect Marco Feliciano, a fundamentalist pastor affiliated to PSC, as president of the Human Rights and Minority Commission in 2013, and efforts to oppose the inclusion of the term 'gender' from the National Education Plan in 2014. However, it was in the legislature that began in 2015, after Rousseff's reelection, that FPE consolidated its turn to the far-right, with the election of Eduardo Cunha, an Evangelical pastor and member the MPD party, as president of the Chamber of deputies in February of that year. During his mandate, Cunha articulated with the FPE to approve far-right projects in the areas of education, reproductive rights, and security (Lacerda, 2019; Mariano, 2022). The most emblematic case was the near absolute cohesion of FPE during the impeachment vote against Rousseff in April 2016. If 72% of MPs voted to oust Rousseff, it reached 84% (198 MPs) among FPE members. Evangelicals remained highly influential during Michel Temer's interregna government (2016-2018), mobilising to approve most of the government's policies, before moving to support Bolsonaro's candidacy in 2018.

5.1.1 *Lulismo*, public security, and Evangelicals

The contradictory alliances of *Lulismo* were also reflected in the security sector, which saw a stronger reformist movement compared to the transition period. The most structured plan arrived in 2007 with the *Programa Nacional de Segurança com Cidadania* (National Programme of Security with Citizenship - PRONASCI), which articulated policies of prevention, control, and repression of organised crime with development policies in 94 different initiatives, such as police qualification and valorisation, gender equality, and carceral reform (Ruediger, 2013). New social actors were incorporated in the process of debating and implementing security reforms (Spaniol, Júnior and Rodrigues, 2020). This was the result of strong mobilisation from social movements demanding an opening of the security structure to civil participation and transparency of information – a demand that had been frozen in the Constituent process compared to other areas such as public health and education (de Lima, de Souza and Santos, 2012).

There were considerable advances in the normative framework of public security brought by the PT administrations. For instance, the Disarmament Statute of 2003[35], the *Maria*

[35] The Disarmament Statute created a restrictive legislation for the private possession of firearms.

da Penha law of 2006[36], and the *Comissão Nacional da Verdade* (National Truth Commission - CNV) established in 2011[37], were instances of strong participation from civil society in debating and formulating policies (Vieira and Jardim, 2020; Baptista, 2012; Cury, 2013). Taken together, however, public security policies in the PT era failed to deliver the proposed paradigm shift: reforms often led to fragmentary results and discontinuity, such as in the PRONASCI programme, whose budget was reduced by Rousseff to next to nothing in 2012. Lula and Rousseff were politically unwilling to tackle structural problems given the impact it could have electorally if policies failed (Soares, 2019; de Azevedo and Cifali, 2015).

Reform attempts were also overshadowed by the growth and pressures from security sector coalitions in Congress, especially after the creation of the *Frente Parlamentar de Segurança Pública* (Public Security Parliamentary Front - FPSP) in 2011. FPSP has represented the interests of the arms industry and security actors in Congress, often lobbying for punitivist policies and the expansion of private security services (Macaulay, 2019). The Front grew from 210 MPs in its first year to 299 in 2015 (Hinz et al., 2020, p. 192).

Further, during the PT era the main indicators of violence and crime deteriorated. Despite growth of expenditure in public security across all federative entities – at a rate of 79.2% between 2003 and 2016 (FBSP, 2019, p.15) – this was not followed by a reduction in patterns of insecurity and racial injustice. For instance, incarceration rates jumped from a population of 232,000 in 2000 to 722,120 in 2016 (FBSP, 2020, pp.288–289). The participation of blacks in the total prison population grew from 58.4% in 2005 to 63.6% in 2016, while it decreased for whites from 39.8% to 35.2% over the same period (FBSP, 2020, p.13). On the other hand, the rate of intentional homicides jumped from 49,816 deaths in 2002 to 61,619 in 2016, a growth of 23.7% in the period (Rodrigues, 2020, p.121).

Likewise, despite the massive poverty reduction observed during the PT governments, especially in the poorer north and northeast regions, homicide rates only decreased in the richer southeast whilst it increased in the former (Cavalcanti, 2020, p.10). São Paulo, for instance, saw violent deaths drop from 42.2 per 100,000 inhabitants in 2000 to 13.4 in 2013, whereas in the north-eastern states of Alagoas and Ceará, it grew in the same period from 25.6 to 65.5 in the former and from 16.5 to 59.9 in the latter, a staggering 155% and 263% variation respectively (de Lima et al., 2016, p.69). In this context, blacks have become both the main

[36] The *Maria da Penha* law created mechanisms to prevent domestic violence against women, such as a specialised police service, assistance to women facing domestic violence, and urgent protective measures against aggressors.
[37] The CNV was instituted by President Rousseff to investigate human rights violations committed by the state since 1946, with special attention to the military dictatorship (1964-1985).

victims of intentional homicides and of police brutality. From 2000 to 2016, the rate of lethal victimisation decreased 6.8% for whites and grew 23.1% for blacks, who were also 2.5 times likely to be killed than whites (Soares, 2019, p.27). In 2016, 4,220 people were killed during police operations, a growth of 90.7% compared to 2013, when the number was 2,212 (FBSP, 2021, p.59). Of this sum, 81.8% were young (12-29 years old) and 76.2% were black (FBSP, 2017, p.7).

This scenario has opened space for Evangelicals to mobilise activism in the security sector. At the institutional level, this has become entwined with law-and-order, militaristic policies formed in alliances with so-called 'bullet benches' in legislative institutions such as city councils, state assemblies, and the National Congress (Lacerda, 2019). In Congress, for instance, the articulations between FPE and FPSP reached its peak in the 2015-2018 legislature, when it shifted from a survival strategy of fringe political groups to become an influential political force during Rousseff's impeachment proceedings. From the 376 votes in favour of her ousting, 101 votes came from MPs that participated in both Fronts (Hinz et al., 2020, p. 199).

In civil society, the spread of Evangelicalism in the outskirts of urban areas - affected by high rates of violence and aggravated by neoliberal reforms - has led to new forms of violence regulation that navigate the porous borders between licit and illicit activities, and state and non-state actors (Lanz and Oosterbaan, 2016; Oosterbaan and Machado, 2020; Garrard, 2020). Machado (2016, p. 127-8) notes that Evangelicals have developed a "very specific repertoire for tackling violence", ranging from "devotional practices focused on the 'spiritual battle' against crime, to an intense evangelization of imprisoned criminals, or direct negotiations with criminal gang leaders in order to convince them to release 'bandits' condemned to death by 'drug gang courts'". In our interview, Ribeiro developed on this idea:

> Anyone who works in *favelas* in this country knows of this mediation with crime: there's a minor who is about to die, you need to negotiate so he does not get killed; someone leaves prison, you need to see where to put this person, otherwise traffic [gangs] will take him again. Then he falls in [the world of] traffic again, they take him to the pastor and say: take care of this miserable, otherwise we will have to kill him [...] (Ribeiro, academic, 2022).

This was corroborated by Monteiro, a security analyst who works at the *Fórum Brasileiro de Segurança Pública* (Brazilian Forum of Public Security - FBSP), a Think Tank dedicated to security issues based in São Paulo. In his words,

> If you look at drug addiction, the [Evangelical] communities are present, they are operating as therapeutic communities, managing these spaces […] You look into prisons, the communities are working there very intensively, to an extent that some processes of exiting organised crime are only possible […] if there is a religious nexus. There is a very strong weight of this discourse in public security as well as in the criminal universe […] so there is a very large interconnection between these issues (Monteiro, security analyst, 2022).

This type of social activism has also found partnerships with the state under *Lulismo* For instance, Therapeutic Communities, which are private organisations mostly run by religious entities that host vulnerable populations for drug rehabilitation, began receiving funds from the federal government in 2011 under Rousseff's government (O Globo, 2011). The majority of TCs are engaged in religious practices such as prayer, conversion, liturgy, and Biblical readings (Cortez and Barroso, 2023; Loeck, 2018), which sparked controversy due to the mandatory nature of these activities in some places. Evangelicals have been actively lobbying for TCs to become the standard treatment for drug addiction.[38]

In sum, what stands out in the public security policies of the PT era is a persisting tension between reform attempts aimed at democratisation with a historically conservative and punitive security structure. While these contradictions were crucial to right-wing mobilisation, none would have more far-reaching political consequences than two interrelated events: first, the laboratory experiment in Haiti under Brazil's leading role in MINUSTAH, and second the UPPs project in the state of Rio de Janeiro. This is where pacification makes a comeback to national politics. Influenced by the context of *Lulismo,* it is also under democratic pacification that Evangelicals were mobilised to support military occupations in marginalised urban areas.

5.2 The rise of democratic pacification: MINUSTAH and UPPs

Brazil's responsibilities in Haiti involved management of all UN military and police personnel in the country, military control of marginalised areas in the capital Port-au-Prince, and of refugee camps after the 2010 earthquake (Hirst and Nasser, 2014). The Brazilian Army contributed to MINUSTAH with 37,000 soldiers between 2004 and 2017 and provided all the Force Commanders to the mission. In this process, Brazil gained the opportunity to experiment with more 'soft approaches' to policing which were "attuned to global sensitivities regarding human rights, democracy, and the rule of law" (Müller, 2018, p.231). Incentives for

[38] Between 2017 and 2020, federal investment in CTs reached R$ 560 million (~U$115 million) (Moncau, 2022).

participating in MINUSTAH were part of Lula's broader foreign policy strategy, utilising the discourse of 'non-indifference' and 'solidarity diplomacy' to participate in cooperation initiatives and peace-keeping operations with the active role of the Ministry of Defence (Finazzi and Amaral, 2017; Soares, 2012). For the PT governments, this was also an opportunity to set a new role and public image for the military as an institution guided by human rights principles.

MINUSTAH was instituted under UN Resolution 1542 with the aim to create a stabilisation force to re-establish state control over periphery regions dominated by gangs, provide a wide-range security sector reform, and construct the pillars for a state-making project. In this process, pacification would be an essential component to implement a representative democracy and a market-friendly economic model according to guidelines set by the UN and the IMF (Guerra and Blanco, 2017). Invited by the US and France to back a coup that ousted former president Jean-Bertrand Aristide in 2004, Brazil's participation was justified on grounds that its own experiences in consolidating the nation-state had provided the Armed Forces with broad pacification capacities (Rodrigues and Maciel, 2020). Symbolic to this was the construction of a statue of the Duke of Caxias in the capital Port-au-Prince, with the inscription "in tribute to the Brazilian military [official] of peace force" (Gomes, 2014, p.16).

Given the unconventional character of the operational environment – constituted by urban guerrilla warfare – for which the Brazilian Army had ample experience, a "community turn" was implemented in the operations, which in turn were based on the dictatorship-era *Ações Cívico-Sociais* (Social-Civic Actions - ACISOs), mentioned in the last chapter. In this, after a series of tactical interventions (combatting and occupation of territories) aimed at neutralising enemy gangs, ACISOs were implemented with the aid of non-state actors, providing free services to locals such as medical treatment, football tournaments, and engineering installations in poor neighbourhoods in order to obtain legitimation for the interventions (Müller and Steinke, 2020). Further, international NGOs, such as the Brazilian *Viva Rio*, were essential partners in the implementation of the pacification strategy, acting as consultants to the mission and engaging in reconciliation measures within affected communities (Hirst and Nasser, 2014). General Augusto Heleno, the first MINUSTAH commander, claimed that ACISOs were important to gain locals' 'hearts and minds', resulting in Haitians "going over night [to the base] to pass information about bandits" which "helped a lot in the pacification and became the embryo of the Pacifying Police Units in Rio de Janeiro" (Garbin, 2017).

MINUSTAH provided the Brazilian Army with a modernisation of its equipment and technical and operational learning curves in counter-insurgency methods that were later incorporated in the UPPs project. By the end of 2010, around 60% of the troops deployed in the pacification of the *Maré favela* in Rio de Janeiro had participated in MINUSTAH (Rodrigues and Maciel, 2020). In sum,

> Brazil's MINUSTAH experience allowed for a fine-tuning of previous pacification experiences and their 'upgrading' to globally dominant counterinsurgency standards, which, in turn, influenced pacification-related military doctrinal revisions processes and intervention practices at home (Müller and Steinke, 2020, p.14).

Taking inspiration from MINUSTAH, the UPPs project ran from 2008 to 2014 and represented a definitive return of pacification discourse and practices to Brazilian politics, but with a shift in its policy design that included a broader range of state and non-state actors. UPPs were also influenced by the context of *Lulismo*, promoted as a form of 'bringing the state back' and offering development opportunities to areas marked by economic exclusion and high rates of violence from gang turf wars and police brutality (World Bank, 2012). In 2010, Lula claimed that the "success of UPPs in Rio de Janeiro should be nationalised" and likened its role to MINUSTAH in projecting a positive image of the country abroad (Terra, 2010). Rousseff, in turn, initially placed the nationalisation of UPPs as a top public security priority during her 2010 campaign, foreseeing the implementation of 2,883 community-oriented police units across the country (FENAPEF, 2012). UPPs became internationally praised as a role model of security policy by organisations such as the United Nations Office for Drug and Crime (UNODC) and the World Bank (UNODC, 2013; World Bank, 2013), and similar projects were implemented in different states such as in Paraná (Safe Paraná), Maranhão (Community Security Units), Bahia (Community Security Bases), Rio Grande do Sul (Peace Territories), and Minas Gerais (Stay Alive).

Rio de Janeiro is widely known for being a city divided between the *favelas* – the poor and 'violence-torn' areas – and *asfalto* – the economically rich and touristic urban areas inhabited by higher income gated communities. *Favelas* are characterised by socioeconomic marginalisation, informality of land use, lack of basic public services, and political disenfranchisement (Hoff and Blanco, 2020; Larkins, 2015). Their origins date back to the nineteenth century, when poor workers and former enslaved peoples, after being expelled from urban tenements and destitute of land rights, began forming communities unassisted by public authorities in places like *Morro da Providência* and *Morro de Santo Antônio*, gradually

expanding to middle and upper class regions (de Oliveira, 2017). Despite being working class spaces lived by labourers, service-sector and domestic workers, comprising strong community associations, and being the birth of important cultural manifestations, *favelas* are generally represented as violent, segregated spaces run by armed groups controlling drug trade (Cavalcanti, 2020). The state's presence in the *favelas* is limited to "providing low-quality services, clientelism and inefficiency", as well as "disrespect to the civil rights" of its inhabitants (Leite, 2012, p.378). In light of this, the state has framed *favelas* as an issue to be controlled by an exclusively militarised approach, further widening the inequalities between *favela* and *asfalto*, the former usually seen as suspects and the latter as victims. Often in public discourse, this segregation is depicted as a distinction between civilisation and barbarity (Hoff and Blanco, 2020).

The UPPs were implemented by former state governor Sérgio Cabral of the MDB party (2007-2014), then an ally of Lula, shortly after the announcement of Brazil's hosting of the World Cup (2014) and the Olympics in Rio (2016). Rio had been inserted in the global circuit of sport mega events (previously with the Pan-American Olympics in 2007 and the Military Games in 2010), which transformed the city's security governance into a global issue. The idea of Rio as a 'global competitive city', which would place it on a governance network of public policy "best practices" and signal attractiveness to foreign investors, was a leading branding component of the UPPs project, as most of the units were localised in the South of the city, surrounding the famous *Maracanã* stadium and middle-class neighbourhoods (Hoff and Blanco, 2020). In this sense, pacification in Rio was part of an urban restructuring project that played into the logic of the dominant neoliberal model, often resulting in the forced removal of communities and to real estate speculation in gentrified areas surrounded by *favelas* (Muller, 2018; Sabborio, 2013).[39] In total, 38 UPPs were implemented between 2008 and 2014, covering 196 *favelas* with around 700,000 residents.

The UPPs represented a strategy to reinstate state control over *favelas* dominated by drug gangs through military force, and later to establish permanent community policing followed by social programmes, or 'social UPPs', whose aim was to integrate *favela* spaces and residents into the wider city in terms of services, infrastructure, investments, and rights (de Oliveira, 2017). The UPPs became a public security policy with the Decree-law 42.787 of 2011, which defined four operational phases in the pacification strategy: first was the tactical

[39] For instance, just one year after the implementation of the UPPs project, real estate value increased by 400% in pacified *favelas*, which led to a rent inflation that forced many to abandon their homes (Sabborio, 2013, p. 138).

intervention undertaken by specialised forces – usually the Special Operations Battalion of the Rio de Janeiro Military Police, known for its truculence and use of heavy weaponry, alongside the Armed Forces; the second phase was 'stabilisation', where military operations were intercalated with interaction with the local community; third was 'implementation', where community police units were installed in the area; and lastly was 'evaluation and monitoring', the only moment in pacification where civilian public authorities intervened (Franco, 2014, pp.54–55).

Although the UPPs were a welcomed project by locals at first, perception soon shifted as it became clear the warfare logic was much more present than the social one. At first, killings by the police decreased by 68% and homicides by 40% between 2008 and 2013, but shortly after it increased again to near pre-UPP levels (Magaloni et al., 2020, p.555). In 2013 alone, there were 4,745 registered homicides in the state of Rio de Janeiro (1,311 in the capital city), nearly nine times the combined national rates of England and Wales (ISP, 2021; Clark, 2021). There were many reports of police abuse and human rights violations by UPP security forces (Müller, 2018, p.238), and research has demonstrated that it failed to obtain legitimacy with locals (Ribeiro and Vilarouca, 2017; Franco, 2014). Social movements began criticising the rationale behind UPPs, which prioritised the 'conquering' of territories, 'neutralising' real or suspected enemies, and establishing a 'tutelar' forms of authority (Hoff and Blanco, 2020; Salem and Bertelsen, 2020). Thus, pacification in Rio was much more about the police becoming the regulating force of social order rather than tackling structural problems (Franco, 2014). As a Colonel who commanded the Pacifying Forces in the *Complexo do Alemão* claimed about the operation:

> The greatest difficulty we have here is in acting against Brazilians. It is different to other typical military operations where we have a defined physical enemy in uniform. In urban confrontation, we cannot see the enemy on the other side. The drug dealer, the thief and the suspects are among the people (G1, 2012).

Such an understanding places the 'people' (namely, *favela* residents) as actual and/or potential enemies of the state (Müller and Steinke, 2020). Take, for instance, the 'social UPPs' projects, which were designed as an outreach programme to approximate the police to locals, offering a range of services from healthcare to education, street building to trash cleaning, and various social projects in collaboration with NGOs (Müller, 2018).[40] By establishing permanent

[40] The project was partially funded by the UN-Habitat programme and included participation from the private sector (Franco, 2014).

contact points and investing in the formation of local leaderships, community-oriented policing was "primarily aimed at gaining acceptance, support, collaboration, and intelligence from residents" (Salem and Ortelsen 2020 p. 93). Similar to the Haitian experience, it was a counter-insurgency perspective that oriented UPPs' 'soft' approaches to policing after military occupation had taken place. Thus, community policing units were used primarily to supply security forces with privileged information about ongoing unrests, social mobilisation against police presence, and intelligence about suspected criminals, therefore enhancing the efficiency of tactical operations (de Oliveira, 2017; Müller, 2018).

Under this logic, many non-state actors collaborated with the UPP project, among them Evangelicals. Throughout different pacification operations in the *favelas*, Evangelicals were instrumentalised by the military to provide moral legitimation for occupations, often through the promotion of social gatherings to approximate the community to the police (Salem and Bertelsen, 2020). Building on Evangelicals' large experience and activism in the security sector, UPPs personnel activated religious moralism as a moral indicator separating 'good' from 'bad' people in occupied *favelas* (Machado, 2017).

5.2.1 Perfecting counter-insurgency: the mobilisation of Evangelicals

In many UPPs, the Military Police engaged with religious actors as a strategy of winning the hearts and minds of local residents. Examples ranged from partnering with Evangelical churches controlling therapeutic communities for the treatment of drug addicts (Machado, 2017), the organisation of gospel concerts promoted by Rio's Special Operation's Battalion (Machado, 2015), to the use of Military Police chaplains to build trust relations with local residents (Birman, 2012). Salem and Bertelsen's (2020, p 97) ethnographic work also noted that UPP police officers routinely manifested a form of police moralism in their relationship with locals, anchored in Pentecostal morality and racialised tropes that cast locals as "easily corruptible and morally inferior people in need of salvation". Moreover, Ribeiro told me that she had witnessed a "flux of people taken to churches by UPP officers", in what can be seen as both a tactic of mediation with the world of crime, and a mission of "rescuing" souls from crime (Ribeiro, academic, 2022).

However, this strategy was much more pervasive under the Army's military occupation of three large *favela* complexes: *Alemão*, *Penha* and *Maré*. These occupations were staged as preliminary phases before the implementation of UPPs. The occupation in the *Alemão* and *Penha* complexes occurred between 2010 and 2014, with a contingent of 1,800 soldiers, and in

the Maré Complex between 2014 and 2016, with a contingent of 2,400 soldiers (Machado et al., 2020). The interventions were tellingly titled Operation Archangel (*Alemão* and *Penha*) and St. Francis (*Maré*) and were designed by the Rio de Janeiro state government to push criminal factions away from rich neighbourhoods adjacent to these territories, and hence to secure the flow of business investments and tourists ahead of the World Cup and Olympics.

As in Haiti, the prolonged period of military occupation in operation Archangel had forced the military to develop strategies of approximation with the local population. Initially this was done via neighbourhood associations and local NGOs, but cultivating these networks proved difficult as the military grew suspicious of their contact and interaction with criminal factions (Machado et al., 2020; Lopes, 2015). In the military's interpretation, the difficulty and ambiguity in distinguishing friends from enemies in this urban warfare setting, together with growing public criticism towards the occupation, indicated the need to establish partnerships with groups that shared similar values. Local religious actors were thus activated as trustful partners who could be mobilised to mediate the increasingly tense relationship with residents (Esperança, 2014; Lopes, 2015).

According to Lira, a former Evangelical military chaplain who served during both occupations, "the military had this view that the rest of the population was contaminated, that it bears the mark of impurity, especially among neighbourhood associations". He mentioned that there was always "reason for mistrust" with locals, especially among the "people from hip-hop and *funk* [a musical genre]". In the military's mindset, "these people have contact with and are co-opted by drug trafficking", whereas "pastors and priests are more trustworthy" (Lira, ex-military chaplain, 2022). Ribeiro corroborated this view. She told me that approximation to Evangelicals was based on the "need to conquer the community, discover who the honest poor people of the *favela* were. That is what the Army was seeking, because it did not trust anyone" (Ribeiro, academic, 2022).

The establishment of networks with religious actors was assigned to the Department of Religious Assistance of the East Military Command of Rio de Janeiro. Military chaplains were deployed on two fronts, internal and external. Internally, they were used as a tool of ideological coherence to boost troop morale. In practice, this translated to chaplains conveying to young soldiers on the frontline that pacification was part of a divine plan to bring civilisation to urban peripheries (Gonçalves, 2014). According to Lira,

> I had an internal function, to give support to the troops, and there is a psychological dimension to this. They were very debilitated, they had little leisure time. At some point they did not even shower anymore, only wanted to sleep. They were on their

> feet the whole day with the sun burning [...] Stress all day long, and there were less soldiers than what was needed in the territory [...] There was a soldier who died, and in my opinion when his body arrived, it looked like he had killed himself, but the press said it was an accident. So it is an explosive combination, a lot of demand, discipline, and guns in hands (Lira, ex-military chaplain, 2022).

He continued,

> My role there was to legitimise this, you understand? For the troop but also for the population. I will not do this anymore, I give up. I left in 2014 [...] Because I was being instrumentalised, you know? [...] a good part of my job in the Army was to convince the boys that they were sent by God, they wanted me to do that. Sent by God for pacification, it is a divine call to pacify, a vocation. And that there was the other side which represented absolute evil, [people] who wanted the downfall of the territory (Lira, ex-military chaplain, 2022).

On the external front, chaplains were enlisted as community brokers tasked with broader counterinsurgency initiatives. Their role was to cultivate trust among religious leaders in order to legitimise the pacification project and to act as intelligence gatherers on criminal activities. Lira commented that the Army started inviting religious actors to become informal mediators or "ambassadors of the Army in the territories" (Lira, ex-military chaplain, 2022). Military chaplains were thus transformed into counter-insurgency agents whose work developed on two lines: first, by considering "local religious [leaders] as those who are the more legitimate and trustworthy local voices [...] as they would not have any connection with crime or politics", and second, through "joint actions, where the Army would provide the necessary infrastructure to organise large, religious events" (Lopes, 2015, p. 279).

Among the 'products' developed by the military on this front were: local events celebrating specific holidays such as Easter, Christmas, and Children's Day; training courses to engage religious leaders in 'peace culture', covering topics such as conflict mediation, drug addiction, and domestic violence; the creation of chambers where religious leaders could express community demands to the occupying forces and public authorities; ecumenical meetings at the Pacification Force's base; and the promotion of reflections about the pacification process during masses (Oosterbaan and Machado, p. 2020, pp. 111-112; Gonçalves, 2014, p. 111). In the case of Children's Day, for instance, Lira said it reached a peak of 2,000 attendees. In his own words, the Army distributed

> food all day, there was hot dog, Coca-Cola – who had donated for the event - so we had soft drinks, food, toys, activities. Children went crazy, they got to hop on helicopters, ride the Army's horses, pet the trained dogs. Can you imagine? So, I did this type of mediation with Christian leaders, so that they could in return appease the

> environment because it was very tense. You had locals throwing stones at soldiers, cursing, spitting at them, it was like that (Lira, ex-military chaplain, 2022).

While both Catholics and Evangelicals were mobilised for those activities, the military ended up prioritising Evangelicals leaders given their stronger base-building networks in the territories as well as their ideological convergence with the strategic aims of the mission (Lopes, 2019).

Another important dimension of the mobilisation of Evangelicals in Rio's pacification was a politically conservative project of order-building, drawing from the long-term legacies of pacification in Brazil, and translated as a civilising and spiritually redemptive mission (Salem and Bertelsen, 2020; Savell, 2016). Pacification bundled notions of territorial liberation with 'moral and spiritual liberation' from crime through the use of force, militarised prayer, and the ideal of citizens converting to both Christ and the state order (Machado, 2015; Birman, 2012). Reports and discourses by military officials during the occupation cast *favelas* as unruly places. According to one Force Commander, the military's job was to

> show the population that another form of life exists [...] It is an enormous cultural work to change this reality. The message of pacification is that there is a pacific and orderly way of life [...] So if their wish is to live as they do now, they can maintain this, we are giving this instrument for them; the security institutions are entering, the state enters with other structures: school, education, sport, infrastructure, water, sewage, litter, energy, wellbeing. This is progressive, does not come from night to day, and it is the choice they make. Is this what you wish, or would you rather go back to the previous stage? (cited in Gonçalves, 2014, p. 101).

Moraes, a researcher with over a decade of fieldwork experience in the *Alemão* and *Maré* complexes, had the opportunity to participate in official meetings held between military officials and religious leaders, and speak to key military strategists. He claimed that many officials themselves espoused a religious justification for the pacification operations. In his own words, there was a widespread shared view among officials that

> God had placed them in the Army to fulfil a mission of the Kingdom of God. I remember seeing a uniformed colonel wielding a rifle at hands and shouting: '[*Favela*] Complex for Jesus!'. So these individuals from the military believed that God opened a door for them, the armed wing [of the state], and gave them the power to bring the Kingdom of God - under bullets or force if necessary (Moraes, academic, 2022).

Lira expressed a similar perception: "I think there is really this view [in the Army] that these territories are decayed, taken by evil, and in need of salvation". A colonel who was commanding operations in *Maré* told him: "'I entered *Maré* and could feel spiritual oppression,

you know? The dirt, lack of order, social order'". For the churches participating in the partnership with the military, such a vision could not resonate better. Lira recalled that when negotiating with Evangelical leaders for support, the average perception was that "'now we have a collaborator in the task of redemption for the territory and its residents. We have someone joining us to break away from the claws of evil [...] and to deliver Good and order'" (Lira, ex-military chaplain, 2022). Thus the partnership for many churches was "very natural", and "from the moment [religious] people discovered the project, they embraced it. It was an added effort to save *Alemão* [...] State and religion together, the cross and the sword." (Lira, ex-military chaplain, 2022)

While community policing and the local turn in the Brazilian military's international and domestic operations received political support from progressive sectors, these mechanisms were in practice used as counter-insurgency assets. Lira' testimonial is instructive here. He had begun his career "believing what in Public Security people call proximity policing". In reality, however, the experience turned out to be very different:

> When you see the thing in *locus*, I became disillusioned completely, and that's when I left the Army. So many things can go wrong, I do not even know where to start. You expose locals, whoever supports you is exposed [...] You invite some people to take part in the project, some accept it willingly, but within a year the Army leaves [the territory]. There was a pastor who dived deeply in the project with us, but as soon as the Army left, he had to flee from the territory. He called me and I could not do anything. What was I supposed to do, put him inside my house? (Lira, ex-military chaplain, 2022).

This passage reflects not only the failure of the military occupation - which, as soon as the military left, opened ways for criminal organisations to re-articulate territorially (and to seek revenge by targeting supporters of the occupying forces) - but also how the instrumentalisation of religious leaders fell short of anything resembling the introduction of better public services for the population. Describing similar cases in the US, Griffith (2021, 14-15) argues the "social sentimentalization of community policing" by Evangelicals does not "fundamentally challenge the power, funding, or deployment of police as a response to social problems that could be addressed in other ways". Below I turn to how the MINUSTAH-UPPs experience contributed to strengthening the far-right.

5.3 Democratic pacification and the far-right

Despite widespread consensus among analysts that Brazilian pacification in Port-au-Prince and Rio failed, these experiences yielded important returns for the military. The most important result was the return of the military into national affairs and the political mobilisation of a military elite that had not occurred since re-democratisation (Rodrigues and Maciel, 2020; Conti, 2019). According to General Heleno, MINUSTAH was a "fundamental experience for the current generation of officials in the Brazilian Army", providing the Brazilian troops with more management knowledge in periods of crisis and allowing them to know better "their capabilities", including of leadership (Godoy, 2019; Garbin, 2017). According to Moraes, the military had been

> for decades looking for a space of re-signification. They tried first with the Amazon - 'the Armed Forces as protectors of the Amazon' - but it did not work. But then came Haiti and later *Alemão* and *Penha*. Luciano Hulk [a popular TV host] dedicated a full show to the Army. Then *Esporte Espetacular* [a weekly sports TV program] also dedicated a full show about Haiti. All TV networks were giving fuel to it. It became the theme of a prime time soap opera, *Salve Jorge*, about an Army captain who was in *Alemão*. Even Prince Harry visited the *Alemão* complex in 2012. And in Haiti, they were in contact with a universe of global NGOs and international organisations such as the UN. All of this was just hatching the snakes' egg (Moraes, academic, 2022).

During Bolsonaro's government, this military elite occupied key positions in the state. Generals who had been Force Commanders in Haiti were chosen as top-tier ministers, such as Floriano Peixoto (General Secretary of the Presidency between February and June 2019), Fernando Azevedo e Silva (Defence Minister between 2019 and 2021), and Santos Cruz (Government Secretary between January and June 2019). General Augusto Heleno, the first force commander of MINUSTAH, was Bolsonaro's right-hand man, leading the Presidency's Institutional Security Bureau between 2019 and 2022. Otávio Rêgo Barros, another MINUSTAH veteran who later commanded the Pacification Force in the *Alemão* Complex and oversaw the military-religious partnership, was the government's spokesperson between 2019 and 2020. General Walter Braga Neto, who was the Commander of the East Military Command in Rio de Janeiro during the occupation, and later became the intervenor of the federal intervention in Rio in 2018 - which effectively succeeded UPPs - was chosen as Chief of Staff between 2020 and 2021, Minister of Defence between 2020 and 2021, and then Bolsonaro's running mate in the 2022 elections. Although some of these names left the government and became critical voices against Bolsonaro, others, such as Heleno and Braga Neto, remained loyal allies and were key articulators of the process of democratic backsliding. Under those

ministers, Bolsonaro's government became the most militarised since the end of the military regime. In 2018, the military held 2,765 posts in the federal government, a number that rose to 6,175 in 2020 (Jota, 2020).

With the recapture of politics by this military elite, the term pacification was widely employed under the far-right government, often with the intention to depict a homogenous national identity forged by the military through centuries of fighting political subversives. In his first speech after winning the presidential election, Bolsonaro claimed he would, "following the example of the patron of the Army, the Duke of Caxias, seek to pacify our Brazil" (Lula, 2018). One week later, the vice-president elect, General Hamilton Mourão, echoed Bolsonaro by defending greater presence of the military within the elected government: "We are the Army of the Duke of Caxias, who became known as 'The Pacifier', the one who pacified all wars of peoples in the nineteenth century that nearly divided our country" (Rodrigues and Maciel, 2020, p.14). On the celebration of the Soldier's Day,[41] in August 2020, Bolsonaro invoked once again the spectre of the pacifier, quoting a phrase attributed to Caxias: "to those who insist on believing the military should not participate in politics, here's another quote [by Caxias]: 'My sword has no party'. And I add: The party of us all is Brazil" (Soares, 2020). [42]

On 31 March, 2021, coinciding with the anniversary of the 1964 military coup, General Braga Netto, then Minister of Defence, issued a military Order of the Day to celebrate the date, in which he claimed that, on that occasion, the "Armed Forces ultimately took the responsibility to pacify the country, confronting its wearing out to reorganise it and guarantee the democratic freedoms we today enjoy" (Brazil, 2021). Commenting on the pacification efforts put in place in the context of the Cold War, where there was allegedly a "real threat to peace and democracy", the General then considered the contemporary geopolitical setting, with "new challenges, such as environmental issues, cybernetic threats, food security, and pandemics", to which he claimed the Armed Forces were prepared to assure the "peace and stability of our Country" (Brazil, 2021). This military order was published amidst a political crisis following

[41] The Soldier's Day was officially instituted in 1925 on the same day as the Duke of Caxias' birthday (Castro, 2000, p.111).

[42] Bolsonaro's reference to pacification precedes his government. During the voting proceedings to impeach president Rousseff, on 17 April 2016, Bolsonaro justified his favourable vote to oust her with the following statement: "To the memory of Colonel Carlos Alberto Brilhante Ustra, the terror of Dilma Rousseff! To the Army of [the Duke of] Caxias! To our Armed Forces! For a Brazil above everything and God above all, I vote yes!" (Sias, 2017). Colonel Ustra had commanded the leading torture unit of the military regime in the 1970s, where former President Rousseff was held and tortured as a political prisoner. For his actions during the military regime, he was awarded 'The Medal of the Pacifier', which takes its name after the Duke of Caxias' actions in the nineteenth century, covered in the last chapter. After this speech, Bolsonaro's popularity skyrocketed, making him the main representative of the far-right in the country.

the government's attempt to impose a military siege and undermine efforts by local governments to fight the Covid-19 Pandemic.

More importantly, MINUSTAH and UPPs also became crucial sites for experimentation with a range of policies that would later become the hallmark of Bolsonaro's political agenda. In 2018, security became a priority in the political agenda. The hard push to the right in security policies under Michel Temer's interim government signalled that the humanist and progressive aspects of democratic pacification were being subsided in favour of more authoritarian and militarised approaches (Sá e Silva, 2017; Morellato and dos Santos, 2020). With unprecedented numbers of homicides - reaching as high as 63,880 in 2017 - the internationalisation of drug cartels operating from within the prison system, and the rise of politically motivated violence, security became a key ingredient of the far-right's electoral success, mobilising fear of crime among the population with calls to militarise politics and provide security officials with legal protection from unlawful actions (Manso and Dias, 2019; Lima et. al., 2020).

In a 2018 presidential campaign interview for *Jornal Nacional*, the largest news program by the *Globo* corporation, Bolsonaro hailed the Brazilian military's initiatives in Haiti as a "success" and suggested using them as a model for operations against organized armed groups in marginalised urban areas (Globo, 2018). Members of the Armed Forces with MINUSTAH experience often expressed frustration over what they perceived as restrictive use-of-force rules during domestic operations, in contrast to the relative freedom they had in Haiti (Stochero, 2012; Gazeta do Povo, 2019). In the same interview, Bolsonaro advocated for the creation of *excludente de ilicitude* (exclusion of unlawfulness), a policy to exempt or lessen the punishment for security agents who unlawfully kill while on duty. Hence, Haiti served as a testing ground for these more punitive security policies, which were later applied to Rio de Janeiro and re-enacted by the far-right government (Harig, 2018).

Did the politics of religion in democratic pacification also contribute to strengthening the far-right? As argued in the introduction, the rise of the far-right in Brazil has been inextricably linked to the political mainstreaming of the Evangelical far-right (Mariano and Gerardi, 2020; Almeida, 2019). Bolsonaro's government effectively weaponised Evangelicals with the widespread use of disinformation campaigns and conspiracy theories that tapped into popular fears about crime, violence, and corruption, associating them with the threat of communism or the 'globalist elite agenda'. Years before the rise of Bolsonaro, however, democratic pacification had become a laboratory for engaging religious actors in political-military projects. According to Salem and Bartelsen (2020, p. 88), the "experiment with new

policing practices at the UPPs can aid us in understanding the moral framework underpinning *Bolsonarismo*". This claim, however, is more of approximation or analogy rather than an empirical one: "increasing police [and military] involvement in *favela* sociability reflects broader trends towards a reconfiguration of the social through the logic of security - including the merging of security politics with right-wing moralism and reactionary discourses on gender, sexuality, and race" (Salem and Bartelsen, 2020, p. 88). Other scholars have also established this connection (Lopes, 2019, p. 305). While it is clear that democratic pacification contributed to strengthening the far-right via a military re-capture of politics, it is unknown how the mobilisation of Evangelicalism in democratic pacification could have prefigured *Bolsonarismo*.

Some interviewees were sceptical of this view. According to Ribeiro, UPPs "consolidated some actors, but also weakened others" (Ribeiro, academic, 2022). Moraes concurred: "I do not see that this public security project brought any benefits to Evangelicals, I do not think so. Some groups were able to jump from insignificance to a space of greater visibility with this partnership. But it is over, in Rio no one talks about UPPs anymore, it was a complete failure" (Moraes, academic, 2022). Lira, the former military chaplain, was even more suspicious about this connection:

> This movement is much older, I do not know if the UPP and the Army's occupation had any difference. Back then, the UPPs and the Army established a dialogue with local [Evangelical] leaders, not the national ones [...] I do not see this relationship. But with the military, it is different. You can trace the history. I worked with [General] Rêgo Barros; I was the spokesperson for the [Army's] presidency in *Alemão*. And Braga Neto was my Commandant. I met many of them [now working in Bolsonaro's government] in *favela* territory, under the occupation. But I do not think the same applies to churches. Who empowered Evangelical churches was the PT government (Lira, ex-military chaplain, 2022).

Following Lira's take that the "movement is much older", I claim that there is another way to analyse this connection between pacification and far-right politics. This implies to look beyond the UPPs in Rio, and to follow the trail of democratic pacification as a process broader than pacification operations, as argued in Chapter 2. Here the theoretical distinction between thin and thick conceptions of pacification becomes analytically important. After all, Haiti and Rio represented the pinnacle of shifts that had been already occurring in public security since re-democratisation, where human rights sensibilities and democratic reforms were introduced to complement existing militarised and violent models of policing. Despite being highly mediatised and politicised given the context of *Lulismo* and the hosting of international mega-

events, similar processes had already taken place across the country, as was demonstrated with the police reforms in São Paulo in the last chapter.

Similarly, the relationship between Evangelicalism and violence regulation at the urban margins preceded the UPP. According to Machado (2015, p. 128), "'urban' pacification was already being implemented by religious agents in Rio de Janeiro's peripheries, even before the Rio de Janeiro State Government officially introduced its pacification policy". In our interview, Ribeiro claimed: "When I say that Evangelical and Pentecostal churches of the peripheries have their own model of pacification, it is in this sense: they make the administration of violence, in the most part, without the articulation with the state" (Ribeiro, academic, 2022). For the rest of the empirical research, however, I analyse the possibility that Evangelicals are constructing their own pacification strategy from below, in articulation *with* the state, specifically with police institutions, through micro-solidarity networks. This, in turn, may be an important element in the strengthening of far-right politics (beyond Bolsonaro's government) from the perspective of Christian Militarism.

Conclusion

This chapter contextualised new developments of pacification in a democratic setting and unpacked the growing protagonism of Evangelicals in the security field. It was argued that *Lulismo*, the guiding ideology of the PT years in power, contributed to Evangelical growth and mobilisation in the security sector. This was in part led by the process of incorporation of subaltern classes into a new consumer culture, and in part as the result of the failure to address violence and insecurity in marginalised urban areas. Evangelicals became key mediators in the regulation of violence and provision of safety nets to vulnerable populations, whilst in Congress they became increasingly more articulated with conservative and punitivist agendas.

Another important aspect of *Lulismo* was democratic pacification, which heralded a new role for the military in both domestic and international security operations, guided by a rhetoric of human rights protection and democratisation. Democratic pacification entailed a decentralised policy design that while still focused on militarism, incorporated new actors from civil society, such as NGOs, churches, and academics, in a paradoxical coalition between progressive and conservative forces. Thus, policing combined militarism with the mobilisation of human rights discourse and actors in a wider strategy of social control of marginalised populations.

A key feature of democratic pacification was the mobilisation of Evangelicalism. In both Haiti and Rio, the military learned that success for operations could not rely on force alone and that mobilising symbolic, religious elements was an effective way of bolstering ideological support and justify military occupations. Via the Army's military chaplaincy, Evangelical conservative ideology was activated as part of a wider project of order-building and violence regulation in marginalised urban areas in Rio's *favelas*. Here, the historical trajectory of pacification in Brazil gave way to a significant shift: after centuries of Catholic monopoly, Evangelicalism emerged as an alternative ideological strategy to pacify marginalised populations and engage them in order-building. Thus, with democratic pacification, a 'new' form of Christian Militarism has been observed.

While democratic pacification contributed to strengthening the far-right through a military recapture of politics and the punitive approach to security capitalised by Bolsonaro's government, the connection between Evangelicals' participation in UPPs has been rather speculative. Following the theoretical framework, I expect Evangelicals to be key actors in the construction of a new pacification strategy from below that contributes to strengthening the far-right, although not from a top-down perspective, which is historically how pacification was pursued in Brazil. The analytical cue will be to look at bottom-up, micro-solidarity networks that reflect wider Evangelical base-building and activism within police forces. The next three chapters will unpack these issues by focusing on the Evangelical military chaplaincy in police institutions.

Chapter 6 - The Evangelical Military Chaplaincy as an Instrument of Pacification: Origins, Growth, and Politicisation

Introduction

The last chapter contextualised the rise of democratic pacification, its relationship to the far-right, and the growing protagonism of Evangelicals in the security sector. The empirical task for the next three chapters will be to trace Evangelical activism in the wider policing milieu, identify its strategic role in policing, and nuance its relationship to far-right politics since the last decade, from the onset of the political and economic crisis in the early 2010s to the end of Bolsonaro's government (2019-2022). This activism constitutes the third analytical factor of the theoretical framework, pivoting the focus towards micro-solidarity networks.

This chapter foregrounds the Military Chaplaincy (MC) as the main site where pacification from below is constructed. Specifically, the chapter considers how the Evangelical MC has transformed, in recent years, into a site of religious activism with the Police Forces. By focusing on how Evangelical activism has grown significantly in military organisations - challenging not only Catholic hegemony but also the secular state - the chapter shifts attention to the social base of Evangelical MCs and how it capitalises on, and expands from, police politicisation.

Section 6.1 provides a historical overview of the MC in the Brazilian Armed Forces and the process of Evangelical growth and activism in this area. Section 6.2 focuses on the Evangelical MC in the Military Police, which has a distinct structure to the Armed Forces, comprising both institutional and voluntary military chaplains, alongside a fragile legal status. Section 6.3 focuses on the recent exponential growth of Evangelical MCs, connecting it to real-existing problems associated with police labour as well as to the politicisation of the police and its relationship to *Bolsonarismo*. Section 6.4 explores the strategic role that Evangelical MCs perform in policing operations and organisational culture, which closely resemble Brazil's tradition of pacification.

6.1 A brief overview of the Military Chaplaincy (MC) in Brazil

The MC is a consolidated institution in most advanced military organisations around the world. The military chaplain is a faith-based minister employed to provide pastoral care to officials, veterans, and their families, undertake funerary rituals, assist in morale-building of troops, advise superiors in religious matters, and engage with local civilians in areas of operation (Bergen, 2004). The chaplain is usually (but not always) a non-combatant officer who represents a particular religious ideology but is also trained to offer support from a non-denominational perspective.

In Brazil, MCs are divided between institutional and voluntary. Institutional chaplains are statutory military officials admitted into the ranks of various military corporations (Army, Navy, Airforce, Military Police, and Military Fire Brigade) via public exams, who go on to pursue a career initially as Lieutenant and ranking up to Colonel. There are only two religions officially covered by institutional MCs in the Armed Forces, Roman Catholicism and Evangelicalism, in a country marked by a diversity of religious beliefs.

IMCs are regulated by Federal Law n. 6.923/1981, which instituted the Service of Religious Assistance in the Armed Forces (SARFRA), an entity responsible for the selection and training of chaplains. According to this law, SARFRA "aims to provide religious and spiritual assistance to the military, civilians of military organisations, and their families, as well as to answer to the incumbencies related to the activities of moral education undertaken within the Armed Forces" (Brazil, 1981). Cross-referencing different sources, it is possible to estimate that there are around 155 military chaplains in the Armed Forces, of which 114 are Catholics and 41 Evangelicals (SAREX, 2020; Stacciarini, 2017; ACMEB, 2017).

The Brazilian MC can be traced back to the colonial period (Machado, 2022). Modern-day institutional MC, however, dates back to the Vargas era when the Service for Religious Assistance was created in 1944 exclusively to assist in war operations and comprising of Catholics, Evangelicals, or "any other religion as long as it does not offend the discipline, morals, and laws" (Brazil, 1944). The Brazilian Expeditionary Force, which fought in Italy during the Second World War, was accompanied by 30 priests and two pastors.

After the war, in 1946, a new law made the Service permanent and extended it to the Navy and Airforce. The legislation did not distinguish between religions, but it demanded that aspiring religions be professed "at minimum by a third of personnel in the units to be

contemplated" (Brazil, 1946), which in practice assured that only Catholics (95% of the population at the time) could be represented (Jácomo, 2016, p. 55). This was in a context of reactionary Catholic expansionism within state institutions, which actively sought to block religious diversity in, and secularisation of, society by pressuring politicians to enact policies that mirrored ideals of a 'Catholic nation' (Mariano, 2010). The creation of the Brazilian Military Vicariate in 1950 by a decree from pope Pius XII was a testament to this activism, seeking to subordinate the Service of Religious Assistance to principles set by the Vatican (Silva, 2017).

The first Evangelical admissions occurred only in 1981 in the Army, in 1995 in the Navy, and in 2003 in the Air Force (Mello, 2011). The aforementioned Federal Law 6.923/1981 became the definite legal parameter for MCs, which included a principle of proportionality for each professed religion (which has never been observed), and a requirement of a bachelor's degree in Theology for acceding the post (Brazil, 1981). The structure of MCs has not changed much in the democratic period, although it has seen a consolidation of Catholic hegemony in a context of increasing inter-religious competition for greater participation and influence in the public sphere. This was observed in the creation of the Brazilian Military Ordinariate following the diplomatic pact between the Brazilian state and the Holy See in 1989. The Military Ordinariate is an ecclesiastical institution subordinated to the Vatican but physically located and employed by the Ministry of Defence. The Archbishop of the Military Ordinariate, appointed by the Holy See, oversees all Catholic institutional chaplains in military organisations, including the Military Police. In 2009, under Lula's government, another diplomatic pact was signed with the Vatican (Brazil, 2010), which cemented the juridical and historical privileges of the Catholic Church in Brazilian territory, including that of the Military Ordinariate (Fischmann, 2012).

Currently there is no equivalent entity representing Evangelical chaplains in the Ministry of Defence. This is rather done informally by the *Aliança Evangélica Pró-Capelania Militar e de Segurança Pública do Brasil* ('Evangelical Pro-Military and Public Security Chaplaincy Alliance of Brazil' - ACMEB), founded in 2005 to represent military chaplains within the Armed Forces and Auxiliary Forces (Military Police and Fire Brigade). It is important to note that since the Constituent movement in 1986, Evangelicals mobilised to confront not only the left and progressive social agendas, but equally to challenge Catholic hegemony in the public space, which they considered a threat to their religious freedom (Mariano and Pierucci, 1992). Reflecting this issue, the 2009 diplomatic pact came under heavy

criticism and opposition from Evangelical legislators, who claimed in Congress that the agreement "objectively threatened the constitutional principle of the Separation of Church and State" (cited in Mariano, 2010, p. 21).

According to Lira, there has been increasing tensions in MCs due to Evangelicals disputing greater space while the "Catholic church is trying to hold the process back as long as it can" (Lira, ex-military chaplain, 2022). This was observed in the pacification of Haiti, where there was "a war between Catholics and Evangelicals" during the 13 years of MINUSTAH to "decide who will go there representing as a chaplain. The issue was only solved after the Earthquake [in 2010], when Brazil doubled its personnel, and you could have two chaplains at the same time". He also mentioned a dispute for "more vacancies in public admission exams" and for "who will lead the Army's chaplaincy, if it is a priest or a pastor" (Lira, ex-military chaplain, 2022). In fact, the appointment of the first Evangelical chaplain as head of the Army's religious service in 1998 was an attempt to appease such tensions, but also to please the Higher Commands of the Army, who were reportedly "dissatisfied" with the sexual orientation of many Catholic chaplains who engaged, in the words of a former head of the religious service, "in homosexuality and promiscuity" (cited in Alonso, 2016, p. 1611).

The creation of ACMEB reflects this broader Evangelical activism in the Armed Forces. In 2008, for instance, the Alliance sent a communiqué to the then minister of defence, Nelson Jobim, requesting the creation of an ecclesiastical structure under its authority within the Ministry of Defence analogous to that of the Catholic Military Ordinariate (Mello, 2011, p. 123). Despite recognising the issue, the Ministry of Defence has only provided a temporary solution by including the president of ACMEB as a guest member of the *Comissão dos Serviços de Assistência Religiosa das Forças Armadas* ('Commission on Religious Assistance Services of the Armed Forces - CORSAFRA), which was created in 2012 by President Rousseff's minister, Celso Amorim (Brazil, 2012).

6.1.1 The Military Police: Institutional and Voluntary Military Chaplaincies

Institutional military chaplains within domestic security operate in a different setting to those in the Armed Forces. Military Police and Military Fire Brigade chaplains are not federal public

servants, but employees of local state governments.[43] Thus, MCs in the police forces have varied institutional trajectories and resources, making it difficult to estimate the number of military chaplains operating in this area.

According to information sourced from fieldwork documentation and estimations from interviewees, the number sits between 35 to 50 career chaplains admitted through public exams. However, there are different levels of institutionalisation, making this number potentially higher - one state official estimated 84 in total - depending on the perspective of what counts as an institutional military chaplain. Martins, a military chaplain in the *Polícia Militar do Distrito Federal* (Military Police of the Federal District - PMDF), said there are police forces using "enlisted [officers] deviated from their role working as chaplain", others whose chaplain is a "retired officer who came back in what we call limited time service provision", and "corporations that have institutionalised chaplaincies with private organisations such as the *PMs de Cristo*" (Martins, military chaplain, 2023). In the case of the latter, these MCs are "weaker" in terms of institutionalisation, based on "precarious agreements" where some "commanders agree, others do not" (Martins, military chaplain, 2023).[44]

While institutional MCs in the Military Police may appear politically irrelevant considering the size of its personnel, it is in the voluntary MC where Evangelical activism stands out in its reach. Voluntary MCs is a system where chaplains are in theory not career military personnel but rather civilians who voluntarily serve in Military Police institutions.[45] However, during fieldwork it became clear that many of them, aside from being pastors, were also retired or active Military Police officers. This makes it hard to distinguish between civilian and military roles, as well as institutional and voluntary ones. Voluntary chaplains are usually affiliated to churches, religious organisations, or faith-based associations formed by Military Police officials. Typically, they serve on a part-time or temporary basis. Their appointment is based on the consent of the local police battalion's commander or on an agreement between the church/organisation and the Command of the military organisation. Although there is no

[43] State governments are responsible for overseeing police institutions, although according to article 142 of the Constitution, they are also considered as Auxiliary Forces of the Armed Forces (Brazil, 1985).
[44] Like in the Armed Forces, only Catholics and Evangelicals are represented in police MCs, the only exception being in the Military Police of the state of Bahia, which in addition has representatives of Spiritism and Afro-Brazilian religions. In the case of non-Military Police Forces (Civil Police, Federal Police, Highway Federal Police, etc.), there are no institutional MCs except for the Civil Police in the state of Pernambuco and in the Federal District.
[45] Only Auxiliary Forces such as the Military Police, allow voluntary chaplains to operate within their battalions. Lira claimed that volunteering "is not well seen" within the Armed Forces (Lira, ex-military chaplain, 2022).

legal framework overseeing voluntary MCs, they are usually subjected to the supervision of institutional military chaplains, who report on their activity.

More importantly, the voluntary MC is an area of exclusive Evangelical activity.[46] No other faith-based group provides the same type of service and solidarity networks to the police. There are a few associations from other minority religions in the Military Police, such as the Spiritist and Afro-Brazilian traditions, but these are low-profile organisations that represent a specific demographic within police institutions, having no political agenda or ideological view on policing of their own (Jácomo, 2016). In the case of Catholics, despite their traditional pastoral activities conducted by lay people in prisons, hospitals, indigenous communities, and *favelas,* the MC is verticalised and follows strictly from the doctrines stipulated by the Vatican. According to Martins, when compared to Catholicism, "Evangelical theology believes in the priesthood of all believers. There are many lay pastors among the troops who are not theologians and do not have orthodox, academic training, but who lead a life with God. This is widely incentivised in Evangelical churches" (Martins, military chaplain, 2023).

Historically, the Evangelical voluntary MC preceded the institutional variant. The *Confederação Evangélica do Brasil* ('Evangelical Confederation of Brazil – CEB), an interdenominational organisation founded in 1934 that represented Evangelicals nationwide, was responsible for appointing the first military chaplains to join the ranks of the Armed Forces during WWII (Crivelari, 2009). With the Confederation shut in the 1960s due to internal divisions regarding support to the military dictatorship (Almeida, 2016), this work was pivoted to regional associations that represented Evangelicals within the military ranks, such as the *Associação Missionária dos Militares Evangélicos* ('Missionary Association of the Evangelical Military' - AMME) from the Federal District, the *União Evangélica dos Policiais Militares do Estado do Rio de Janeiro* ('Union of Evangelicals of the Military Police of the State of Rio de Janeiro - UEPMERJ), and the *União dos Militares Evangélicos de Santa Catarina* (Union of the Evangelical Military from Santa Catarina - UMESC). In fact, some institutional MCs were created from the work of these state-level associations, such as AMME and UMESC.

In other cases, voluntary MCs can also become institutionalised in agreements with the local state. The recently created Minas Gerais Association of Evangelical Military and Police

[46] The number of volunteers is difficult to establish. One interviewee estimated around 4,000 voluntary chaplains operating in police institutions across the country (Almeida, MC coordinator, 2022), although another claimed that his MC alone, *Universal nas Forças Policiais* (Universal within Police Forces - UFP), from the mega-church IURD, had around 10,000 active volunteers (Silveira, MC coordinator, 2022).

Officers, known as *Sentinelas de Cristo* (‘Christ’s Sentinels’), signed an agreement in January 2022 with Military Police of Minas Gerais to provide religious assistance to its troops in view of the absence of institutional military chaplains (Minas Gerais, 2021). The Association of the Evangelical Military Police Officers of the State of Sao Paulo, known as *PMs de Cristo* (‘Officers of Christ’), is unique in the sense that it replaced the institutional military chaplaincy after it was formally extinguished in 2005 by the state government (see next chapter).

These associations are members of the *União de Militares Cristãos Evangélicos do Brasil* (Union of Christian Evangelical Military of Brazil - UMCEB), founded in 1979 and which represents them as a national federation. UMCEB promotes voluntary MCs and supports local states in their institutionalisation process (Martins, military chaplain, 2023; Lamin, 2021). The following can be read in UMCEB’s website regarding its mission:

> UMCEB: UNITING THE BRAZILIAN MILITARY TO EVANGELISE THE WORLD.
>
> UMCEB’S vision: To promote and strengthen the bonds of Christian military companionship, making all ONE IN CHRIST JESUS
>
> UMCEB’s MISSION: To take the good news of Jesus Christ into the barracks and Public Security Forces, with the aim to act with God's grace and mercy in the liberation, transformation, and rescue of our companions.
>
> UMCEB’s values: to act in fear of God, with discipline, ethics, obedience, and respect to the laws and regulations (UMCEB, n.d).

While most military chaplains interviewed for this research were careful to distinguish their work from proselytism, UMCEB’s missionary activism is quite uninhibited. Among its objectives, we read things like “To strengthen and expand the Kingdom of God through the military family and other public security institutions", “To mobilise the military and civil servants in public security of our country to evangelise”, and “To promote the moral, relational, spiritual, and emotional restoration of the servants that work in the Public Security System in Brazil” (UMCEB, n.d).

Another form of voluntary MC comes from churches creating their own chaplaincy organisations. There are two such cases in Brazil: the *Ministérios Pão Diário* (Our Daily Bread Ministries - MPD), a transnational church with global reach whose Brazilian branch created the *Pão Diário Segurança Pública* (Our Daily Bread Public Security - PDSP) in 2018, a project that focuses on creating a digital infrastructure to publicise military chaplaincy work and training (see Chapter 8); and the Brazilian mega-church with growing international presence, *Igreja Universal do Reino de Deus* (Universal Church of the Kingdom of God – IURD), which

in 2018 launched the project *Universal nas Forças Policiais* (Universal in the Police Forces - UFP). Both operate on a national scale.

6.2 The ambiguous legal status of MCs in the police

Institutional and voluntary MCs within the police forces operate in a grey legal area in Brazil. First, there is no general legislation establishing the scope of their activities. The federal law that created the Service of Religious Assistance (6.923/1981) does not regulate the specificities of the role or code of conduct, it simply states the organisational aspects of the military chaplain career. Further, neither the 1981 federal law nor specific legislation from each branch of the Armed Forces mention the Auxiliary Forces such as the Military Police or the Fire Brigade. This creates a situation where states resort to a series of different and often incommensurable legislation regarding their MC.

By surveying the websites from state governments and legislation, I was able to identify that the majority of Brazilian states, 23 out of 27, have active institutional MCs within their jurisdiction. However, only a minority, seven states, have created specific legislation regulating their activity. These regulations can take the form of both state-level law or resolutions issued by the General Command of the state's Military Police. In contrast, 16 states lack specific legislation, and a small number operate under provisions that predate the 1988 Constitution and even the 1981 federal law. Only four states (Acre, Roraima, Goias, and São Paulo) currently do not have institutional MCs, although other forms of institutionalisation may be present, such as in São Paulo and in Goiás, where only voluntary MCs operate.

Second, given the lack of a specific legal framework, MC advocates tend to focus on general Constitutional principles and adduce them as the legal foundation of chaplaincy activities in the police. This was observed in interviews as well as in the niche literature developed by Evangelical military chaplains serving in the Military Police and Fire Brigades, such as the book *Chaplain's Manual: Theory and Practice* (Alves, 2017). The first principle is related to the issue of religious freedom as expressed in article five of the Constitution, in specific paragraphs vi and vii:

> VI - freedom of consciousness and belief is inviolable, being assured the free exercise of worship and guaranteed, in the form of law, the protection of places of worship and its liturgies

> VII - it is assured, in the terms of law, the provision of religious assistance in the civilian and military entities of collective internment (Brazil, 1988).

The assumption in evoking this principle is that, given that military institutions are a place of quartering (collective internment), the state naturally restrains the religious freedom of Military Police officers, which in turn creates the need for providing religious assistance to the troop. According to Gouveia (2017, p. 114), a military chaplain in the Fire Brigade of the Federal District,

> the state, via the military chaplaincy, seeks to balance the scales in favour of those whose work not only hinders the exercise of the right to religious freedom by virtue of the conditioning and the nature of the military service, but also accentuates the need of this guarantee given the existential and moral conflicts that tend to emerge with more intensity in the military environment.

The second principle relates to the issue of the secular nature of the state as expressed in article 19 of the Constitution, which states that "it is forbidden to the Union, States, the Federal District, and Municipalities" to

> I - establish religious sects or churches, subsidise them, hinder their activities, or maintain relationships of dependence or alliance with them or their representatives, **without prejudice to collaboration in the public interest in the manner set forth by law** [...] (Brazil, 1988; emphasis added).

In contrast to previous constitutions, where religious collaboration with the state was either forbidden or restricted,[47] the 1988 constitution introduced an exception to this, conditioning it to a specific law that would regulate such activity, *and* considering it must be in the public interest. The vagueness of what constitutes and who defines the public interest has led analysts to claim that the constitutional article is in contradiction with the secular character of the state (Fischmann, 2012; Miranda, 2013). However, to Evangelical MC advocates this is a key theme to mobilise influence. Lamin (2021, p. 127), a Colonel in the *Polícia Militar do Estado de São Paulo* (Military Police of the State of São Paulo – PMESP) and one of the founders of *PMs de Cristo*, urges that in their day-to-day activities, chaplains should "dominate this concept [secularism] and in all opportunities, communicate this understanding to the commanders and police personnel". Chaplain Alves (2017, p. 166)

[47] In the first republican constitution of 1891, the separation of church and state was absolute, prohibiting any type of collaboration of religious institutions in the public sphere (Brazil, 1891). The following constitutions gradually opened space for this collaboration. The last constitution of the military regime, from 1967, restricted religious collaboration to the educational, assistance-related, and hospital sectors (Brazil, 1967).

considers that "the mistaken concept of secular state that some hold, as well as the prejudice and generalisation regarding the conduct and scandals involving religious leaders, are threats against which we need to take precaution". Chaplain Gouveia (2017, p. 115), in turn, opines that MCs are defined as an activity of public interest not only because it enables the exercise of religious freedom within the barracks, but because the MC is in itself an institution that

> reinforces the values and principles that constitute the structure and action of the Forces. In other words, the military chaplaincy fulfils a strategic function in the ethical and moral formation of the military. The values and principles contained in the Disciplinary Regulations of the Armed Forces and Auxiliary Forces are perfectly consistent with the ethical and moral precepts of most of the religions, especially those of Judeo-Christian origin.[48]

Relativising the secular character of the state has become not only a strategy to spread Evangelical activism within the police, but an active contestation of Catholic hegemony. As a local coordinator of UFP told me in Rio de Janeiro, "in my opinion, this thing of 'secular state' is a bit hypocritical, why? It says the state is secular, but when we enter many security institutions there is a chapel of the Catholic Church, it has an image of a patron saint" (Garcia, MC coordinator, 2022). It is further important to remark that the grey legal area in which MCs operate reflects the unfinished character of secularisation in Brazil. Despite the formal separation between Church and State in the new Republic (1889), the boundaries between Christian ideologies (Catholic in their most part, but increasingly Evangelical) and the public space were precariously constructed over time without being institutionally well demarcated (Carmuça et al., 2020).

6.3 The recent growth of Evangelical MCs

When I asked interviewees why voluntary MCs had grown so much in recent years, there was consensus around two things: first, that the proportion of institutional chaplains relative to the total number of officers in each police force were extremely low. This made voluntary MCs, according to Martins, a "path of no return" (Martins, military chaplain, 2023). He continued: "Brazil will expand chaplaincies through volunteering because it provides you with a quicker and larger workforce" (Martins, military chaplain, 2023). This workforce is free, bearing no

[48] A very similar opinion is shared by Lamin, who claims that the chaplaincy works to "orient and form the character of the military, which will directly influence their work with the community, fulfilling therefore the public interest of the chaplaincy" (Lamin, 2021, p. 54).

financial burden to states, being solely based on the missionary activism of Evangelicals that see it as spiritually mandated. Chaplain Lamin (2021) understands this mission as the urge to construct the kingdom of God and announce the good news of the gospel of Christ, in all spheres of society, in the face of corruption, decay, and sin.

This missionary purpose connects to a wider strategy of Evangelical activism: conversion. According to Lira, conversion implies a politics of conquest:

> Wherever there is a field to conquer, be it a hospital, a legislative house, an educational institution, the military, there will be an Evangelical. The more mobilised by the issue of Christian religion, the more interest in conquering they will have, because [for them] it is war. It is like [in] the military, [an Evangelical] always thinks he's at war. In the military's mind, war is ongoing, the same in the Evangelical's mind, all the time, a war for the souls. The Evangelical hymns - also Catholic ones but more so Evangelicals - refer to the General Christ. It is a spiritual warfare for the souls, and where there is space, [they] will occupy it. (Lira, ex-military chaplain, 2022).

This form of seeing the world makes Evangelicals "thirsty to conquer spaces in the state. And the barracks are another important step in this occupation, few people know it but this has been happening for a while now." (Lira, ex-military chaplain, 2022). This notion was also highlighted by Moraes: "Evangelicals understood they must be present in all spaces and occupy it, it is a war logic just like Von Clausewitz, to occupy spaces and territories. And the chaplaincy is very much about this [...] to take the 'values of the Kingdom of God' to all society" (Moraes, academic, 2022). According to bishop Garcia, from the UFP project, their mission was "to obey the order given by Christ in the Bible: go to the whole world and preach the gospel to every creature" (Garcia, MC coordinator, 2022). This translates as an

> urgency to save people, especially members of the security forces. Our desire is urgent, rapid, because we Christians understand that time is short, so we must take the word of God to the people, we need to take salvation and above all spiritual comfort to those men and women that work arduously to maintain public order (Garcia, MC coordinator, 2022).

Second, interviewees referred to a political opening for voluntary MCs to spread their activities. As military chaplain Martins remarked, MCs "can also have a political bias, of politicians taking advantage of relationships with churches. So, I believe volunteering will grow and not all organisations will maintain their institutional chaplaincies" (Martins, military chaplain, 2023). Referring to this political dimension, Martins meant not a reflection on the political nature of MCs themselves but of how, given "there is no regulation" of their activities, they are left "at the mercy of the current political authority". He used the example of the

northeastern state of Maranhão, where the former governor, Flávio Dino, had personally appointed institutional military chaplains by decree, in a way Martins considered "outlawed", as they were joining an officials' career without a public admission exam. Moreover, he stressed that some appointments were based on clientelistic relationships: "the bigger churches were the churches that put in the chaplains. And who did they [the government] put in? Whoever they [the churches] nominated" (Martins, military chaplain, 2023).

However, voluntary MCs were also growing beyond local state borders in recent years. When asked if the arrival of Bolsonaro in the presidency in 2018 had provided a political opportunity for this to occur, participants agreed by pointing out that his administration was giving more freedom for religious organisations to collaborate with the federal government, and especially so in the security sector, where according to one interviewee, the "majority of professionals are Christians" (Castro, government official, 2022). But this expansion also preceded Bolsonaro's opening. In order to understand why voluntary MCs became so relevant and socially accepted in the police barracks, we need to understand the wider process of police politicisation and how Evangelical MCs capitalised on it.

6.3.1 Evangelical base-building and the politicisation of the police

Given the lack of engagement of the left and progressive sectors with security policies in Brazil, there is a general consensus that conservative, right-wing, and far-right forces dominate the debate and policy implementation in that area (Soares, 2019). This view is reinforced by the passive approach to security sector reforms of the *Partido dos Trabalhadores* (Workers' Party - PT) era as discussed in the last chapter, and it was something I often heard during fieldwork, for instance, that public security was "massacred in the last 20 years" (Castro, government official, 2022), or that "in times of political correctness" there is "a lot of prejudice towards the police" (Souza, chaplain, 2022).

This issue is compounded by how ideological polarisation has created a climate in which 'human rights' is juxtaposed in opposition to 'public security', the former allegedly being a left-wing domain calling for the decriminalisation of drugs, de-militarisation of police forces, and in some cases for the abolition of police forces; the latter being a right to far-right domain of law-and-order politics, social conservatism, and militarism. Catchphrases such as

‘human rights for righteous humans’ and ‘a good criminal is a dead criminal’ are often reproduced by right and far-right leaders (Moraes, academic, 2022).

In fact, there is a plethora of base-building work and social activism within security forces that is conservative and far-right, in other words, social practices and discourses that actively seek to win the hearts and minds of security officials, and which may contribute to reproducing a militarised and punitive culture within the barracks. This issue became more pronounced when I approached the *Fórum Brasileiro de Segurança Pública* (Brazilian Forum of Public Security - FBSP), a leading security think tank in São Paulo. A major theme FBSP has prioritised in the last years has been about professionals and careers in the security sector.[49]

In 2021, a study was conducted with 9,067 police officers from all police corporations who were asked on issues such as personal and professional profiles, reform and modernisation of the police forces, victimisation and discrimination at work, and mental health (FBSP, 2021a). In general, officers felt dissatisfied with the current model of organising the police, and supported its reform. For instance, 81% of them supported the unification of police corporations into a single career structure and form of admission, and 76.5% agreed that it was necessary to reorient the focus of police activity to protecting citizenship rights, although this had dropped from a previous 87.3% in 2014 (FBSP, 2021a, p. 13). Among the factors that hinder the performance of police work, respondents considered issues such as low wages (84.6%), insufficient personnel (84.1%), lack of funding for equipment and guns (78%), inadequate training (76.7%), and lack of integration with other police corporations (71.2%), as very important factors (FBSP, 2021a, pp. 29-31). Around half of them reported that their work rights had been disrespected (49.3%), that officers had been humiliated or disrespected by their superiors (54.8%), while the majority agreed there was a need to regulate the right to unionise and strike, currently forbidden (71.3%) (FBSP, 2021a, p. 9).

The survey corroborates other studies that argue that police labour in Brazil to be precarious, stressful, high-risk, and discredited by the state and society (Minayo and Adorno, 2013; Minayo et al., 2011; Silveira and Medeiros, 2016). Suicide rates among active officers are higher than deaths occurred in-duty: for instance, there were 99 suicides registered in 2019 compared to 27 in 2017, although numbers are also considered to be under-notified (Miranda et al., 2020).

[49] Beginning in 2014, FBSP published the report “Opinion of Brazilian police officers on reforms and modernisation of public security” (FBSP, 2014), which was followed by two reports in 2015, “Women in police institutions” (FBSP, 2015a), and “A study on victimisation and risk perception among professionals of the public security system” (FBSP, 2015b).

Despite this picture, the militarisation of security remains the structuring issue around which any discussion of reform gravitates, and support for militarism has increased instead of retracted between 2014 and 2021 (FBSP, 2021a). For instance, support for the unification of the police forces with a civil character dropped from 56.9% in 2014 to 46.8% in 2021, while support for unification with a military character increased from 9% to 14.4% in the same period. (FBSP, 2021a, p. 9) Likewise, support for the extinction of the Military Justice for litigations involving Military Police officers dropped from 63.6% to 45.5%, and support for the removal of the Military Police and military fire brigade as auxiliary forces of the Army dropped 73.8% to 54.9% (FBSP, 2021a, p. 15).

Monteiro, an analyst at FBSP's, told me that what they noted in the survey was that there was a

> consensus that things need to change, but there is no consensus on how to change. So, progressive sectors do not have a clear project for this area. And conservative sectors, more to the right, always had this discourse, that to control crime, [to] control violence, the police had to act with violence, [that] the police are heroes and so forth, [that they] should not be investigated […] and this ultimately ended up creating a series of complications (Monteiro, security analyst, 2022).

Among the complications blocking changes, Monteiro mentioned the "institutional disarticulation of the police forces", the "difficulty to bring different sectors to dialogue", and importantly the "growing mutual imbrication between the police and politics". The lack of institutional regulation has created a window of opportunity for greater involvement of the police in electoral politics. For instance, there is no quarantine period between work in policing and electoral candidacy for security officers, a factor that contributes to blurring the lines between both activities.

In the National Congress and in state-level Legislative Assemblies, this type of imbrication has produced the so-called 'bullet caucuses': supra-party networks composed of elected legislators (mostly) from the security sector, who are usually characterised by an "authoritarian view of social control, a constant tension with human rights policies, and representing police corporations and the arms industry" (Novello and Alvarez, 2022, p. 81). In the 2018 elections, 42 security officials were elected as Federal Deputies, a growth of 121% compared to 19 officials elected in 2015 (Sou da Paz, 2020). Similarly, the *Frente Parlamentar de Segurança Pública* (Public Security Parliamentary Front - FPSP) grew from 210 Deputies in the 2011-2014 legislative cycle to 306 in 2019-2022 (Hinz et al., 2020). Looking at the sub-federal level, the number of candidates from security forces running for mayor grew from 225 in 2016 to 515 in 2020, an increase of 129%, whereas for council seats this went from 6,380 to

7,296 in the same period, an increase of 14% (Sou da Paz, 2021). Disaggregating the available data by political parties, the ideological spectrum of candidates from the security sector was overwhelmingly right-wing: 57.56% were right-wing, 30.01% were centre-right, 9.53% were centre-left, and 2.89% were left-wing (Sou da Paz, 2021). This shows that police politicisation is a phenomenon articulated by the right of the political spectrum.

A critical side-effect of this has been agitation of police forces by security-centred politicians, or 'police-deputies', and, at least since the 2015-2019 legislature, their active mobilisation around Bolsonaro's political platform. The political aim has been twofold: to protect corporativist interests (e.g.: wages, pensions, budget, career structure and perks, and assure police autonomy from regulations concerning the use of force), and to create a mass movement that legitimises it (Feltran, 2021). *Bolsonarismo* embodies this movement, especially with the discursive representation of police officers as heroes in a larger culture war between 'good' and 'bad/non-citizens', the deserving and the undeserving (Webber, 2020). Signs of police radicalisation have been prevalent in recent years, especially under Bolsonaro's government (Rolim, 2023).

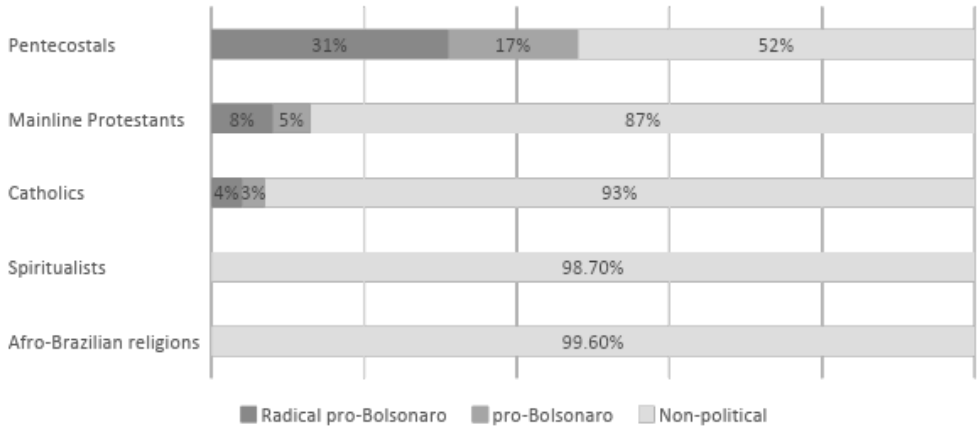
Thus, there is an ongoing problem of political control within police forces, related to the creation of a direct identity between political leaders and police officers, that can potentially spill over institutional oversight. As Monteiro questions, "where is the loyalty of these police officers", in police institutions or among the far-right? (Monteiro, security analyst, 2022). When I asked Monteiro about the reasons that the police constitute an important base of supporters to Bolsonaro, he went straight to the point of career valorisation: "the police feel devalued for many reasons. Either because of wages, the discourse [about them], the way in which the media represents them, the form how the third sector talks about them" (Monteiro, security analyst, 2022). Traditionally, he continued, policies of police reform have been "very unequal across regions" and "have never been assumed as a central problem" for the federal government. Bolsonaro, however, broke with this pattern:

> He always talked a lot about this, with very clear solutions. 'I will increase the armament of civil society as a strategy' […] And on the other hand, symbolically, [he takes a line of] being very close and valorising the police. The most important legislative initiative in this sense was assuring the so-called 'exclusion of unlawfulness', which already existed in the legislation but that was seen as an anticipated demand from the police to not being investigated in cases of [operations] resulting in death […] He is also always taking pictures and videos shaking hands with the police [...] He participates in their graduation [ceremonies] […] Although he did not make any substantial change [to public security], he always had this very clear in his discourse: 'I am with the police, they are important' (Monteiro, security analyst, 2022).

An interesting picture arises when considering the role of religious identifiers. Recent studies have shown considerable growth of Evangelicals and retraction of Catholics within the Armed Forces (Lentz and Penido, 2022), although in the Military Police there is scarce information. The most comprehensive attempt at mapping the political view and religious beliefs of the police in Brazil is a study by FBSP (2020b) titled "Religion among Military, Civil, and Federal Police Officers in Brazil", which crossed the interaction of 879 police officers in both religious and pro-Bolsonaro environments on social media between January and July 2020. Although only about 30% (*n* 212) of officers actively interacted in online religious environments, the study reveals interesting insights about Evangelicals. Taking into account all corporations (Military, Civil, and Federal), on average 56% of those officers were Evangelicals (FBSP, 2020), a number that stands well above the average national population that identified with this religion in 2020, which was 31% (G1, 2020). Pentecostals formed the majority group that interacted in online religious environments (43%), followed by mainline Protestants (32%), and Catholics (12%) (FBSP, 2020b). Disaggregating the data by corporation and rank, Evangelicals formed a majority in the Military Police for both officials (54%) and enlisted (84%) roles, and in the Federal Police for both Commissioners (62%) and Agents (66%) (FBSP, 2020b). In the Civil Police, Evangelicals formed a majority among Commissioners (47%), while Catholics had a majority among Agents (59%) (FBSP, 2020b.

Regarding interaction in pro-Bolsonaro online environments, the sample showed that Evangelical identity markers tend to be overwhelmingly higher among police officers compared to other religions, and even more so when considering radicalised online environments (see Figure 1 below). For instance, 48% of Pentecostal officers supported Bolsonaro, followed by 13% Mainline Protestants, and 7% Catholics.

Figure 1 - Percentage of interactions in religious and political online environments by Military, Civil, and Federal Police Officers (January-July 2020)



Source: FBSP (2020b).

Interestingly, there was more interaction in radical environments by Pentecostals (31%), at a rate that also sits above the national average of this strand (22%). Common themes in radicalised online spaces were comments and shared content against democratic institutions (Supreme Court and National Congress), the media, the left, and progressive agendas such as LGBTQ+ rights. If cross-referenced with other surveys, it seems safe to assume that within the security forces, Evangelicals had a greater degree of adherence to *Bolsonarismo*, while ideological penetration filtered through religious identifiers seemed more widespread within the lower ranks of the Military Police – which is also the corporation that mostly supported Bolsonaro (de Lima and Bueno, 2020; FBSP, 2020a).

Such numbers have led to speculation that Evangelical leaders and churches were providing groundwork for a 'Bolsonarisation' of police culture (de Lima, 2020a; Marton, 2020; Galhardi and Vieira, 2021). According to Lima, president of FBSP, what created the opportunity for this religious activism was the fact that the structural problems associated with the police forces were transformed into moral issues connected to the individual behaviour of officers:

> In practice, this does not allow us to think of security as a public policy, with the responsabilisation of the whole chain of command. We are always judging the police at the end of the line. This opens space for religious groups to politically appropriate the debate and receive professionals with messages of belonging and acknowledgement (cited in Balloussier, 2020).

This is a perspective also shared by academics. According to Albernaz (2010, p. 538), the "less institutionalised the parameters of police activity, the more diffuse and obscure the processes of police decision-making becomes.". Monteiro agreed with this point of view, adding that the lack of regulation can increase the degree of discretion of officers, which in turn "is certainly influenced by the values and constitution of that individual. And it will be strongly marked by their religiosity [...] today these religious values are disputing not only the hearts and minds but also the institutions [of the police]" (Monteiro, security analyst, 2022).

But what exactly are Evangelicals doing when disputing the hearts and minds of the police? Monteiro emphasised the issue of base-building in marginalised urban areas:

> The importance that Catholicism had in vulnerable territories, here in the capital of São Paulo, for instance, with the Base Ecclesiastical Communities and all the discussion we had in the 1970s and 1980s, it lost tremendous strength. And today you will find Evangelical and neo-pentecostal groups very involved with different agendas that are relevant to the context of security and violence prevention (Monteiro, security analyst, 2022).

Moraes concurred with this view. He said that in the peripheries, the Evangelical church is "social assistance, it is solidarity, healthcare network, refuge network", and at many times this type of assistance can represent the "salvation and survival of the individual". He continued:

> part of the base-building success lies in the fact that it gives a feeling of belonging to people, of welcoming, which traditional left-wing politics does not do, and the spaces in the state to do this are very precarious [...] And in the middle classes, we find police officers, low-ranked public servants, the military - the Evangelical church has grown a lot [...] There is an issue among Evangelicals which is social ascension. Now that the individual is a creature in Christ, he stops drinking, smoking, spending money, he works more, he saves more [money] (Moraes, academic, 2022).

Moraes highlighted that in the context of military organisations, there is a political dimension in base-building that reinforces the ideology of both Evangelicals and military professionals. According to him, in the militarised police worldview there exists "two political types", one is the human rights defender, who is "friends with criminals, cocaine sniffers, and weed smokers", and the other is the *cidadão de bem* ('the good citizen'), who is "in favour of security, of family, and the war logic". Although there are of course those "who think differently", this military ethos "is not simple to change" as it is the result of centuries of militarisation of the public space (Moraes, academic, 2022). In turn, this is "a logic that the churches also end up buying into, that to defend human rights is to be a leftist and therefore

you cannot be a Christian and a leftist at the same time" (Moraes, academic, 2022). Having established the issue of police politicisation and its relationship to Evangelical growth and base-building within the barracks, it is now time to connect this issue to the Evangelical MC.

6.3.2 The Evangelical Military Chaplaincy (MC) as a site of base-building

I claim that the Evangelical MC is a privileged site for the type of base-building that capitalises on, and grows from, career issues and police politicisation. Chaplain Alves (2017, p. 166) considers that "the intensification of problems such as suicide, violence, and drug addiction, to which managers are not finding solutions, as well as of recurring personal and collective crises, are opportunities to the advancement of the chaplaincy". The reason for this advancing is that MCs function as micro-solidarity networks (Malesevic, 2017), providing strong social and affective bonds to police officers, and allowing them to "protect and project themselves mutually like in a traditional family where 'brothers' ascend together" (Lentz and Oliveira, 2022, p. 363). This is in line with the notion that military institutions are 'totalising' institutions, in the sense that there is little distinction between professional and personal life, where the military individual is part of a "coherent world" (Castro, 2004, p. 4).

The Evangelical MC is a place of fraternity between 'brothers in arms', actively dedicated to working the 'totality' of the Military Police officer both in-duty and off-duty: in the barracks, at home, in the church, and on the streets. As seen, it addresses mental health problems associated with the precariousness and risks of police labour,[50] offers spaces of career valorisation, seeks to solve moral dilemmas by filtering policing and violence with religious

[50] While the sample of participants, data, and fieldwork observations for this study are insufficient to draw correlations, there is certainly an element of racialisation in the growth of Evangelical base-building in the police due to issues of labour precarity that needs to be unpacked in future studies. In a national survey about the Military Police from 2022, the majority of officers identified as whites (39.2%), followed by blacks (37%), Asians (0.7%) and Indigenous (0.3%), while the percentage of uninformed was 22.9% (Brazil, 2023, p. 27). There are also relevant regional differences, which can be grasped in a similar survey from 2018. For instance, in São Paulo, the Military Police was constituted by 64% of whites and 35.5% of blacks; in Rio de Janeiro, 36% were whites and 57% were blacks; in Rio Grande do Sul, 83% were whites and 11.8% were blacks; and in Ceará, 5.4% were whites and 94.5% were blacks (Brazil, 2020, p. 59). Despite being a minority at the national level, black police officers (from both Military and Civilian police) have the highest rate of victimisation from violent crimes: in 2019, 65.1% were blacks compared to 34.9% whites (FBSP, 2020, p. 77), while in 2022 it rose to 67.3% for blacks and decreased to 32.7 for whites (FBSP, 2023, p. 53). Racial inequality is further reflected in the distribution of careers, with white officers occupying more senior careers and black officers occupying lower-ranked careers, being therefore more exposed to the risk of violence and precarity (Soares, Rolim and Ramos, 2009). A study from 2009 showed that at the national level, the Military Police had white officers occupying 51% of senior ranks and 39.6% of lower ranks, while 47% of black officers occupied senior ranks and 58.1% lower ranks; in the Civilian Police, the disparity was even larger, with whites occupying 70.1% senior ranks and 48.7% of lower ranks, and blacks occupying 28% of senior ranks and 48.9% of lower ranks (Soares, Rolim and Ramos, 2009, p. 101).

signifiers, and works to deliver a more 'efficient' police officer. Two events illustrate how the Evangelical MC has capitalised on these themes in recent years.

In 2013, the MC of the PMDF created a project called 'Moral Education Program' which offered a series of Biblical courses to officers on issues such as finance, family relationship, and marriage. The project was criticised in the media for "not taking the secular state into account" (Correio Braziliense, 2013), and when the police was questioned for having spent public money on the project, chaplain Alves responded that "the State is secular, but the citizen is religious [...] the fact that it is secular does not mean that religiosity has to be execrated from existence. People have their religiosity, and this can be used in benefit of the State" (cited in Jácomo, 2016, p. 14). Another military chaplain from the same institution, Mendonça, published a more charged response piece, claiming that the argument

> that the state is secular is nothing more than the old anti-Christian persecution disguised as political correctness. After all, it is impossible to deny that in a country where 90% of the population believes in God, more than 80% are Christians, and which was discovered and built by people of its morality and faith, it is expected that its influence be present in society, including the police and military Corporations (Medonça, 2013).

He went on to claim that the case reflects the "immoral and anti-Christian and anti-family agenda of the [PT] government. Pure ideology" (Mendonça, 2013). Despite not using the terms directly in the text, among the tags chosen for the piece include "communism", "left", "media manipulation", "persecution", and "socialism". Two things are noteworthy here. First, that the attempt of relativising the secular character of the state - 'the state is secular, but its citizens are religious' - was something widely heard from participants, with one claiming that Brazilian academics, associated with the left, cannot distinguish between an "atheist state, a secularist state, and a secular state" (Castro, government official, 2022). This is a pervasive rhetorical tactic in far-right discourse in Brazil, and Bolsonaro himself has used it frequently when justifying the appointment of a "terribly Evangelical" Supreme court judge: "the state is secular but we are Christians" (Londres, 2019), or "the state is secular but our government is Christian" (Diário de Pernambuco, 2020).

Second, it shows how Evangelical military chaplains, at the onset of the political crisis that led to Rousseff's impeachment, were activating left-right dichotomies in the security field, placing the former in a narrative of anti-Christian values that supposedly promote criminality, and the latter in a narrative that identifies policing with moral Christian values and fighting crime. Thus, what is important to note is that these tropes were already circulating in the police forces years before the rise of *Bolsonarismo*.

A more recent event showed an explicit alignment of Evangelical MCs with Bolsonaro's government. In October 2019, the XIX National Congress of the Brazilian Union of Evangelical Christian Military (UMCEB) - the national missionary entity representing MCs - took place in the state of São Paulo, organised by the *PMs de Cristo*. The title of the event was "*The impact of the valorisation of the family and security forces' professionals in the culture of peace*". The keynote speaker was Silas Malafaia, Brazil's most influential Evangelical pastor and personal advisor to Bolsonaro on religious issues. Before delivering his speech, he showed a video of Bolsonaro saluting attendees: "We have an objective, we have a target: to save our Brazil. To defend our family, to fight for the innocence of children in classrooms [...] To fight against abortion, against the decriminalisation of drugs, among many other things [...]" (UMCEB, 2019a). The video was received with excitement from the audience, many of whom were institutional and voluntary chaplains.

In his speech, Malafaia stated the importance of "God's presence and the work of unity". "The enemy knows what it means to stay together and have unity in purpose" (UMCEB, 2019a), he continued, invoking the ideal of spiritual and military unity that underlies UMCEB's doctrine, which in turn is anchored in the Gospel of John 17, urging all Christians to be "brought to complete unity" (The Bible, n.d). The talk reached its high point when Malafaia denounced what he called "anointment without attitude", that is, the inefficacy of prayer without a corresponding will to action:

> [there are] a bunch of believers in Church – [they do] backflips, climb walls, speak in strange tongues until morning, but what happens when they leave the front door? They do not preach the gospel, do not confront sin, do not denounce sin, accept talks of abortion, of gender ideology, gay marriage, they retract, hide. Why, then, do we need anointment? (UMCEB, 2019a)

The speech ended with Malafaia inviting all military pastors to join him on stage and record a prayer in the name of Bolsonaro's life. With the crowd repeating after him, he declared that "Brazil is from the Lord Jesus" and announced a "new era of peace, security, and prosperity" (UMCEB, 2019a). These two cases show that the Evangelical MC has been affected by, and engaged with, police politicisation since at least 2013. The next two chapters will further unpack this issue.

6.4 The Evangelical Military Chaplaincy as an instrument of pacification

So far, I have shown how the Evangelical MC has grown in recent years within police institutions. Now I turn to the political dimension of Evangelical MCs and connect it to pacification. If the MC has a fragile legal basis, its unquestioned status is conferred by the strategic role it performs to achieve military and political objectives. In the US, MCs are considered strategic assets that play a key role in troop cohesion, "inoculating commanders and crew against sympathies or moral sensitivities that weaken their will to commit the violent acts required by their mission" (Waggoner, 2014, p. 718). Historically, secular authorities have recognised the instrumentality of MCs, both in terms of reinforcing discipline, preparing soldiers to die, and strengthening resolve to kill (Davie, 2015; Wilkinson, 1981).

The Brazilian Army's *Campaign Manual: Religious Assistance in Operations* (Brazil, 2018), which summarises learnings from its democratic pacification experiences (covered in the last chapter), acknowledges the strategic dimension of the MC, or "the religious legitimacy to directly contribute with the mission's success" (Brazil, 2018, p. 29). The manual considers two roles for chaplains in military operations. First, that of a religious minister who works to "nourish the spirit, assist the ill, and participate in funerary honours" (Brazil, 2018, p. 18). While the latter two are related to more conventional pastoral activities, the task of 'nourishing the spirit' receives a more detailed elaboration. Its purpose is, among others, to "mitigate the stressing effects of continuous action in operations", "trigger competencies of spiritual nature that contribute as mechanisms of confrontation and overcoming of internal conflicts", and "contribute to dissipate dichotomies or ethical dilemmas in face of the difficult and complex decision to kill" (Brazil, 2018, p. 33).

The second role is that of that of advisor to the Commander, which involves advising on

> the impact of religion within their unit and on the specificities of the religious environment in the area of operation that may affect the mission's fulfilment. This can include native religions in the area of operations; sacred days that may affect military operations; and the importance of local religious leaders and structures (Brazil, 2018, p. 19).

Here the military chaplain is considered as a kind of operations' ethnographer who surveys "information about ethical, moral, and religious issues, which can be of interest to the command" (Brazil, 2018, p. 22), has "functional knowledge of world religions and the dynamic

religion of native populations, afro-descendants, nomads, immigrants, and equivalent" (Brazil, 2018, p. 26), and "preserves memory" by "gathering and analysing facts that transform into information, and, from this, contributes to knowledge production" (Brazil, 2018, p. 37). Not only does the military chaplain assist in this form of intelligence gathering service[51], but it is also the chaplain's responsibility to be directly involved in the psychological front of operations, working closely with the Command to "settle religious, moral, ethical, and cultural issues related to the programs, civic-social initiatives, exercises, and operations" (Brazil, 2018, p. 26). In this sense, the MC is a key instrument in winning the hearts and minds of the local population:

> the knowledge of local religious beliefs and its repercussions in the relationship of the troop with the population are fundamental in the formation of public opinion. Military chaplains facilitate the relationship with religious leaders and military Commanders (Brazil, 2018, p. 37).

This knowledge is then brought back to the Information Operations division, where the military chaplain obtains "orientation around the ideas-force discussed in the contact with local religious leaders or councils, and which are of interest to the Command, aiding in the formation favourable opinions to operations" (Brazil, 2018, p. 37). The emphasis on forming positive public opinion is once again emphasised in the chaplain's responsibility to "integrate communitarian and Civic-Social Actions", where "religious assistance collaborates with the effort of the Command in conquering support from authorities and the population via the provision of religious tasks such as weddings, baptisms, confessions, counselling, among others" (Brazil, 2018, p. 37).

The same ideas contained in the manual appear to mark the strategic role of the MC in the police forces, although this comes not in the form of an institutional doctrine such as in the Army but intellectual elaboration by Evangelical MC advocates. For instance, Martins, an Evangelical institutional military chaplain from the PMDF, told me the following story:

> Once an officer wanted to work without ammunition. The Commander came to me and said: 'I'm going to arrest this guy'. I said: 'if you arrest him, he will become stronger. 'What do you mean'? 'Because you'll make him believe he is being persecuted for being loyal to his faith. That is not the way, this is a matter for chaplains, leave it to me'. So I talked in Biblical terms to the officer about his understanding [of the Bible] and ultimately he was convinced he did not need to work without ammunition. Because it was not conflicting if you

[51] Although the Manual states the military chaplain does not act like "intelligence officials or combat proponents" (Brazil, 2018, p. 25), it is hard not to draw the parallels here.

> had to suddenly use force against someone. God blessed it. So he went [to work] with a peace of mind and preserved his faith. We did our job helping the Commander solve a conflict that he could not solve (Martins, military chaplain, 2023).

The way Martins characterised his work was with "scientific rigour". According to him, the "institutional chaplaincy is part of the state. Scientific rigour. We are using faith in benefit of the objectives of the state" (Martins, military chaplain, 2023). Similarly, in the *Chaplain's Manual*, there is a chapter titled *The strategic basis of chaplaincy*, which claims that military chaplains should not be guided by a "purely theological concept" but by "how its activities aid the institution in the fulfilment of its mission" (Alves, 2017, p. 177). The author, chaplain Alves, that it "needs to be clarified that the chaplaincy is not a church", that is, a place of proselytism (Aves, 2017, p. 177). However, the lines are not clearly demarcated, as further on he claims that the chaplain's primary interest should be "in contributing to the wellbeing of the collective, exercising the love to the neighbour, and magnifying the kingdom of God" (Alves, 2017 p. 177).

Moreover, Alves (2017) presents a series of testimonies collected from Military Police commanders about their opinion on the MC. According to one former commander of the PMDF, Colonel Rosback, in the MC

> we will always find the friendly hand of God, who will receive the Police officer in the most diverse situations [...] During the general command, the chaplaincy acted in a series of events and [gave me] strategic advisory through spiritual support and the ministering of God's Words, so that we could make the best decisions of command, which always involved the lives of the police and citizens (Alves, 2017, p. 174).

In another piece written in a peer-reviewed journal, Alves (2015) presented a detailed view of how the military chaplain works to fulfil the institutional and strategic values of the PMDF. He lists five values: first, organisational culture, where the values of the PMDF are compatible with the "Biblical rules proclaimed in the military religious mission" (Alves, 2015, p. 78); second, motivation, where the chaplain instructs police officers that their ultimate commitment is not to the police corporation in itself, but that this should be a "natural unfolding of the commitment with the principles of God (Alves, 2015, p. 79); third, quality of life, where the chaplain works towards the wellbeing of officers disseminating the "principles of a beneficial philosophy of life" (Alves, 2015, p. 82); fourth, image management of the police, where internally the chaplain is seen as "a minister of God and envoy of the Corporation. As such, it is the PMDF that visits the police officer in the hospital, at home or elsewhere, because

it cares about him", while externally the chaplain is involved with strengthening public opinion on the police through the organisation or religious community events (Alves, 2015, p. 82); and fifth, philosophy of action of the police, understood as community-oriented policing, under which the chaplain engages with religious entities that have a high degree of penetration in the community, "resulting in a network of relationships and contacts that demonstrate Military Chaplains can act as mediators between police authorities and religious leaders of the community" (Alves, 2015, p. 84).

Similarly, Martins told me that the military chaplain needs to get closer to the local community "in order to create a feeling of security in that community" (Martins, military chaplain, 2023). According to him, the chaplaincy is a "bridge" between police and community, a key asset to "make the population start to participate in the public security process". This interaction is important because it "generates the view that the police are human, because faith, the exercise of faith, has to do with humanity, so you start to break some stigmas created about the police" (Martins, military chaplain, 2023).

In all, these values work to create a more 'efficient' police officer. In our conversation, Martins remembered when he addressed his superiors about the role of chaplains, in a meeting at the start of his career:

> We help your police [officer] to have a regulated financial life, a harmonious marital life, to treat the population and the family well, to respect your commanders, treat well your subordinates, to do everything with excellence. We work with a maximum level of motivation. While you claim that the corporation is larger than the individual, that [they, the police] have to act in the name of the corporation, [of the] the state, I tell them: they have to act for God, because it was God who created us, hence our main motivation is God, our greater satisfaction lies in God. So our objective is to deliver a police officer who is better each time, more qualified at the maximum of their potentiality to well execute their service. So even if you do not believe [in God], would you like an officer like this? Who here wants it, raise your hand. And everybody raised: I want, I want, I want! (Martins, military chaplain, 2023).

The strategic functions of the Evangelical MC resonate very closely with the historical dynamics of pacification described in the previous chapters. In terms of military doctrine, it entwines with a series of doctrinal aspects envisioned in the Army's Pacification Manual (Brazil, 2015), such as: permanent contact with the population, which implies "the detailed study of local culture, customs, laws, social structure, modes of life, and belief systems of the society in area to be pacified" (Brazil, 2015, p.36); humanitarian tasks, involving cooperation with civilian organisations to provide immediate needs to the population (Brazil, 2015, p.36); and calibration of public opinion through engagement with community leaders, NGOs, and the

media (Brazil, 2015, p. 38). Thus, it is not a coincidence that military chaplains, and in specific Evangelical chaplains, were crucial assets in pacification operations in Rio de Janeiro under the *Unidades de Polícia Pacificadoras* (Pacifying Police Units – UPPs) project. The strategic aspect of the MC was brought forward by many participants and will be a recurring theme in the next two chapters. Importantly, given that Evangelical MCs have expanded their social base capitalising on police politicisation to the far-right of the spectrum, special attention will be given to the ideological and political project of these base-building activities, as they have the potential to indicate a pacification strategy being constructed from below, that is, from articulations between Evangelicals and police institutions.

Conclusion

This chapter has analysed the social base of Evangelical activism with the police forces. In specific, it demonstrated the origins, growth, and recent politicisation of the Evangelical MC in Brazil. Historically, Evangelical MCs have emerged with three aims: to achieve equitable representation of Evangelicals within military and police organisations, to compete against Catholic monopoly in the realm of spiritual assistance to military personnel, and to re-signify the secular nature of the state, in a wider strategy of institutional 'conquest' related to Evangelical missionary activism in state and society.

In the view of its advocates, the fragile and ambivalent legal status of the MC system is compensated by the strategic role it performs in warfare and policing. This directly connects Evangelical MCs to Brazilian pacification, as military chaplains are expected not only to provide spiritual assistance to troops in order to achieve 'moral cohesion', but to engage with the population affected in a conflict area in a process of winning their hearts and minds, that is, integrating them into the state order and neutralising dissent. Thus, the Evangelical MC, functioning as micro-solidarity networks, bridges the coercive and ideological dimensions of pacification. As such, the chapter showed evidence that the Evangelical MC is an important pathway to the diffusion of Christian Militarism, connecting it both to far-right politics and to wider order-building strategies advanced by social groups.

The expansion of Evangelical MCs, especially voluntary organisations, can be traced to several factors: first, being a highly unregulated service area, and functioning within largely autonomous police organisations, means the institutional barriers for missionary activism are

relatively low. Second, Evangelical MCs tackle real-existing social problems related to police labour, such as precarisation and mental health issues, and career valorisation. Evangelical MCs are able to tackle these issues through providing emotional and social assistance networks, extending their missionary activism to forms of solidarity that provides notions of belonging and protection. In the absence of state reforms to improve labour conditions of the police, Evangelical MCs are seen as a remedy, which in turn allows them to grow exponentially. Third, Evangelical MCs have managed to capitalise on the ongoing process of politicisation of the police, which builds on grievances with the left but also expands on increasing radicalisation to the right. Evangelical MCs in recent years have become an important site fostering this politicisation, which is also strengthened by Evangelical growth within military organisations, notably within the Military Police. In Chapter 8, I will demonstrate the extent of this politicisation, with Evangelical actors constructing a 'Spiritual Assistance' public policy, tailored to security professionals, under Bolsonaro's government.

Importantly, this chapter contributed to unpacking an important claim: that Evangelical MCs are an important pathway of pacification from below. The next two chapters will give an in-depth exploration of two Evangelical organisations that contributed to shaping the expansion of Evangelical MCs within the police, from more localised projects to a nationwide and consolidated institution: the *PMs de Cristo* Association (Chapter 7) and *Ministérios Pão Diário* (Our Daily Bread Ministries – MPD) (Chapter 8). While both projects were involved in this process of politicisation of the police and supported *Bolsonarismo* to varying degrees, they also went beyond it, creating the ideological and political foundations for Christian Militarism to be diffused nationally.

Chapter 7 - Creating Evangelical Pacification Doctrine: The *PMs de Cristo* as an Intellectual Incubator

Introduction

The last chapter analysed the social base of Evangelical MCs, both institutional and voluntary. This chapter begins to focus on voluntary MCs in the context of expanding Evangelical activism within the police forces. Voluntary MCs distinguish themselves from for their high degree of professionalisation, ideological indoctrination, and capillary capacity to mobilise community-level actors and security officials, even more so than institutional MCs.

Specifically, the chapter shows the role of Evangelical intellectuals in forging the ideological foundation of Evangelical base-building with the police. By focusing on the works of a pioneering Evangelical voluntary MC, the *PMs de Cristo* ('Officers of Christ'), it evidences the creation of an Evangelical pacification doctrine that is disseminated nationally, setting a template for other MCs and entangling them in a broader web of police politics. The story of *PMs de Cristo* is one of a grassroots movement independent of party linkages that grew articulating micro-solidarity networks with the police. With time, however, the group became ideologically aligned with the higher commands of the Military Police as well as conservative political groups organised in the São Paulo State Assembly. *PMs de Cristo* became widely popular in the military milieu due to its effectiveness - in the eyes of Military Police commanders - in addressing key internal and external problems confronting police corporations, such as high rates of suicide among officers, lack of mental health and social safety nets, and a legitimacy deficit in society in face of competing forms of authority, especially within marginalised communities.

Concretely, I develop the argument that *PMs de Cristo's* intellectual doctrine functions as a new pacification ideology, supporting spiritual and emotional assistance networks, sponsoring demonstrations of career valorisation, and promoting community policing projects seeking to win the hearts and minds of the population. As an ideologue of *PMs de Cristo* explained to me, the military chaplain is a figure who acts as "some kind of community mobiliser", who can "facilitate the activation of citizenship", forming "good leaders",

"strengthening the social fabric", and "potentializing what is good in society", so that "evil does not take hold of public spaces" (Costa, MC coordinator, 2022). Importantly, *PMs de Cristo* pursues these activities with no financial burden to the state budget and in ideological harmony with the higher commands of the Military Police. The consequences of this are twofold. On the one hand, this Evangelical doctrine provides legitimacy to authoritarian modes of policing by justifying it as divinely sanctioned, and thus rendering it self-explanatory and not subjected to criticism. On the other, it offers a far-right model of order-building, in which chaplains operate as one of the main brokers of a narrowly-conceived, Christian democracy centred on the protagonism of the police.

Section 7.1 introduces the *PMs de Cristo* association, describing their origin, growth, and institutionalisation within the Military Police. Section 7.2 analyses four books published by *PMs de Cristo* associates, evidencing the construction of an Evangelical pacification doctrine with its own set of theological and political views that pushes for closer entwinement between police and church. Section 7.3 shows the group's transformation in recent years as the intellectual incubator of Evangelical activism in the police across the country, and its relationship to *Bolsonarismo*.

7.1 The *PMs de Cristo*: origins, growth, and institutionalisation

The Association of the Evangelical Military Police of the State of São Paulo, or *PMs de Cristo*, was widely acknowledged by interviewees as the most consolidated Evangelical MC, acting as an agenda-setter in the field, even among institutional MCs. *PMs de Cristo* represents, in their own estimations, some 25,000 active or retired Evangelical Military Police officers of the state of São Paulo (Jácomo, 2016, p. 65), with around 2,500 contributing members, which represents 2.6% of the total workforce, of around 96,000 employees (Almeida, MC coordinator, 2022).

According to their official website, the association's mission is to "value the human figure of the police officer, assisting the Military Police family emotionally and spiritually based on the message, principles, and Christian values" (PMs de Cristo, n.d. a). *PMs de Cristo* is a non-profit, interdenominational association, maintaining 128 centres (*núcleos*) spread across the state of São Paulo. Their voluntary MC is currently present in most of the subsidiary organisations of the Military Police such as: the Fire Brigade, the Highway Military Police, the

Military Police Academy, the Environmental Military Police, the Shock Battalions, the Aviation Command, the Military Hospital, the Military Prison, and the Administrative Centre.

PMs de Cristo has a variety of targeted programmes such as Suicide Support and Prevention, Support to Young Police and Fire Fighters, Strengthening of the Family, Prison MC, Hospital MC, and their flagship project, Police and Church, described as an "effort to unite the Police and partner Christian Evangelical Churches in order to support the management of personnel and community policing that integrate the Management System of the Military Police of the State of São Paulo" (PMs de Cristo, n.d. b). Further, *PMs de Cristo* also promotes events, such as "thanksgiving services, thematic meetings, breakfast or coffee break for police officers, among other actions in partnership with Evangelical churches and leaders" (Lamin, 2021, p. 83).

7.1.1 The early years

The embryo of the association dates back to 1984 in the Military Police Academy of *Barro Branco*, the centre that trains officials in the northern area of the city of São Paulo.[52] There, students created the *Barro Branco* Evangelical Guild, which had "weekly Biblical meditation gatherings and communion between students and officials" (Terra, 2021, p. 9). Religious guilds were encouraged by senior officials as a socialising and complementary activity in the training of police officials, and replicated in other Military Police academies that train lower-ranking officers in São Paulo (Jácomo, 2016, p. 46). In this initial phase guild activities had a limited scale, with meetings being "isolated and momentary" (PMs de Cristo, 2021a).

On 25 June, 1992, the association - "this project of the Great General Jesus Christ" (Neto, 2021, p. 106) - was formally established by 74 Evangelical police officers, who felt "inspired by the Biblical history of Neemias (a man who mobilised the families of Israel for the reconstruction of the walls of Jerusalem)" (Lamin, 2021, p. 82). Their founding statute set the following goals:

* to offer spiritual, family, and social assistance;

[52] The Military Police has a dual form of entry that follows from its formal subordination to the Army. One is via enlistment of soldiers for street patrolling and the other is via an admissions exam for officials' career, who are responsible for the strategy and management of the corporation.

> * to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the Word of God in the Military Police milieu;
> * to stimulate and motivate the Military Police to live an authentic Christianism;
> * to rescue the 'wounded from war';
> * to provide social, cultural, recreational, and beneficent activities;
> *to become a representative institution of Evangelicals within the command of the corporation" (cited in Neto, 2012, p. 106).

PMs de Cristo emerged in the context of crisis and reform of the Military Police in São Paulo, which was analysed in Chapter 4. The reforms had introduced three new organising principles for the Military Police: 1) quality management, 2) human rights, and 3) community-oriented policing (PMESP, 2021, p. 24). Amidst these institutional shifts, *PMs de Cristo* maintained a low-profile, seeking to legitimise its activities within the barracks by reaching out directly to fellow officers in need with spiritual and emotional support. Their chaplaincy activities targeted initially the administrative sectors of the police, such as schools, prisons, and hospitals. Jácomo (2016) calls this the "pacifist" phase of the group, pursuing social recognition as a morally renovating force in a military institution that was losing public credibility. The little evidence publicly available on the group from this period corroborates this view.

A newspaper article from February 1996 reports that a "group of Military Police officers that meets for prayers and carries the Bible during patrols was able to reduce the rate of infractions and irregularities committed by the troop of Batatais (355 km north of São Paulo) by 89.4% in the last seven months of [19]95" (Dias, 1996). An article from March of the same year, titled "*PMs de Cristo* preach for the rational use of weapons", describes a small branch of the group in São José dos Campos who were seeking to "raise awareness among police officers to confront situations of violence with balance" (Folha de São Paulo, 1996). Another article from January 1999 reports the group having reached 1,000 members in the state, having an "on-call telephone number for counselling and prayer", and tells the story of a former police vigilante who murdered 50 people and was later converted by the group in prison (Estado de São Paulo, 1999).

In the documentary "A Force for Change",[53] produced by the Sentinel Group in 2007 and which tells the story of *PMs de Cristo*, the context of crisis and reform of the Military Police is further explored.[54] The documentary narrates the 'moral degradation' of the Military

[53] The documentary was given to me by a member of *PMs de Cristo* during fieldwork.
[54] The Sentinel Group is an American Evangelical organisation that produces documentaries about the impact of 'spiritual warfare' missionary activities around the world, focusing mainly on places in the global south marked by high inequality and where spiritual revival is deemed necessary. The group subscribes to the American

Police in the 1990s, and describes some officers "playing cosy with underworld drug dealers and racketeers" while others, "fed up with the Justice system's corrupt revolving door, have turned to vigilantism" (A Force for Change, 2007). Colonel Terra, co-founder of *PMs de Cristo,* comments on the 1997 *Favela Naval* incident, where the police was filmed indiscriminately killing a worker, that it was "a terrible stain on our police and society. Many officers were ashamed of walking in uniforms" (A Force for Change, 2007). After referring to the police reforms that followed as an effort to "rescue public trust in the men of law", the documentary's narrator shifts to the contribution of *PMs de Cristo* in this process as personified in the works of its co-founder: "the Commission of Community Policing counted with a secret weapon, a man of God, upright and humble, called [...] Terra" (A Force for Change, 2007). According to an interviewee, Colonel Terra is an "icon inside the police" (Mendes, chaplain, 2022), has worked closely with the General-Command of the Military Police in the area of community policing, and later became the coordinator of Security Community Councils in the state of São Paulo (Cruzeiro do Sul, 2011).[55]

This approximation to key stakeholders and decision makers in the security field has helped expand the activities of *PMs de Cristo*. However, as was shown in Chapter 4, these police reforms did not fundamentally change the militarised and violent orientation of the police. Human rights sensibilities were introduced while police massacres and racialised incarceration continued to grow exponentially in the state (Nunes, 2014). Further, regarding community policing, Brunetta (2012, p. 28) argues that it was more related to a "means of reconstructing a worn image of the police, than the intention of promoting structural alterations in its *modus operandi* [...]". Similarly, the institutionalisation of Community Security Councils have been instrumentalised by the police, who rather than using it to promote civilian participation and deliberation in security matters, sought to legitimise its own actions through the co-option of community leaders: the 'good citizens' who "essentially distinguish themselves by the discourse of unconditional support to the actions of the police" (Bueno et al., 2016, p. 160).

If *PMs de Cristo* was critical of the police institution in the 1990s, with the reform period the opposite happens, that is, they become ideologically aligned. *PMs de Cristo*'s

evangelist Billy Graham's Lausanne Covenant from 1974, which is considered a catalyst of the Christian Right in the US (Leihart, 2021).

[55] In 2002, Colonel Terra defended his dissertation in the Military Police Academy titled "The Importance of the Community in the Implementation of Community Policing: a proposal for mobilisation and volunteering within the scope of the operational company" (Alves, 2012, p. 181).

leaders are themselves well-ranked and respected officials working for this 'renewed' Military Police, and their solidarity network seeks to strengthen the identity of the police internally as well as externally. Alves, a police official and member of *PMs de Cristo,* describes the police reforms as a "clear demonstration of the concern to promote the management of public security in a transparent, participatory and, above all, professional way" (Alves, 2012, p. 20). As such, the pacifist discourse of the 1990s was gradually replaced by one of "legitimacy of police authority in face of God; and spiritual protection that Military Police officers could enjoy if they were in communion with this same God" (Jácomo, 2016, p. 97).

7.1.2 The process of institutionalisation

In 2003, the group began a "Missionary Patrol" project, mobilising around 300 volunteer chaplains to conduct 'prayer vigils' with officers five minutes before they began patrolling (*PMs de Cristo,* 2021a). In the above-mentioned documentary, Colonel Terra refers to this period as a milestone for the group, where they sought to "pray with more intelligence" by using the "intelligence systems of the police" to find out "where the vulnerable communities of São Paulo were located" (A Force for Change, 2007). In his own words, "besides evangelising the officers, besides sustaining faith with officers, God wants to use the police, the police institution, as a lever of transformation of society" (A Force for Change, 2007). In that year, the São Paulo State Assembly paid tribute to *PMs de Cristo* by giving them the Medal of Community Merit of the Military Police (Alves, 2012, p. 136). Thus, a new phase began for the group where the public prestige and social capital accumulated with security professionals and politicians gradually led *PMs de Cristo* to a process of institutionalisation.

Illustration 1 - *PMs de Cristo* chaplains pray with members of a community policing unit

Source: A Force for Change (2007).

In March 2008, one of the largest circulating newspapers, *Estadão*, featured a full page on *PMs de Cristo*. It reported that following the murder of the Commander of the 18th Police Battalion in north of São Paulo by nine officers from the same regiment, both the General Command and the state government authorised *PMs de Cristo* to offer spiritual assistance during the rotation of troops (Manso, 2008). The strategy, according to a participating pastor, was to try to "soften brutish hearts" by offering prayers during 10 minutes and inviting them for spiritual counselling outside the regiment (Manso, 2008, p. 52). Interviewed for the piece, Colonel Terra explained the institutional strategy: "for now, we are in the 18th company [...] After, we'll train new chaplains to reproduce this model across the 400 [police] companies" (Manso, 2008, p. 52). Later in June of that year, a laudatory article appeared in the official news platform of the São Paulo state government. It featured stories of successful suicide preventions and approving comments by police commanders, pointed to the growth of the group, with the number of affiliates reaching 1,500, and the distribution of 20,000 bibles to police officers (Zanelli, 2008).

Activities expanded via the use of social media and widely publicised prayer campaigns (Manso, 2012, p. 58; Teixeira, 2012). Media coverage amplified their visibility, with descriptions of *PMs de Cristo* as a group that "fights crime with a gun on one hand and the

Bible on the other" (Extra, 2012), or as "soldiers armed with the word of faith and hope" (Guiame, 2014). The group also gained more visibility as it started campaigning on morally conservative issues against minority groups. For instance, in 2006, the Secretary of Justice of the state of São Paulo ordered the withdrawal of pamphlets created by *PMs de Cristo*, which considered non-Christian beliefs, homosexuality, and prostitution as sinful practices, and equated them with murder and theft (Jácomo, 2016, p. 84).

Political support to *PMs de Cristo* was also growing, with deputies in the São Paulo State Assembly passing motions of applause and requesting financial assistance from the state government for the group (ALESP, 2011a; 2011b). In 2012, the former governor of São Paulo, Geraldo Alckmin, sanctioned a law that instituted the "*PMs de Cristo* Day" in the official state calendar, which is celebrated every year on the 25th of June (Estado de São Paulo, 2012).[56] The legislative bill was met with no opposition in the State Assembly, and *PMs de Cristo* was considered by its rapporteur in the Standing Committee on Public Security and Penitentiary Matters as an exemplary "institution that valorises the human figure of the police officer" and "always based on Christian principles and values, without neglecting the mission and objectives of the Military Police (ALESP, 2012).

Such expressions of political support derived mainly from conservative deputies linked to both the security and Evangelical caucuses in the State Assembly, which at the time were advancing punitivist and moralist Christian agendas (Novello and Alvarez, 2022). Political figures such as Olímpio Gomes, then from the *Partido Democrático Trabalhista* (Democratic Labour Party - PDT), José Bittencourt, from the *Partido Social Democrático* (Democratic Social Party - PSD) and Colonel Telhada, then from the *Partido da Social Democracia Brasileira* (Brazilian Social Democracy Party - PSDB) were among the articulators in support of *PMs de Cristo* within the State Assembly. All three of them later became key supporters of Bolsonaro's government.

The consolidation of this process of institutionalisation occurred in 2015 with the implementation of the 'Police and Church' project, in partnership with the General-Command of the Military Police. This marked a new phase for the group, with the professionalisation of its MC services, expansion of the geographic areas of operation, and increasing mobilisation

[56] The São Paulo and São José do Rio Preto municipalities have also instituted a '*PMs de Cristo* Day' in their official calendar (Lamin, 2021, p. 84).

of community-level actors. According to Souza, "from 2015 to now, God made an upgrade. He brought the Church inside the barracks" (Souza, chaplain, 2022).

Interestingly, the Police and Church project began at the same time that the institutional MC of the Military Police was in decline. In the 1990s, the latter consisted of a very small service with only two Catholic chaplains. In the bulk of police reforms of that decade, resources prioritised psychological and social assistance, especially given high suicide rates among police officers (Lima, 2003). One of the chaplains retired in 2003, and at the beginning of 2015, the only military chaplain left in the corporation was arrested and accused of embezzlement and administrative misconduct, prompting the then General-Commander, Colonel Ricardo Gambaroni, to shut down the service on grounds of the "needlessness of this role of police chaplain in virtue of the religious diversity" within the corporation (G1, 2015).

Parallel to this, however, Gambaroni was also articulating with *PMs de Cristo* to expand their MC to all subsidiary organisations of the Military Police in the state. In October of 2015, the Police and Church project was officially inaugurated, which according to Terra (2021, p. 11), was an "innovative project, low cost and high impact, not only to the mental health of our officers, but to the strengthening of the three pillars of the Corporation: quality management, human rights, and community police". There is scarce information available about how this project was designed and negotiated, with one interviewee claiming that a General-Commander (unnamed but likely referring to Gambaroni), "was a great supporter of this project with Colonel Terra", "opening the doors of the police for us to enter", and that "he was extremely impacted because he had never heard about the Bible from the perspective of what constitutes authority" (Mendes, chaplain, 2022). A couple of issues seemed to be at play in this chaplaincy replacement policy: the fact that it was a voluntary service with readily available supply of human resources; it was free of charge, resulting in no financial burden to the state budget; and it was ideologically aligned to the General-Command, which makes it easier to oversee their activities.

In an interview, Colonel Terra claimed that after they were approached by the General-Commander, they connected with

> pastors of various regions of the state - capital, Greater São Paulo, and interior - and from this meeting we began the implementation, first with the publication of internal norms that did not exist covering the voluntary chaplaincy [...] Each commander understood they should make their own regional norms to regulate the work of the voluntary chaplaincy and how these services would be offered [...] There were more than 30 meetings and in each, operational commanders from all levels [...] were

> invited, as well as pastors from various churches who wished to participate [...] We gave a quick training to pastors and other members [...] This was done in all battalions and company headquarters of the state, as well in regional headquarters of the Military Police, in order to highlight the importance of working in partnership, in a vision of community policing (PMs de Cristo, 2021a).

The Police and Church project has developed on two fronts: first, it involves "cooperating with the Commanders in the management of human resources, offering emotional and spiritual assistance via the voluntary chaplaincy" (Lamin, 2021, p. 85). Here, the military chaplain operates inside Military Police barracks to assist individual police officers in so-called "'Moments with God', with counselling, also helping in funerary services of officials and [their] families, helping to reinforce values, helping in personal, family, and work crises, and helping to improve the organisational environment, avoiding internal crises" (PMs de Cristo, 2021a).

The second front aims at "extending the force of church volunteering to community challenges, acting in support of PMESP, for example in the mediation of conflict and social crises, especially [those] linked to vulnerable families, conflicts between neighbours and in schools with issues of crime and violence" (Lamin, 2021, p. 87). According to Colonel Terra, this "communitarian view" involved the "de facto approximation not only of the chaplain but the whole community he represents, with the Public Security System" (PMs de Cristo, 2021a). In order to understand the pacification strategy that underlies the Police and Church project, the next section turns to its ideological foundations as outlined by a number of publications authored by members of *PMs de Cristo*.

7.2 Unpacking the ideological doctrine of *PMs de Cristo*

The works published by *PMs de Cristo* constitute the theoretical backbone of Evangelical MCs, which can be read as a field guide for practitioners or, as I take it to be the case here, an elaborate Evangelical pacification doctrine. As will become clear, this doctrine offers many striking parallels with far-right themes, but in a way which is independent of electoral politics or party linkages. Instead, the argument here is that Evangelical pacification strengthens far-right politics via a grassroot model of order-building centred on a theocratic model of policing. Four books will be analysed in this section through thematic analysis. Instead of presenting the content of each book individually, they have been coded inductively into themes that consistently re-emerged throughout the reading process. The books analysed were:

1) *With the sacrifice of one's life: an exciting and daring approach on the noble and divine mission of being a police officer*, written by Colonel Terra, a retired police official and co-founder of *PMs de Cristo*, and Miguel da Silva, pastor and chaplain. The book was published in 2007 in a joint partnership with Campus Crusade for Christ, an American anti-communist organisation, the International Biblical Society, and the publisher *Mundo Cristão*;

2) *The Police and the Church: a partnership for community development and the fight against crime,* written by Colonel Alves (2012), a police official and member of *PMs de Cristo*. The book was based on his MA dissertation in the Military Police Academy of São Paulo, and became the baseline for the Police and Church project, establishing its conceptual foundations.

3) *Police and Church Project: Guide for the Implementation of a Voluntary Chaplaincy),* authored by Colonel Lamin, a police official and *PMs de Cristo* regional coordinator. The book was published in 2021 by *Publicações Pão Diário,* and it can be considered a base-building manual accumulating on years of experience of the Police and Church project, and offering a 'how-to' guide for Evangelical organisations to pursue similar projects in other regions.

4) *God's Mission for the Police Officer*, by Colonel Neto, a retired police official and pastor. The book was originally published in 1998 and received four reprints, the latest one published by *Publicações Pão Diário* in 2021.

Three major themes were extracted from this literature: 1) the sources of violence in society; 2) career valorisation; 3) and the transformation of the social fabric. My claim is that the first theme is contextual, it identifies and interprets the problem of violence and criminality in Brazil through Biblical exegesis. The second and third themes, instead, offer a solution to these social problems by presenting the dual task of pacification, which consists of a focus on penetrating the heart and mind of individual police officers (theme 2) and on church-police community relations (theme 3). Analysis of each theme will be complemented by interviews conducted with three members of *PMs de Cristo*.

7.2.1 The sources of violence in society

Violence and corruption appear in the books as all-encompassing and deeply rooted phenomena in society (Lamin, 2021, p. 59; Alves, 2012, p. 36), which are aggravated by the interest of "the big media in spreading out violence" (Alves, 2012, p. 119), and from groups who "distort human rights" to the benefit of criminals (Neto, 2021, p. 19). Discrediting academic interpretations, such as those that focus on stratification, urbanisation, or inequality, violence is interpreted rather as a consequence of sin, the "deviance from God", and "collusion with the thought of Satan" (Alves, 2012, p. 116; Neto, 2021, p. 22). Although Alves (2012, p. 118) comments that "cultural, educational, and political traits" are also responsible for violence, it can be assumed that it is the *lack* of Christian traits that can cause it, for "only with Jesus Christ, in his infinite transformative action of societies, concepts, paradigms, values, culture, and kingdoms, is it possible to change the violent scenario that one lives in specific places".

To prove his point, Alves (2012, p. 119) cites the documentaries produced by the Sentinel Group, which shows Evangelical 'missionary crusades' providing relief assistance and prayer campaigns to poor urban neighbourhoods in Latin America and Africa, and claims that "whole populations were impacted by the Word of God and by the Gospel of Jesus Christ, through which they were freed from the criminality that was previously rooted in their daily lives [...]". The Sentinel Group's founder, George Otis Jr., had coined the term 'spiritual mapping', which means "the activity of identifying demonic spirits and strongholds in a particular region, city, or country", and engaging in a 'strategic spiritual warfare' against these spirits through prayer and conversion (Coulter, 2021; Reynolds, 2010).

The authors fully echo the notion of spiritual warfare: "human beings are subjected to an eternal struggle represented by the duality between good and evil (Ephesus 6. 10-19)" (Alves, 2012, p. 12; Neto, 2021, p. 25). To win this war against evil, it is necessary to "use the spiritual weapons and all of God's armour" (Terra and da Silva, 2007, p. 67). Resonating the Sentinel Group's spiritual mapping, Alves (2012, p. 115) asserts that "Christian messianism fights tirelessly against those forces that do not want it to advance in spiritual territories. The heart of each person is the great front in this celestial struggle".

As discussed in previous chapters, the militarised discourse and the moralisation of the fight against crime within Evangelical circles are not new. The novelty is that *PMs de Cristo*

unites these themes into the doctrinal basis of the Evangelical MC, and spiritual warfare is thus mapped onto policing as a whole. The police is identified as members of the "axis of good" (Alves, 2012, p. 11), who "fights evil the most, hence why our police officers are the target of the enemies of our souls" (Lamin, 2021, p. 165; Terra and dos Santos, 2007, p. 19).

Given the pervasiveness of violence ('Evil') in society, Alves (2012, p. 16) asks, "why does the Church not maintain an efficient and effective communitarian relationship with the police force in the battle against the 'forces of evil'"? The answer given is because, in the last decades, both institutions had isolated themselves from the communities they were supposed to serve. On the side of the police, during the military dictatorship, it became "self-enclosed", and the "distancing between police and community resulted, on the other hand (and unfortunately), in misunderstanding, distrust, and even reciprocal repudiation" (Alves, 2012, p. 77). Echoing the concerns of police reformers in São Paulo during the democratic setting, the legacy of the dictatorship left "behavioural vestiges in the operational activity of the police [...]" (Alves, 2012, p. 78).

Likewise, the Church had also allegedly "encastled itself, sought to close its temples, and congregations, became a self-absorbed institution, turned towards worship and liturgical acts" (p. 78).[57] Alves (2012) acknowledges the role played by Liberation Theology's[58] base-building practices during the military regime, but assesses that it ultimately failed to deliver its promises on two grounds: first, its orientation was too "materialistic" and not "supernatural" enough:

> Even if it cures the sick, helps those in need, and gives bread to the hungry, it can never lose sight of the true mission of the Church: to act through the direction of the Holy Spirit of God, abandoning each and every practice of individualisms, fundamentalist spiritualisms, assistentialisms, and political involvement. It also cannot forgo transcendental, supernatural, and divine orientation in these operations (Alves, 2012, p. 70).

Second, because Liberation Theology became allegedly too politicised:

> Some behavioural deviation on the part of non-charismatics, turned towards political prospection, led Liberation Theology adepts to fall in traps that have cost their reputation, when, in the name of a socialising practice, they were seduced by the

[57] This is a revisionist position, as Evangelical churches were the most supportive of the military regime compared to any other religious institution in the country (Lacerda, 2022)

[58] Liberation Theology was a movement that emerged in the 1970s within the progressive sectors of the Catholic Church in Latin America and became key articulators of resistance against the military regime in Brazil. Liberation Theology places the struggle against poverty as a fundamental Biblical principle (Bento, 2018).

> power of politics, which led them to ultimately fall in love with the status of community leaders. Many communities derived from Base Ecclesial Communities, extremely well structured, collapsed when their religious leaders succumbed to the enchantments of politics (Alves, 2012, p. 73).

Thus, because of the military regime and the decline of leftist base-building, Alves (2012, p.17) claims that "the church began to lose space as an opinion former and the matrix of social organisation", making it now an urgent task to "recover its status quo". Something to which chaplain Mendes, speaking about the state of social decay in urban centres, concurred with: "it is not only the state to be blamed, the Church is also guilty, because we have the capacity and conditions to collaborate, to cooperate and help, why not? Can you imagine each church taking care of its neighbourhood?" (Mendes, chaplain, 2022).

Thus, *PMs de Cristo* leaders see it as their task to re-activate a 'communitarian vocation' held to be long lost by both the police and the Evangelical church. Therefore, the proposal of working together to overcome social problems, with the Police and Church project, needs to be seen as a base-building alternative to Catholic Liberation Theology as well as to public policies promoted by the state:

> The police, working together with churches, has more possibility to identify, prioritise, and **solve social problems such as criminality and social disorder, aside from gaining conditions to promote improvements in the quality of life and well-being of citizens, and orient political transformations** (Alves, 2012, p. 11; emphasis added).

This ambitious goal is further explained:

> It is up to the police to seek collaboration from the Church, and it is up to the Church [...] to collaborate with agents of the police force, to **help them become better professionals**. Besides this, in the philosophy of communitarian and citizen police, the integration between community and police should be more broad [...] Being the Church a member of this conglomerate called community, it can also become a communitarian reference in this relationship with the police, **not only mediating potential conflicts but also directly collaborating in the correction of that parcel of society that finds itself deviated from acceptable patterns of community behaviour.** Church and Police, therefore, are co-responsible for the solution of the problems of violence (Alves, 2012, p. 18; emphasis added).

In this manner, the doctrine outlined in the book offers a double function, one which is internal to the corporation, working individually with police officers to "help them become better professionals", and one which is external, working in partnership with the police to "solve social problems", "orient political transformations", and correct those "deviated from

acceptable patterns of community behaviour" (Alves, 2012, p. 18). Both of these functions come together in what Terra (2021b, p. 14) calls "full cycle chaplaincy": it "starts from the health of the individual and their family, passing through the improvement of the work environment and arriving at communitarian and cybernetic challenges, to the strengthening of peace culture" (Terra cited in Lamin, 2021, p. 14). Citing a well-known pastor in São Paulo about the role of social responsibility in the Evangelical church, the authors claim that "our call is to become pacifiers. More than ever, the world needs constructors of peace" (Alves, 2012, p. 59; Lamin, 2021, p. 61).

The main characteristic that emerges from reading *PMs de Cristo*'s interpretation of violence in society, and the strategy to solve it, is that their doctrine is distinctively anti-statist. The authors consider the state unable to deliver public goods to address key issues such as the valorisation of the police career and officer's mental health, as well as to tackle inequality or solve litigations in the criminal justice system (Lamin, 2021, p. 78; Alves, 2012, p. 17). "Brazil is sunk, right?", chaplain Mendes remarked about the state (Mendes, chaplain, 2022). Echoing this view, Alves (2012, p. 170) reflects on the importance of civil society organisations, such as businesses and churches, to take on the burden of improving public security:

> The great question that looms is this: are these not the responsibility of the state in its municipal, state, and federal spheres of action? With the Modern State, we cannot think like this any longer. It would be politically incorrect to imagine that the government would have the conditions to take care of all urban areas, especially in a city of gigantic dimensions such as São Paulo. Organised society should take this commitment for itself. Everyone wins!

Such position resembles what Schafer (cited in Griffith, 2021, p. 3) calls the anti-statist statism of postwar US Evangelical ideology, which "combined denunciations of liberal public policy with growing support of the national security state, the politics of economic growth, and public aid for religious agencies". The key difference here is that in the case of *PMs de Cristo*'s pacification doctrine, Evangelicals are not outside actors voicing support for violent methods of social control: through the MC, they are simultaneously *the police and the church*. In a laudatory MA dissertation about *PMs de Cristo*, dos Santos (2018, p. 13), a former police officer and pastor, reflects positively on this merger as the "promotion of citizenship and the overcoming of distrust with the police" among the "popular layers". He further contends that

> the military-religious discipline and its secular and divine conception overlap as a mission that appears as an alternative to the fissures of the state, precisely in its

> incapacity of managing public security policies. It is no accident that *PMs de Cristo* present themselves as a less violent alternative to deal with situations of inequality and urban violence. The evangelical police officer makes his work an extension of his evangelising mission (dos Santos, 2018, p. 88).

In this sense, this "military-religious discipline" - or Christian Militarism more broadly - emerges as a "democratic alternative" to public security policies in poor urban neighbourhoods.

7.2.2 Career valorisation

The ideal of social peace brought by *PMs de Cristo* can only be put in practice if, first, the police corporation is internally pacified and its evangelising mission in communities are adequately understood by police officers themselves. The first task of Evangelical pacification from below is thus to turn inwards to the police corporation, with the MC functioning as a force multiplier in the pursuit of ideological cohesion. According to Lamin (2021, p. 74), "the issue of spirituality is, provenly, relevant and intrinsic to a series of critical events faced by the Military Police when it surrounds the troop's morale". This is explored in the texts as career valorisation (Alves, 2012, p. 14; Lamin, 2021, p. 73; Terra and da Silva, 2007, p. 7)

The first element of career valorisation is to provide theological justifications for policing. According to Souza,

> God is the author of authority. The word of God says that no authority exists on Earth without being sanctioned by God. God is very connected to this issue of authority. I believe the police officer is one of the barriers, one of the instruments of God to fence against crime, against the attacks of Satan in the physical domain (Souza, chaplain, 2021).

The books talk about the police as "God's servant" who in "the spiritual world is also empowered with spiritual authority (Neto, 2021, p. 14, p. 26), or as "instruments of God" in the "restoration of order, peace, and hope", striving to "oppose to the works of Evil theft; death, and destruction" (Terra and da Silva, 2007, p. 19, 66). The exegetic tactic to justify this is to cite the Book of Romans, Chapter 13, written by the apostle Paul to the church in Rome, which claims that

> there is no authority except that which God has established [...] Consequently, whoever rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgement on themselves. For rulers hold no terror for those who do right, but for those who do wrong. Do you want to be free from fear of the one in authority? Then do what is right and you will be commended. For the one in authority is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for rulers do not bear the sword for no reason (The Bible, n.d).

Neto (2021, p. 23) illustrates the contemporaneity of this passage by using the Living Bible translation of the scripture, which replaces the term "authority" for "policeman" - an adaptive stretch which also proved popular among US Evangelicals utilising the same edition (Griffith, 2021, p. 6). Justifications of violence are consistent throughout the books. Alves (2012, pp. 111-112) talks of positive violence, "employed to conquer the Kingdom of God", and of warfare, "which served to fulfil God's promises to his people". The wars of the Bible, according to him, were "holy wars", which means they "were the fulfilment of prophecies, gifts, and not merely the pursuit of power, force, and domination, for it is God who goes in front of the battles, and not the violent desires of men" (Alves, 2012, p. 113). Speaking about the sanctity of these wars, he then establishes that "Our soldiers of today, protectors of human rights and the Homeland, are also sanctified by God" (Alves, 2012, p. 114).

Terra and da Silva (2007, p. 64) suggest that as a last recourse, the police officer "might see himself required to make use of lethal force, causing, unfortunately, the death of the aggressor", although they alert that this should be "accidental and not sought after or desired in his life". Neto (2012) is even more instructive. If a police officer is to kill someone, "this action should be supported by one of the exclusions of unlawfulness.[59] In this case, the officer, by killing the aggressor of society, will act exercising the judgement of God against him" (Neto, 2012, p. 32). Such acts of 'legalised' killings are not to be questioned. Referring approvingly to death convictions with stoning as reported in the book of Leviticus, Neto (2012, p. 32) says the means were legitimate "simply because they were in the exercise of justice determined by God, acting in strict compliance with the legal duty". Applying this logic to present-day Brazil, he then makes the case for authoritarian methods that subvert any form of democratic control over the police:

[59] While the 'exclusion of unlawfulness' was a key policy in Bolsonaro's electoral campaign in 2018, in practice this has existed in the Brazilian Criminal Code since 1941, granting exceptional powers to police officers in the so-called 'resistance to arrest' procedure, whereby an officer who has killed a supposed criminal on grounds of legitimate defence testifies as a veritable witness in the police report, leading to the exclusion of unlawfulness in registries (Brazil, 1941, Art. 292).

> Although we do not have the death penalty in our penal code, the police officer will, in the exercise of his function, and often in a matter of seconds, have to judge and, if necessary, convict [someone] to death. **He, as an officer, carries on something which no judge in the world can do: to judge and simultaneously execute the sentence** (Neto, 2012, p. 32; emphasis added).

The books are vague and ambiguous about what constitutes the limit to the use of physical force. The authors seem to assume that the mere fact of *being* a Christian police officer and *following* Biblical principles as sufficient parameters to what divides 'moral' from 'immoral' behaviour. The many testimonies found in the texts about events that ended with lethality are simply interpreted, after the fact, as divinely sanctioned, or, as Neto (2021, p. 33) claims of his own experience, when an armed criminal was killed by his colleague, "we exercised God's judgement against him". But what about those officers who *do* commit deviance?

Police deviance is seen as an outcome of spiritual warfare, that is, the works of Evil in society. Because of this, the police "ends up becoming brutish, insensible and rude in face of the savagery of violence and crime and due to their constant involvement with death and danger" (Alves, 2012, p. 126). When an officer commits a crime, however, "he stops serving the Kingdom of God and becomes a servant of darkness" (Neto, 2012, p. 27). However, while *PMs de Cristo* believes that marginalised communities need to be subjected to 'spiritual mapping', that is, the action of identifying Evil spirits in a whole territory - which equates to further stigmatising these communities as producers of violence and crime - the same logic does not apply to the police corporation: "our objective is not, however, to demonstrate that the police institution should go through a complete spiritual-corporative purification [...]" (Alves, 2012, p. 14). Instead, blame for police violence is dislocated to individualised behaviour: "when an officer makes a mistake, it is not the police institution that was mistaken, but the police officer" (Neto, 2012, p. 24). According to Souza,

> [...] I do not see any problem, in the current constitutional framework we have, that small deviances occur with professionals. I'm seeing a media article that an officer killed someone in a party in São Paulo. The officer will respond to his acts judicially. It was not the Military Police who killed him [...] I do not see any problem with these events that may happen, [they are] typical of human beings (Souza, chaplain, 2022).

The books also emphasise the need to strengthen the family unit as a prescriptive against deviance. The family is considered the "core of balance in all society. It is in the family that the ethical moral values and behaviour of citizens are sealed" (Alves, 2012, p. 130). Further,

the family is the officers' "foundation" (Costa, MC coordinator, 2022), it is where they find "strength to fulfil God's call to serve their community" (Terra and da Silva, 2007, p. 7), and where the principle of authority is to be found (Neto 2021, p. 23). The books and interviews give many examples of how military chaplains were able to address family problems - divorce, sickness, alcohol or drug abuse - by strengthening the family through counselling, Bible studies, and prayer campaigns

This 'familial framework' is central to Evangelical's attitude towards law-and-order politics (Grifith, 2021). According to Lacerda (2019, p. 202), the emphasis on strengthening the traditional family institution functions as a "compensatory moralism for the loss of quality of life derived from neoliberal policies". For Evangelicals, the best way to treat social problems is through family politics, that is, a focus on private authority and individual agency rather than collective forms of solidarity. *PMs de Cristo* effectively incorporates this logic as a public mental health service within police institutions.

Finally, career valorisation is pursued through a highly sentimentalised discourse that seeks to penetrate the hearts and minds of police officers (Grifith, 2021). Sentimentalisation involves an appeal to feelings and emotions, tropes of a loving and forgiving God, personalised messages of hope, and exhortations of an indivisible bond connecting the family and the nation to a divine purpose. According to Neto (2021, pp. 90-91), one can only succeed in evangelising an institution by sharing its member's "interests, anxieties, emotions, frustrations, objectives, etc". Alves (2012, p. 126) acknowledges that "some officers suffer quietly" as "they are instructed not to expose feelings. The officer thinks he should be superior to these emotional crises, and this feeds ever more the feeling of oppression that consumes him without truce".

As such, the spiritual message needs to "penetrate the heart of man" (Souza, chaplain, 2022) as the "heart of each person is the great front of this celestial battle" (Alves, 2012, p. 115). This is acknowledged throughout the books. Colonel Lamin (2021, p. 108) offers an insight into the "techniques of getting close to an officer's heart", which includes: learning the "Q Code" (military vocabulary), offering breakfasts, staying around in the barrack after the Moment with God sessions, "drinking coffee for 10 or 15 minutes". Souza claimed that it is during these moments "friendships are formed", officers engage in "feedback with the pastor", and "bridges are built for counselling" (Souza, chaplain, 2022). These tactics are thus used to approximate the chaplain further to the officer outside the context of the military barracks.

7.2.3 The transformation of the social fabric

The transformation of the police is just the first step in a much more ambitious goal. Alves (2012, p. 138) exhorts the higher command of the Military Police to implement a "global and corporative programme" where police units could visit churches in order to learn "the true spirit of [the] citizen police", and to "convince people to collaborate with policing in the fight against criminality and violence in a conscious and participatory way". This project, which as seen, was implemented across the state of São Paulo in 2015, is represented as one of "guaranteeing the social nomos" (Alves, 2012, p. 14) or, as Costa put it, "the transformation of the social fabric" (Costa, MC coordinator, 2022).

In an interview to an Evangelical news platform, colonel Terra claimed that the police of Christ

> can make a difference acting as a facilitator and communitarian mobiliser, approximating his friends, his church, and his community to the neighbourhood's police unit, publicising services, websites, and positive actions as well as inviting people to participate in the local Community Security Council. He should position himself as an instrument of God, placed by Him to promote peace and protect people (Gospel Prime, 2011).

This 'communitarian potential' is emphasised all throughout the books and interviews. It revolves on the police and the chaplain's capacity to work with the principle of "active citizenship" and "communitarian protagonism", which can help generate a sense of "belonging" among citizens (Costa, MC coordinator, 2022). The chaplain should have the role of a social broker between police, church and community, the one capable of articulating the "communitarian resources to fight negative social conditions" (Alves, 2012, p. 15) and to aid the police "in its strategic planning in the neighbourhood" (Souza, chaplain, 2022). The range of actions are broad: community policing, conflict mediation, participation in Community Security Councils, charity, educational campaigns, and prayer campaigns. (Terra 2021b, p. 13).

The chaplain is further considered an agent of democracy who, "by interacting with people, understanding problems, identifying opportunities", can tackle "communitarian challenges" (Costa, MC coordinator, 2022). Because of the chaplain's natural vocation in "respecting people, human rights, understanding diversity" and "these types of class conflict", there is a window of opportunity to "become a communitarian leader", for people to have an

"awakening on what it means to construct public security collectively" (Costa, MC coordinator, 2022).

By identifying and targeting social problems together, both police and church have the ability to promote "public policies in defence of the Brazilian family" (Alves, 2012, p. 141), and to "rescue lives that are not in agreement with the moral and ethical values of Christ" (Lamin, 2021, p. 70). This is especially important during so-called 'Operations of Saturation with the Deployment of Special Troops' in marginalised communities, which resemble pacification operations like the ones in the *Unidades de Polícia Pacificadoras* (Pacifying Police Units – UPPs) project in Rio de Janeiro. In these, according to Alves (2012, p. 160), the church has the opportunity to cooperate in "social actions and citizenship incentive" as elite units deploy force to control criminality.

One such operation is shown in the documentary A Force for Change (2007). Without giving details of which operation this was or its whereabouts, the narrator explains that these are pursued in areas with "high rates of criminality" that demand occupation by "heavily armed troops" (A Force for Change, 2007). However, in order to "obtain success, brute force is not sufficient. It requires another type of "specialist so that the conquered territory is not lost" (A Force for Change, 2007). Colonel Joviano Lima, then commander of the Military Police's Shock Troop Battalion, explains that after the occupation, methods of social assistance (social-civic actions or ACISOs) would be normally put in place, but in this case, "we noticed that the social aspect was not enough", and thus he invited *PMs de Cristo* to cooperate with "emotional and spiritual assistance to adults and children". He concludes by highlighting the "importance of bringing concepts of public order completely based on a Christian ethic" (A Force for Change, 2007).

In our interview, Costa laid out the politically transformative potential of this type of partnership: by mobilising the network of "the good people, you end up automatically neutralising the growth crime and evil people", and when this becomes normalised, the chaplain also aids in the "formation of good community leaders":

> Instead of having, let's say, a sick community leader who is only interested in power, the chaplain ends up helping to form a leader who in fact loves society because of the love of Christ [...] the chaplain also cooperates for [the creation of] a leadership that is not, say, addicted, arrogant, self-interested, who is there only for power, political interests, or even party interests, instead of the essence of democracy which would be real love for the people, the land, the neighbourhood. So this awakening of pure and simple love is another aspect of the communitarian chaplaincy, the formation of good leaders, at all levels (Costa, MC coordinator, 2022).

This network of 'good people' is a precondition for "evil not to root in public spaces with corruption and deviation of all sorts", and if this is sustained, then "governments can come [and go], parties can come [and go], but you have something pure, which is democracy in action, at frontline line" (Costa, MC coordinator, 2022). Moreover, this would mean "you do not depend on the government, you depend on forming local leaders who will supervise the government, because this is what democracy is, you need supervision, public power cannot do as it wishes [...]" (Costa, MC coordinator, 2022). *PMs de Cristo*'s ideal of democracy thus overlaps with the logic of policing, wherein people participate in the democratic process by being "very vigilant" and "attentive" (Costa, MC coordinator, 2022). This permanent state of suspicion against crime and corruption is why they see the police as the "frontline of democracy" or "the only bridge between civilisation and the underworld of outlaws" (Terra and da Silva, 2007, p. 86, 26). Alves (2012, p. 30) further elaborates on this democratic ideal:

> What is at stake is the exercise of power [...] the responsibility to manage and solve community problems should be shared among all involved in the policing process. In the full participation [of citizens] in this partnership, there is freedom of decisions and complete communion of thought between civilians and the military.

This participatory framework largely resonates with the demand for popular participation inscribed in many contemporary pacification doctrines, which aim to achieve political legitimacy in a wider counter-insurgency rationale (Schrader, 2017), as described in Chapter 2.[60] According to Neocleous (2017, pp. 25-26), empowering 'the people' in the architecture of security implies making them intelligence gatherers: "The intelligence needed is intelligence on the population, possessed by the population, and to be gathered by the population itself on itself". Evangelical pacification is instrumental to this, especially in community policing projects "which require permanent people-police interaction, information, and education" (Alves, 2012, p. 28; see also Grifith, 2021).

The church is a crucial actor in intelligence gathering because of its penetration in communities: "Many of these [religious] people have long lived on the same neighbourhood and know the history of the community in each region - and it is possible to take advantage of this knowledge to construct the profile of locals and criminals that exist in the area" (Alves,

[60] Participation is a key concept in colonel Terra's MA dissertation about community policing, developed in the Military Police Academy. The dissertation is not publicly available, but the theme of participation is covered by Alves (2012, p. 47).

2012, p. 167). Given the strong work of evangelisation with criminals by Evangelical churches, "the citizen police could integrate itself with church members and receive useful information for the control of criminality and violence in the region" (Alves, 2012, p. 168). Chaplain Mendes commented on his own experience working with community policing during the beginning of the Police and Church project:

> we were together with the police, participating in research, publicising, helping in reports. Can you imagine the power of this project? You have the police car there in the neighbourhood together with a good leadership [...] partnering with the police in reports, observing everything that's occurring. It was something incredible" (Mendes, chaplain, 2022).

A final issue that appeared in the texts and interviews were about chaplains functioning as an operational back-up for policing in cases such as domestic violence, conflict mediation, and drug abuse. The logic is to free patrolling officers from duties that "are not of police nature and can be solved via pastoral counselling" (Lamin, 2021, p. 93), but which, if unaddressed, could "generate death and destruction" (Costa, MC coordinator, 2022). Alves (2012, p. 138) elaborates the step-by-step of this process:

> the police takes these problems to his chief-commander; or makes use of some already existing protocol [...] to request permission to the people who are suffering with specific problems, then indicates a church from the neighbourhood that is registered in the police unit as partner in community actions.

The activities proposed in these cases range from philanthropy, through to assistentialism, orientation and counselling, referral to competent institutions and follow-ups, and to "sponsoring internment in support houses [therapeutic communities] for chemical dependents or vulnerable people" (Alves, 2012, p. 141). In other words, the Evangelical social welfare infrastructure can be mobilised to make policing more effective. Chaplain Mendes provided a detailed account of an example of operational back-up, where the chaplain's skills were put in use to aid policing. During a night patrol in the region of Ribeirão Pires, chaplain Rafael was called by the commander of the 30th Battalion asking "if he could help because we have a case we believe is of spiritual nature. We have four police cars and cannot immobilise a woman there". When the chaplain arrived at the woman's house,

> it was obviously verified that it was a matter of demonic possession, the woman literally flew at him. He raised his hands and asked God to reprehend that spirit, like

> in the Biblical experiences. She then dropped on the floor, he raised her, she came back to normal (Mendes, chaplain, 2022).

Then, the chaplain reportedly had "an orientation from God", a vision about a child, to which the woman realised it was her grandson, who was found in a room with a "fractured arm, possibly because of the reactions of this woman". The chaplain then brought the child to the officers stationed outside the house, however, because it was considered a spiritual matter, no charges were pressed against the woman: "let her follow on with her life in peace, it is solved" (Mendes, chaplain, 2022). This testimony shows an instance of dislocation of authority from the criminal justice system to Evangelical MCs, blurring the lines of the secular character of the state. It is not clear whether this was an isolated case, however, chaplain Mendes said it was one "among many other experiences that have occurred within police battalions" (Mendes, chaplain, 2022). During my fieldwork visit to *PMs de Cristo'*s headquarters, I was shown a room, equipped with many desktop computers and headsets, that was being set up to function like a call centre for chaplains to connect directly with officers.

7.3 The turning point: professionalisation and the far-right political agenda

This section demonstrates the parallel process of professionalisation of the Police and Church project with the construction of a political agenda. As the activities of *PMs de Cristo* became more professional and rationalised, gaining the trust of many Military Police commanders, the group also became increasingly radicalised to the right. The consequences were twofold: one the one hand, *PMs de Cristo* became the main reference for the expansion of voluntary MCs outside of São Paulo, advising similar projects across the country and networking with other groups to strengthen the Evangelical MC; on the other, it became an important articulator of far-right campaigning within security forces.

In recent years, *PMs de Cristo*' voluntary MC has become integrated within police commands across the state of São Paulo. In 2017, the group was reportedly operating in all 22 administrative regions of the state and working alongside 500 Evangelical churches from different denominations, while 1,500 chaplains had been trained (Lamin, 2021, p. 85). In that same year, the General-Command of the Military Police of São Paulo published an internal norm regulating voluntary MCs for all of its subsidiary organisations, stipulating general principles of conduct and leaving it to each unit Commander to accept or reject religious

assistance, as well as to create new regulations as needed (PMESP, 2017). Although this norm has given a legal backup for voluntary MCs to operate, interviewees also mentioned they had been lobbying with the state government for a more robust normative framework (Mendes, chaplain, 2022; Costa, MC coordinator, 2022).

A good indication of professionalisation is that *PMs de Cristo* has rationalised activities by creating bureaucratic procedures to maximise and evaluate efficiency. Chaplains are required to write reports about the service they provide, which are then compiled in data sets and statistics and sent to the commanders of police units. Between June 2017 and April 2021, more than 60,000 reports were produced by chaplains: nearly 28,000 in the city of São Paulo and its metropolitan region, around 31,000 in the interior of the state, and around 1,400 reports in subsidiary organisations of the Military Police (Lamin, 2021, p. 94-95). However, Souza said this might not be representative of the whole sum as many chaplains fail to write reports (Souza, chaplain, 2022).

Another relevant dimension of this is the application of surveys to receive feedback on their activities. According to Costa, *PMs de Cristo* had conducted three internal surveys with more than 2,000 officers, and "all had the same level of satisfaction, 95% of interest that the project should continue, and [with] people from different religions" (Costa, MC coordinator, 2022). In a smaller survey conducted by Lamin (2021, p. 113-120), officers pointed out that, among the themes they wished to learn the most were "the return of Jesus", "day-to-day Biblical passages", "the importance of the family", "about other religions", "on the death of the flesh", and "to speak of Romans 13:4", which is about submission to divinely-sanctioned authority (Lamin, 2021, p. 117).

Research has also been conducted with police commanders. Alves (2012), for instance, surveyed the perception of commanders before the implementation of the Church and Police Project, in order to gain a better grasp of what they demanded from Evangelical churches. Answers varied from demands for churches to participate in community security councils and in official military ceremonies, to bring "criminal information to the police", aid in social projects, reinforce moral values about "good and evil", promote "good customs", and provide "moral support, avoiding destructive criticisms to the corporation" (Alves, 2012, pp. 149-154).

The Military Police, in turn, has conducted its own research about the effects of *PMs de Cristo*'s activities in the barracks. During my visit to their headquarters, I was given a list of 21 master's and doctoral dissertations conducted in the Military Police Academy. Some of

these studies include: “the impact of prayer in the evangelisation, wellbeing, emotional balance, and professional valorisation of the Military Police”; “The ‘Pray for your Police’ campaign as a facilitating instrument of Community Policing and Social Communication”; “The influence of the lack of religiosity in the conduct of the Military Police”; and “The Strengthening of spirituality of the Military Police, helping in their professional balance”.[61] According to Mendes, *PMs de Cristo*’s headquarters has been used for Viva examinations of research produced in the Military Police Academy on the role of religious assistance (Mendes, chaplain, 2022).

In this context of professionalisation and high prestige with police commanders, *PMs de Cristo* has become a vector for the expansion and strengthening of voluntary MCs outside of São Paulo. According to Souza, “we have the motto of São Paulo being the locomotive in Brazil and of being the first, and thank God we are doing that” (Souza, chaplain, 2022). Interviewees reported advising and training other Evangelical organisations, such as in the state of Paraíba and Minas Gerais (Mendes, chaplain, 2022; PMs de Cristo, 2021a). This outward activity has involved partnerships with other organisations and the federal government. Lamin’s (2021) book, for example, was published in partnership with *Ministérios Pão Diário* (Our Daily Bread Ministries - MPD), a transnational church that has been actively involved in popularising Voluntary MCs in the country. Under Bolsonaro’s government, *PMs de Cristo* was a key contributor to the Working Group that lobbied for spiritual assistance to be transformed into a public security policy, a topic covered in the next chapter.

Although the enmeshment of police, religion and politics has marked the expansion of *PMs de Cristo* since the early 2000s, their radicalisation to the right has been more pronounced in the last few years. In September 2017, for instance, *PMs de Cristo* mobilised police officers to campaign against proposals to reform the Human Rights Education State Plan at the State Assembly, which would include greater participation of social movements and labour unions in the elaboration of the police curriculum. In an audio message that leaked to the press, Colonel Terra said he “received a special request from some police commanders of the [high] command” to mobilise Evangelicals to vote against the proposal (Ponte, 2017). He exhorted “leaders, pastors from the Police-Church project, and from *PMs de Cristo*” to oppose “dangerous” people who had supposedly “infiltrated the human rights council” (Pragmatismo

[61] These studies are not publicly available. I requested *PMs de Cristo* to access some of them but received no response.

Político, 2017). In his own words, "our intelligence system realised they are mobilising many evil people" (Furtado, 2017). He continued:

> These dangerous leftists, who distort the best values and respect of the human person [...] want to infiltrate teachers, dangerous and complicated people from human rights social movements [...] to manipulate the police [...] Let's show up in large numbers. If we are a majority, we will win [...] We request support from the network of good, the good people, as we need to conquer this territory. I count with you and your prayers. It is time for this Army to wake up. God bless! (Pragmatismo Político, 2017).

One week before the second round of the 2018 presidential election, *PMs de Cristo* launched a nation-wide prayer campaign for the blessing of the elections, calling it the *Pátria Amada* ('Beloved Nation') movement.[62] In a video, Colonel Terra delivered a message dressed in military uniform with the Brazilian flag in the background: "we are living a historical moment of our nation, the home stretch of the elections and second round [...] it is the moment where we, the Church, as body of Christ, as Army of God, need to position ourselves". Without directly mentioning Bolsonaro, the prayer campaign revolved on the idea of the need of Christian unity in face of the coming project to "reconstruct the nation" and bring "spiritual, moral, political, social, educational, and economic change in Brazilian society" (PMs de Cristo, 2018a, 2018b).

Illustration 2: *PMs de Cristo* invites Evangelicals for election prayer campaign

Source: PMs de Cristo (2018a).

[62] *Pátria Amada* is a far-right trope borrowed from the national anthem that was also utilised as the official slogan of Bolsonaro's government: "*Pátria Amada Brasil*".

In 2019, *PMs de Cristo* organised the XIX National Congress of the *União de Militares Cristãos Evangélicos do Brasil* (Union of Evangelical Christian Military of Brazil - UMCEB), an event covered in the last chapter. The theme of the event was titled "*the impact of the valorisation of the family and security forces' professionals in the culture of peace*". Watching the video recordings of the event, what stands out the most is how explicitly aligned it was with *Bolsonarismo*, bringing together Evangelical military associations, institutional and voluntary MCs, public security authorities, and far-right politicians (UMCEB, 2019b). Colonel Marcelo Salles, who was then the General Commander of the São Paulo Military Police, recognised on the occasion the importance of "God's evangelisation" and the role of "spirituality in our lives as Military Police" (UMCEB, 2019b). Salles, now a city councillor in the city of São Paulo, promoted an event in June 2023 in the City Council celebrating the 31st anniversary of *PMs de Cristo* (Câmara Municipal de São Paulo, 2023).

A news report from 2021, titled "Evangelical officers foment *Bolsonarismo* online and in the barracks", showed that *PMs de Cristo* organised a series of prayer campaigns and demonstrations espousing far-right viewpoints throughout 2020 and 2021, often following critical events of the far-right government (Galhardi and Vieira, 2021). For instance, a day after Bolsonaro called to impeach a Supreme Court Judge who was investigating criminal activities of his inner circle, *PMs de Cristo* published on its Facebook account a reflection on the relationship between Christian subjects and governments, claiming, as an indirect reference to the judge promoting the investigations, that there was a limit to obeying those who wish to "supplant the authority of Jesus Christ" (PMs de Cristo, 2021b).

Their activism intensified in 2022, especially during the electoral cycle, when Bolsonaro was running for re-election. In September, *PMs de Cristo* launched a new, week-long prayer campaign in celebration of the 200 years of Brazil's independence, with daily lectures by prominent Evangelical pastors transmitted in the group's YouTube account. The theme of the second last lecture was about the upcoming elections, delivered by pastor Claudio Duarte, a radical Bolsonaro supporter, who used Biblical metaphors to warn about the importance of making the correct decisions during the elections. Then, Colonel Terra appeared exhorting Christians to act in unity during the elections as an Army at war:

> we are the Army of God and we must organise ourselves. Why does only crime and evil organise themselves, while we, who are the Army of God, are shy? In this electoral moment, where the nation is being besieged from all sides [...] we Christians need to be the light and salt of the Earth. But it is necessary, to reach the nation, a united Army, for a soldier does not win a war alone, it is the assembly of soldiers aligned under the command of the War Staff (PMs de Cristo, 2022).

Before the second round of the election, which would have the standoff between Lula and Bolsonaro for the presidency, Colonel Lamin, one of the intellectuals of *PMs de Cristo*'s pacification doctrine, delivered two presentations at Evangelical churches titled "*The dangers of Cultural Marxism*". In one of them, speaking on behalf of *PMs de Cristo* and dressed in military uniform, he claimed that "Christianity and security forces preach for morality", while leftist ideology preaches for "amorality", that is, "the negation of morality" (Pib em Birigui, 2022). He added, "this philosophical agenda, which in my view, is just an instrument of something larger, something global which we call the globalist agenda [...] seeks to deconstruct Christian morality" (Pib em Birigui, 2022). After invoking a series of far-right tropes and conspiracy theories, he alerted the audience:

> Every Brazilian who will choose a party that follows this Marxist doctrine, progressivist, socialist, or communist, call it what you want, when choosing these parties, you are saying 'yes' to all of this [...] You are saying yes to drugs, yes to abortion, yes to gender identity, yes to the extrication of criminals, yes to the criminalisation of the police and victimisation of criminals [...] So be very careful, speak to people, especially those who are still undecided or wish to nullify their vote [...] We cannot omit ourselves, because whoever omits has already chosen sides. So I leave this alert for the church, to preserve the moral, the Christian morality, the morals of Brazil, the morals of Brazilians. Amen, Church (Pib em Birigui, 2022).

The parallels of this kind of radicalisation to the right with the *PMs de Cristo*'s pacification doctrine covered in the previous section are striking, especially with regards to notions of 'moral regeneration'. However, the important thing to note is that whereas public manifestations such as the ones above have stopped since the defeat of Bolsonaro in the last elections, the Police and Church project and the Evangelical pacification doctrine on which it is based, have continued. This has two implications: first, that far-right discourse mobilised by *PMs de Cristo* was already previously anchored in the group's conception of social order, which in turn was explicitly pursued in the Police and Church project, established in 2015; second, it also means that far-right politics has other mechanisms of perpetuation and strengthening: inside the barracks with micro-solidarity networks, and with community policing strategies where the police partners up with Evangelical MCs to bring about a transformation of social order.

Conclusion

This chapter has explored the origins, growth, and institutionalisation of *PMs de Cristo* in the state of São Paulo. By analysing the group's Evangelical pacification doctrine, it was argued that *PMs de Cristo* has become an intellectual incubator of the merger between Evangelical ideology and militarised policing. As demonstrated, this doctrine has been put in practice via the Police and Church project implemented in 2015 by the Military Police of São Paulo. Further, the high commands of the Military Police have realised the value of Evangelical MCs have to further their objectives, and politicians have embraced *PMs de Cristo* for their political potential.

It was argued that Evangelical pacification has a double task. First, by working internally with police officers through providing spiritual assistance and articulating a politics of career valorisation, pacification from below centres on the justification of police authority and police violence as divinely sanctioned. The main consequence of this is to shift discussions of structural issues related to police violence to individual responsibility, which can be supposedly corrected via spiritual interventions**.** Second, Evangelical pacification seeks to build long-standing community relationships that serve a mediating purpose for the police, alleviating tensions with marginalised communities, generating consensus that police officers are trustworthy leaders, and preparing terrain for a 'moral regeneration' of territories affected by violence. The chaplain is a key figure in this outward activity, acting as a broker of police-church-community relations and as someone who, together with the police, can bring about a "transformation of the social fabric' (Costa, MC coordinator, 2022) and a process of "political change" (Alves, 2012).

In the last few years, the expansion of the Police and Church project across the state of São Paulo resulted in a parallel process of professionalisation of *PMs de Cristo* and its political radicalisation to the right. On the one hand, *PMs de Cristo* exported its ideas to other states and became an important actor in the nationalisation of the Evangelical MC. At the same time, it increasingly articulated a far-right campaign within the security forces aligned with *Bolsonarismo*.

Crucially, *PMs de Cristo*'s pacification doctrine points to a process of far-right order-building that goes beyond *Bolsonarismo*. Mobilising ideals of militarised warfare against 'evil', moral regeneration of marginalised territories through Christian ethics and discipline, anti-

statism, and policing as the quintessential function of democracy, Evangelical pacification condenses the far-right's political agenda into a model of grassroot base-building unmediated by party linkages, law, and democratic accountability. The implication is the reproduction of authoritarian modes of policing with theocratic undertones.

From the point of view of pacification, this points to the strengthening of bottom-up, decentralised strategies of imposing the dominant social order by merging Evangelical ideology with militarism as a strategy of social control. The next chapter shows the advancement of this strategy by analysing another voluntary MC project, *Pão Diário Segurança Pública*, by the MPD church, and how it made its way to state institutions and became adopted as a public policy during Bolsonaro's government (2019-2022).

Chapter 8 - Evangelical Pacification goes National: *Ministérios Pão Diário* and the Rise and Fall of 'Spiritual Assistance' as a Federal Security Policy

Introduction

In the last chapter, it was shown the construction of *PMs de Cristo*'s pacification doctrine, which emerged from bottom-up articulations between Evangelical and police actors. This chapter analyses the process of consolidation of Evangelical MCs at the national level, in particular by looking at how the far-right attempted to institutionalise Christian Militarism as an ideology and policy promoted by the state. Based on undisclosed documents acquired through a freedom of information request to the *Ministério de Justiça e Segurança Pública* (Ministry of Justice and Public Security - MJSP) in June 2022 and August 2023, and fieldwork interviews, the chapter traces how government officials pushed to construct a security policy that would promote voluntary MCs during Temer's and Bolsonaro's government. Key to this endeavour were the activities developed by *Ministérios Pão Diário* (Our Daily Bread Ministries, MPD), a transnational Evangelical church that built a structure to support MCs nationally and engage them in a process of professionalisation and standardisation. With its activism based on *PMs de Cristo*'s doctrine, MPD became an important player in the institutionalisation of spiritual assistance as a public security policy under Bolsonaro's government.

The main argument to be developed is that MPD was not only pushing for the development of this policy to strengthen the Evangelical MC at the level of the federal government, but it effectively became its main stakeholder in what can be understood as a process of state capture, mimicking the functions of the state as promoter, funder, regulator, and implementer of that policy. Moreover, although the policy entered a period of crisis after being exposed by the media in 2022 - prompting an investigation by federal prosecutors that ultimately led to its demise - it did not stop MPD from expanding its project. Thus, the analytical scope of this chapter - and therefore of the thesis - ends with the acknowledgement that Christian Militarism has found novel ways of growing beyond the electoral performance of the far-right, through indirect institutional channels, such as the ones described in previous chapters.

Section 8.1 charts the political and institutional opening the federal government provided for the expansion of Evangelical voluntary MCs nationally during the offices of Temer (2016-2018) and Bolsonaro (2019-2022), which was largely architected by Evangelical government officials and institutional chaplains, who pushed for the creation of a 'Spiritual Assistance' policy project in MJSP. Section 8.2 follows the development of MPD from an American-based ministry to a transnational organisation with a strong footing in Latin America and Brazil. It analyses the creation of its MC-support project and how it became the main articulator of the Spiritual Assistance public policy. Section 8.3 analyses the services and products developed by the Spiritual Assistance policy, and how it became entangled in the politicisation of the police. Section 8.4 explores the political crisis that ensued when the policy was brought to public knowledge, resulting in its demise after the defeat of Bolsonaro in the 2022 elections.

8.1 The need of a 'moral and religious re-education': the construction of Spiritual Assistance as a public policy

As discussed in Chapter 5, in 2018 security became a priority in the political agenda. The hard push to the right in security policies under Michel Temer's government signalled that the humanist and progressive aspects of democratic pacification were being subsided in favour of more authoritarian and militarised approaches (Sá e Silva, 2017; Morellato and dos Santos, 2020). In this context, debates about the federalisation of public security policies - traditionally operated by state governments - gained new traction. With many states undergoing fiscal crises, security actors were demanding greater participation of the federal government in the architecture of public security and a predictable budget mechanism to invest in equipment, intelligence, and personnel.

Moreover, with increasing episodes of police mutinies and the fact that the rates of suicide by police officers were surmounting deaths in operations, the federal government was pressured to create a national policy to valorise security professionals. Temer's government began instrumentalising this agenda ahead of the 2018 elections (Manso and Dias, 2019; Soares, 2019). The creation of the Extraordinary Ministry of Public Security, in February 2018, which dismembered the Ministry of Justice, was part of this wider politicisation of security (Lessa, 2018; Santos, 2018). Temer's minister of Defence, Raul Jungmann, of the *Partido Popular Socialista* (Popular Socialist Party - PPS), was re-allocated as interim minister of Public Security.

Under Jungmann, a window of opportunity was opened for Evangelicals to construct a political strategy aimed to promote Evangelical MCs at the national level. This occurred in two different phases. First, military chaplains and Evangelical government officials articulated ways to incorporate 'spiritual assistance' in the normative guidelines of a new national policy of career valorisation for security professionals. Then, under Bolsonaro's government, MJSP partnered with MPD to implement a public security policy titled Spiritual Assistance. With a special office set up and its own budget endowment, the policy branched to deliver different services. The result was the strengthening of Evangelical MCs nationally and the diffusion of their pacification strategy.

On 30 April, 2018, minister Jungmann announced a meeting with religious leaders on a plea for churches to help the federal government reduce crime rates in the country (MJSP, 2018). The government's idea was to set up a permanent council with representatives from civil society to discuss and elaborate public policies on crime prevention uniting churches, the industrial and financial sectors, as well as unions and NGOs (Clavery, 2018). The move was likely part of a broader effort to garner political support as the government's approval waned to low levels (Modzeleski, 2018; Morellato and dos Santos, 2020).

According to a news report, during the meeting Jungmann proposed a long-term partnership with churches around four main themes: to "improve the quality of services provided by the police", to "bet on primary crime prevention through moral and religious re-education", to "give mental health and emotional support to security professionals", and to "rescue prisoners from the world of crime" (Universal, 2018). Attending the meeting were representatives of the main religious organisations in the country, including Catholics, Evangelicals, Spiritists, Afro-Brazilian religions, as well as MC institutions such as the Military Ordinariate of Brazil, ACMEB, and *PMs de Cristo*.

Martins recalled that with the meeting, the government was acknowledging there were not enough institutional military chaplains to serve most police forces and that they would not be able to hire new ones in the near future: "So let's call the churches to help us. At first I was against this idea because I think we should've structured how this was going to function before asking for a workforce. So they started sending invitations to all religions and churches" (Martins, military chaplain, 2023). A second meeting was organised for 22 May, which launched an inter-religious "Prayer Campaign for Public Security" that would run between 3-

10 June (Universal, 2018).[63] The meetings were then discontinued, as was Jungmann's project to create a security council with civilian representatives. However, there were two immediate legacies.

First, it signalled the federal government's intent to cooperate with religious actors in a way very similar to how Evangelical MCs operate ("crime prevention through religious and moral re-education" and "mental health and emotional support to security professionals", as stated by Jungmann). This meant tacit and political authorisation, from the federal government, for churches to conduct base-building activities within police corporations. However, there was a caveat. Whereas Evangelical police associations, such as *PMs de Cristo*, have been successful in this, it is largely due to their credentials as inter-denominational entities representing Evangelical officers and coordinated (mostly) by officers themselves. As shown in the case of São Paulo, Churches participate in spiritual assistance programmes through the mediation of *PMs de Cristo*, who work closely with the chains of command of the Military Police. Jungmann's invitation, however, was much broader.

The *Igreja Universal do Reino de Deus* (Universal Church of the Kingdom of God – IURD), a neo-pentecostal megachurch with ramifications in politics and the media,[64] perceived the strategic value of the federal government's move. IURD sent two representatives to the meeting, bishop Eduardo Guilherme, who coordinated the church's prison chaplaincy programme, and Ronivaldo Negreiros, a pastor and institutional military chaplain of the Military Police of the state of Maranhão. According to chaplain Martins, on the day of the meeting, Bishop Guilherme allegedly made the following request to the government: "give me letters for all corporations to open the door [to us], and I will put thousands of voluntary workers at your disposal'. And so it happened, this is how *Universal nas Forças Policiais* [Universal in the Police Forces - UFP] was born" (Martins, military chaplain, 2023). Silveira confirmed this during our interview:

> the Brazilian government requested this provision of assistance to the churches [...] we had various meetings with the minister of justice, where they demanded this support from churches. And this was one of the things that motivated [us] to create UFP [...] So at the time we also had this support [...] We ended up not making [written] agreements, it was more verbal (Silveira, MC coordinator, 2022).

[63] The Brazilian Spiritist Federation published a post on its Facebook page claiming the campaign would be "the first step towards the joined mobilisation and integration with the police and communities in favour of a communitarian public security" (FEB, 2018).
[64] The founder of IURD, Bishop Edir Macedo, owns the second largest television network, Rede Record, and the *Republicanos* (Republican party), created in 2005, is widely considered to be dominated by the IURD's leadership (Cerqueira, 2021).

How this authorisation was procured between the government and different chains of police command is unknown, but the government's political approval was crucial for UFP's expansion. As a result, UFP became the largest church-based voluntary MC in the country, operating in all states and reaching most security forces. During my visit to UPF's headquarters, I was told there were around 10,000 volunteers working with the police forces across the country and 65 church employees administering the project.

Second, the meeting represented an important step in the development of a public policy that institutionalised 'spiritual assistance' within security forces, thereby making Christian militarism an official ideology promoted by the state. Castro, an official at MJSP under Bolsonaro's government, commented that despite being short-lived, the meeting with Jungmann did set a "milestone with regards to the work of spiritual assistance" within the police forces, making it politically relevant in the government's agenda (Castro, government official, 2022). However, this policy would be constructed far from media attention and public debate. Below I trace each step of this policy.

Shortly after the second meeting between Jungmann and religious groups, the federal government enacted, on 11 June 2018, the federal law 13.675, which instituted the *Sistema Único de Segurança Pública* (Unified Public Security System - SUSP) (Brazil, 2018). Originally, SUSP was a project from Lula's first term in 2003, intended to address the "horizontal and vertical fragmentation of policing and public security by inducing greater operational co-operation between police forces, both horizontally at state-level, and between the three levels of government" (Macaulay, 2017, p. 253). The policy's coordination, to be pursued by the *Secretaria Nacional de Segurança Pública* (National Secretary of Public Security - SENASP), was also tasked to improve the exchange of information across the security system, establish quantifiable targets, and incorporate civil society in the formulation of security policies (Madeira and Rodrigues, 2015; Sennes, 2021). However, the project was shelved due to lack of political support from Lula, who reasoned that the extent of the reforms would bring excessive protagonism to the federal government in the security area, thereby risking political damage in the *Partido dos Trabalhadores*' (Workers' Party – PT) alliances with state governors (Soares, 2019).

Temer's refurbishment of SUSP was articulated by the Bullet Bench in Congress - an agenda-setter in punitive law-and-order policies that were key in president Rousseff's impeachment in 2016 (Macaulay, 2017, 2019). At the time, security specialists argued that the

new federal law was untenable, utilised as a smokescreen to enhance the repressive powers of security agencies and as an electoral artifice (Sampaio, 2018; Soares, 2019). However poorly coordinated and ineffective, the new SUSP did indicate a more thorough effort at federalising security policies, especially by creating a stable funding mechanism and standardising technical evaluative parameters across states (de Lima, 2020). Here I will focus on the area of career valorisation which, as argued in Chapter 6, has been highly politicised by far-right forces, and captured by the Evangelical MCs.

One of the main tenets of the SUSP bill was the creation of a National Policy of Public Security, which established the main strategies and priorities of security policies for all levels of the federation. The policy had as its second general principle the "protection, valorisation, and recognition of public security professionals", which was further stipulated by the objective to "stimulate and incentivise the elaboration, execution, and monitoring of actions in the areas of professional valorisation, health, life quality, and safety of servants that are part of the national public security system" (Brazil, 2018). To achieve this, the bill introduced the *Programa Nacional de Qualidade de Vida para Profissionais de Segurança* (National Programme on the Quality of Life for Public Security Professionals - *Pró-Vida*), whose acronym translates as "Pro-Life". The aim of *Pró-Vida* was to "elaborate, implement, support, monitor, and evaluate, among others, the projects of psychosocial attention and work health programmes of public security and social defence professionals [...]" (Brazil, 2018). It is under *Pró-Vida* that spiritual assistance was pushed by government officials and Evangelicals military chaplains.

In its original form, the SUSP law did not include any reference to spiritual assistance. The presidential decree 9.489 from August 2018, which regulated the *Pró-Vida* programme, defined biopsychosocial health vaguely as "actions of health attention, in light of integrations between the biological, psychological, and social dimensions, aiming towards systemic integration of different therapeutic approaches" (Brazil, 2018b). Career valorisation was also vaguely defined as "actions impacting organisational culture and environment oriented towards the promotion of dignity, realisation, and professional realisation" (Brazil, 2018b). According to a technical note from SENASP, "the debates around the creation of a project encompassing spirituality as a public policy [...] came from demands of the Annual Technical Meetings of *Pró-Vida* [...] held in 2018 and 2019" (MJSP, 2021, p. 1).[65] The first technical meeting was

[65] All references to official documents obtained via freedom of information request will be henceforth referenced as 'MJSP' instead of 'Brazil' in its authorship, to distinguish what are public from non-public documents.

held between 19 and 23 November, 2018, shortly after the presidential elections, and the second was held between 13 and 16 August, 2019, during Bolsonaro's first year in power.

The technical meetings were the space to define the main guidelines, targets, and projects for the *Pró-Vida* programme, which would be then carried over to policy agencies for regulation and implementation (MJSP, 2018). The majority of participants came from health-related sectors within various state-level security institutions (de Oliveira, 2018). Castro was one of the organisers of these technical meetings, and later became one of the managers of the Spiritual Assistance policy. According to him, it was a group of military chaplains who raised the issue of MCs during the meetings:

> 'We need to work on this issue of spirituality'. And the rest of participants consensually agreed. From this emerged the need for a project of spiritual assistance. How does the project develop: first, there is a demand, people are asking for it, requesting it, they said it is important. They are the technical staff from the area, so what are we going to do: measure to see if this is really necessary or not (Castro, government official, 2022).

It is unclear how debates around this theme developed during these meetings, if there was any resistance by other healthcare professionals or not, or if it was met with any concerns over its legal status. Interestingly, the presence list for the 2019 event does not show any military chaplain among attendees, although a similar document for the 2018 version was not made available (MJSP, 2019). Assuming this decision did take place in the technical meetings, it is easy to see that its inclusion was more or less easily justifiable in debates given a couple of factors: first, the MC is primarily considered a service related to the healthcare of security professionals; second, there was the precedent set shortly before by minister Jungmann (who also attended the first edition of the technical meeting, in 2018); and third, due to the weight of religion in the public agenda in the 2018 elections. Either way, the technical meetings gave Spiritual Assistance a legitimate facet as it was inserted in a participatory policy implementation cycle.

Moreover, during Bolsonaro's government, MJSP became increasingly close to Evangelical political actors, which created a favourable space for the policy to develop. For instance, Sérgio Moro, minister from January 2019 to April 2020, enjoyed wide support from the Evangelical caucus in Congress, and in October 2019 he received representatives from from IURD's voluntary MC project, which signalled he was willing to work in this area (Batista,

2019; Universal, 2019).[66] Anderson Mendonça, the government's General Attorney, considered by Bolsonaro as "terribly Evangelical", was appointed to succeed in the Ministry. His appointment reflected the strengthening of the Evangelical lobby inside Bolsonaro's government, carried out by groups such as the Evangelical caucus and the *Associação Nacional de Juristas Evangélicos* (National Association of Evangelical Lawyers - ANAJURE). Mendonça headed the Ministry until March 2021, when he was appointed by Bolsonaro to join the Supreme Federal Court as Brazil's first Evangelical justice. He was succeeded by Anderson Torres, a former federal police agent, who remained in the ministry until the end of Bolsonaro's presidency.[67]

The first official evidence of institutionalisation of the Spiritual Assistance policy can be seen in an undated document titled "Project Portfolio 2020", published by SENASP, the national secretariat for public security. In this document, a list of 13 products were described as being run by the *Pró-Vida* programme, one of them being a "Project of Spiritual Assistance (in prevention)" (Brazil, 2020a, p. 14). In November of the same year, a decree signed by minister Mendonça regulated all the fundable activities of *Pró-Vida* under the axis "Valorisation of Security Professionals", which comprised "the promotion of actions of valorisation and quality of life improvement for public security professionals in the areas of biopsychosocial attention, health, work safety, and professional valorisation" (Brazil, 2020b). For the first time, the term 'spiritual and religious assistance' was incorporated into the federal legislation as part of a renewed definition of "biopsychosocial attention", which expanded to include "the themes of psychoactive substances, stress, risks, critical incidents, victimisation, suicide, nutrition, physical education, **as well as spiritual and religious assistance**" (Brazil, 2020b; emphasis added).

The policy began to take shape in early 2021. An internal ordinance from SENASP officially instituted Spiritual Assistance as a project on 29 January, to be implemented by one of its subdivisions, the General Policy Coordination for Public Security Professionals. The objective, according to the document, was to "offer to the Public Security Professional, in face of the risks and vulnerabilities [...] a Spiritual Assistance guided by absolute values and principles [...]" (MJSP, 2021). A second version of the project set a budget of around R$16

[66] Moro left the government in April 2020, accusing Bolsonaro of interfering in the Federal Police to obtain privileged information about ongoing investigations on his family and allies (G1, 2020).
[67] Torres went on to become Secretary of Public Security in the Federal District but was arrested in January 2023 for omission during the violent far-right mob that attempted to suppress the political order on 8 January 2023 (Netto, 2023).

million (~US$3,20 million) to be implemented over a four-year cycle (2021-2024). The funding would be destined to cover costs with training, creation and equipping of Spiritual Assistance centres, purchase of cars for chaplains, and distribution of spiritually-related literature for security professionals (MJSP, 2021b) In terms of personnel, one general coordinator, two managers, and 12 technical members were allocated to work on the project. Of the technical members, half were 'mobilised' public servants, meaning they were likely to be security professionals from different states who were seconded to the federal government, while the other half were external guests. Among these, four were Evangelical military chaplains. Only one Catholic military chaplain was invited to participate. However, he was arrested in 2022 for sexually harassing a minor (O Globo, 2022).

In the first half of 2021, a series of legal documents, dispatches, and technical notes started circulating in SENASP, establishing the aims and instruments of the policy. A technical note defined the goal of spiritual assistance as the mobilisation of

> faith in favour of accomplishing the valorisation of organisational culture, solidification of institutional values, increase of motivation, improvement of life quality, strengthening of family union, balancing of finances, decrease in absenteeism, improvement of interpersonal relationships, human development, as well as decrease in misconduct and suicidal ideation, among others (MJSP, 2021, p. 1).

The documents made reference to many theological and legal studies on the Evangelical MC as theoretical justifications for the project, such as the *Chaplain's Manual* (Alves, 2017), covered in Chapter 6. Alves, the volume's coordinator, appeared as an external contributing member. Metaphysical quotes can be often found in these documents, such as a reference to the preamble of the Constitution, "[...] under the protection of God [...]", which appeared as an epigraph in two technical notes (MJSP, 2021; 2022), and a reference to Nietzsche as an alarming metaphor for the need of police officers to take care of their spiritual health: "Whoever fights monsters should see to it that in the process he does not become a monster. And if you gaze long enough into an abyss, the abyss will gaze back into you." (MSJSP, 2021, p. 1). This is very similar to how *PMs de Cristo* moralises discussions around public security as an interplay between forces of good and evil. In order to prevent risks associated with fighting 'monsters' and being contaminated by the 'abyss', the federal government thus proposed "Spirituality as a public policy" anchored

> in the field of science, [but] going beyond, in the field of theology, rooted in the concept of integral health and quality of life [...] Spiritual Assistance can be a continuous action in the fight of complex phenomena of illness deriving from the activities of public security (MJSP, 2021, p. 1).

The Plan of Action, dated from April 2021, specified the range of services and products to be delivered by the project. They included:

> I - Induction of the Human Life Valuation and Prevention Policy through the implementation of Spiritual Assistance;
>
> II - Implementation of Protocols and standardisation of services using spirituality in the actions of Prevention, Intervention, and Postvention;
>
> III - Establishment of partnerships with various governmental and civil society organisations working on the proposed theme;
>
> IV - Organization of in-person or remote seminars and courses to train facilitators on the established Spiritual Assistance guidelines;
>
> V - Standardization of essential items to be funded for Spiritual Assistance under the Pro-Life Policy;
>
> VI - Acquisition and donation of essential items within the scope of the Spiritual Assistance project;
>
> VII - Establishment of a management and governance office on the topic of Spiritual Assistance;
>
> VIII - Creation of a standard operational procedure for Spiritual Assistance;
>
> IX - Development of an electronic record system for Spiritual Assistance services;
>
> X - Identification and promotion of an electronic application that aids in the daily spirituality of public security professionals;
>
> XI - Promotion of scientific production on the theme of spirituality as one of the dimensions of Health (MJSP, 2021, p. 1)

What stands out reading this list is the clear intent to rationalise spirituality as an object of statecraft: to standardise, quantify, compare, evaluate. Spiritual assistance was not simply considered by the government as a tool to garner ideological support from its electoral strongholds, but the incorporation of transcendental values into routine bureaucratisation with the creation of parameters and standards. The document also stated that the above services would not "incentivise or aid in the development of proselytism" nor induce "the creation of religion" (MJSP, 2021, p. 1). However problematic the project was regarding its legal status and the blurring of the secular character of the state, from the point of view of the team behind it, it simply referred to the institutionalisation of a public policy in a normal democratic setting. Martins' remark, mentioned in Chapter 6, is once again instructive here: "scientific rigour. The institutional chaplaincy is part of the state [...] We are using faith in benefit of the objectives of the state" (Martins, military chaplain, 2023). According to Castro, "it is more or less a little bit

of what we study at university, and we try to do what is more correct, to work scientifically. And of course, we have many researchers helping us" (Castro, government official, 2022a).

The document also stressed high-level expected outcomes for the project, such as "institutionalisation of voluntary spiritual assistance" within security institutions, "increase in productivity, self-esteem, and efficiency of the public security professional", "promotion of approximation and trust relations between the local community and security forces", and "maintenance of an adequate organisational environment, strengthening the bonds of camaraderie, spirit, and body". These outcomes are very similar to the strategic objectives of the MC enshrined in the Army's military doctrine (Brazil, 2018) as well as *PMs de Cristo*'s pacification doctrine.

While the government documents provide an interesting perspective into the creation process of the policy, they are relatively silent on the politics behind its implementation. As fieldwork progressed, it became increasingly clear that SENASP's Spiritual Assistance policy was designed to strengthen the influence of Evangelicals in the oversight and promotion of the MCs on the one hand, and to scale and spread Evangelical base-building strategy in police circles, on the other. The most important evidence supporting this was the role played by MPD, a transnational Evangelical church that became a key articulator of Bolsonaro's policy for public security.

8.2 *Ministérios Pão Diário* (MPD): taking Evangelical pacification nationally

MPD is a transnational Evangelical church founded in 1938 by Michigan minister and broadcaster Martin de Haan (1891-1965), who in 1938 created the Radio Bible Class (RBC), later named RBC Ministries, and in 2015 changed to Our Daily Bread Ministries (or MPD in the Portuguese acronym). De Haan was a well-known figure in fundamentalist circles in the 1920s and later became an exponent of dispensationalism, the theological belief that history is divided into distinct periods where God 'dispenses' specific treatment to distinct populations. Dispensationalism emphasised literal interpretation of Biblical prophecies, particularly concerning the end times, which is at the heart of US Christian far-right and related ideologies such as Christian Zionism (Bacon, 2012; Carpenter, 1999; Vaca, 2012).

MPD is today better known for its pocket-sized publications called 'Our Daily Bread', which are customisable devotional booklets designed to make the Bible accessible to a wider

audience. According to Almeida, the organisation works mainly with the distribution of literature, print and digital, as well as radio and TV (Almeida, MC coordinator, 2022). MPD operates in 156 countries, with offices in 37 of them, and its materials have been translated into 58 languages. Despite being an Evangelical ministry, MPD's products and services are largely non-denominational, and the organisation counts with a network of supporting churches comprising around 10 million people around the world (Almeida, MC coordinator, 2022). In terms of funding, Almeida said

> there is no financial operation. When there is a project, some opportunity to make the world better, we communicate with [the network]. For instance, in England, we had the chance to send materials to soldiers in a project in partnership with a group that works with chaplains in the British Armed Forces, and they authorised us to distribute [devotionals] to soldiers. So, we wrote to our network saying: look, we have this opportunity, the cost for 100,000 books is U$100,000 and we ask you to pray to raise this fund. People sent donations to collaborate, and it was sufficient to print [...] We have projects like these around the world. In the US, of the 2,300,000 prison inmates, 800,000 receive our literature in all prisons, with the goal that they can read, reconcile, forgive themselves as well as others, and lead a different life when they leave [prison] (Almeida, MC coordinator, 2022).

The Brazilian branch began operations in 2000, focusing mainly on the distribution of Christian literature: "we have projects with schools, it is more than 300 schools where we reach over 200,000 students, 94 maximum security prisons, and over 120 hospitals" (Almeida, MC coordinator, 2022). MPD's office is in Curitiba, in the southern state of Paraná, and has 50 employees and a network of around 100 voluntary workers across the country (Almeida, MC coordinator, 2022). According to its official website, MPD also produces podcasts, videos and online courses, and develops a number of chaplaincy projects targeted at students, indigenous populations, truckers, and the police (Ministérios Pão Diário, n.d.). Funding for these projects are slightly different to other branches abroad, as only 2% of revenues come from donations in Brazil (Almeida, MC coordinator, 2022). MPD's publisher sells around one million copies of Evangelical literature every year, and profit is redirected towards projects:

> we reached around 50,000 inmates during the pandemic - of the 700,000 who are caged. This is a big investment, we invest [in this area] R$1,500,000 - R$2,000,000 each year [~U$310,000 - U$410,000] only in materials, besides the costs we have with production, translation, and editing (Almeida, MC coordinator, 2022).

While MPD has worked with security forces in other countries, mainly with the distribution of literature, nothing resembles the scope of the project developed by its Brazilian branch, called *Pão Diário Segurança Pública* (Our Daily Bread Public Security - PDSP), which

was launched in 2018. The project boasts a series of products and services tailored to security professionals, and specifically to police forces, such as books, devotionals, courses, videos, podcasts, radio web, and an online application. One of the main appeals of PDSP is that the majority of the content is produced by Evangelical military chaplains *for* security professionals. However, their activities also go beyond this.

According to Almeida, the work with public security began with distribution of customised devotionals to the Armed Forces for operations such as the *Mission des Nations Unies pour la stabilisation en Haïti* (United Nations Mission for the Stabilisation of Haiti - MINUSTAH) or during the reception of Venezuelan refugees crossing the border to Brazil, in 2018. This was usually done through donations, "but if they ask in large sums, we charge the production costs" (Almeida, MC coordinator, 2022). In 2021, for instance, the Army contracted MPD for the distribution of 2,000 booklets without public tender, which generated public criticism (Amado and Barreto, 2021). The qualitative leap in MPD's work started in 2012 when it partnered with *PMs de Cristo* to support their MC. This began with the rollout of customised devotionals - around 30,000 per year on average, and paid by PM's de Cristo's network of collaborating churches (Almeida, MC coordinator, 2022). This work evolved to "providing materials, organising lectures, aiding them in the conferences they organise [...]", and also "financial support so that they can potentialise" their activities (Almeida, MC coordinator, 2022). Chaplain Mendes, from *PMs de Cristo*, told me that the partnership with MPD is "incredible, they are doing a work of excellence and I believe it is just the beginning" [...] Today in Brazil, it is the only [Evangelical] ministry that has this perception of the need to invest in security forces in the country" (Mendes, chaplain, 2022).

Chaplain Mendes also mentioned the importance of devotionals as a tool for chaplains' activities. According to him, devotionals are a medium through which God speaks to police officers, and an efficient way of publicising the chaplaincy and attracting new members to Evangelical police associations (Mendes, chaplain, 2022). In 2021 alone, MPD distributed 195,000 devotionals to over 20 police organisations across the country, each with their customised covers. Almeida recalled that the outreach had been so high that the commander of the National Force once called him "from the Amazon and said: 'there was a group travelling for 13 hours by boat, and the book was there, they were all reading during the mornings'" (Almeida, MC coordinator, 2022).

The partnership with *PMs de Cristo* extends beyond distribution of literature. If *PMs de Cristo* is the intellectual incubator, MPD can be seen as the intermediary organisation that does the legwork to promote the former's pacification doctrine to the national level. From an

ideological standpoint, MPD fully embraces the core tenets of *PMs de Cristo*'s pacification model. MPD is the publisher of two of the four books analysed in the last chapter - *Church and Police Project: Manual for the Implementation of Voluntary Chaplaincy* (Lamin, 2021), and *God's Mission for the Police Officer* (Neto, 2021). Besides these, MPD's publisher has a 'Public Security' catalogue with a list of similar titles aiming to win the hearts and minds of the police, such as *Christianity for the Police: Fulfil the mission without missing the target* (Lucas, 2021), *101 advices for the military: Devotionals in the book of Proverbs* (Cunha and Lima, 2021), and 18 editions of their devotional booklet customised for different security forces (Publicações Pão Diário, n.d.).

Illustration 3 - A collection of books published by MPD for police institutions

Source: MPD's webstore (Publicações Pão Diário, n.d.)

Like *PMs de Cristo*, MPD sees the work of the military chaplain as operating on two fronts, internally and externally. Internally, the chaplain makes use of MPD's resources (books, app, podcast, videos, etc.) for the officer to "open their minds" and to "create filters for them to think", "because everything passes through a change in the mind [...] Our work is to [promote] a change in the mind, to fulfil the mission" (Almeida, MC coordinator, 2022). Christian spirituality is the filter through which this change of mind occurs, aiding officers to navigate their personal and emotional dilemmas in order to make them better professionals: "Within Public Security, I see that often [spirituality] makes even more of a difference than finances. Because he [the officer] starts to understand the meaning of life, why he chose that profession [...]" (Almeida, MC coordinator, 2022). The blueprint of the Christian police officer as an idealised pacifier is neatly captured in a social media post in MPD's Public Security profile on Instagram, in July 2023:

> the police [...] is the only representation of the state with whom the great majority of the population have a real contact with, and they are the ones who received the social permission to use force and weapons, in the limits of the law, which confers to them a pedagogical dimension [...] Therefore, a good police has to be, above all, a pacified being before thinking of wanting to be a pacifier. Thus, the first war to be had is internally, in our very heart, which needs to be surrendered to the true peace which derives from the heavens, the throne of God's grace (Conexão Segurança e Defesa, 2023).

Illustration 4 - MPD's post on Instagram (2023)

Source: MPD's Instagram profile (Conexão Segurança e Defesa, 2023)

The image attached to the post (Illustration 4) summarises this idea: “More important than being a pacifier is to be pacified by the redemptive work of Jesus in the Cross”. In this sense, issues like police deviation or the use of disproportionate force are seen as personal and individualised problems that can be corrected through spiritual assistance, targeting in particular the family unit of the police officer. According to Almeida, “most of our lectures have to do with relating [oneself] to children and spouse. Because if he [the police] is fine with his family, he wants to return home alive, he will not go to work to be a superhero, and exposes himself to less risk” (Almeida, MC coordinator, 2022). As such, MPD shifts away criticism towards institutional or structural components of police violence, making the case for “isolated cases” which generate disproportionate repercussions in the media (Almeida, MC coordinator, 2022). Much like *PMs de Cristo*, MPD works to legitimise militarised forms of policing: “I travel a lot in Latin America: Argentine, Peru, Bolivia… their police are very corrupt. Here in Brazil we are having a very relevant work” (Almeida, MC coordinator, 2022).

The parallels also extend to the external dimension, based on the mobilisation of Evangelicals in community policing. When I asked Almeida about this, he was very explicit about *PMs de Cristo* as the go-to model not only for their own work but for most Evangelical police associations across the country: “I think the [Evangelicals police] associations have a very interesting work [...] They have been strengthened a lot, because before they were small organisations, now they are finding their model. We even wrote a book: Police and Church, which was the model used in São Paulo (Almeida, MC coordinator, 2022). He mentioned a case where MPD and *PMs de Cristo* partnered to rebuild trust relations between the police and residents in an unnamed *favela* in São Paulo: “there was an exchange of fire in a *favela* and a boy who was a drug dealer was killed. The community did not allow the Military Police to enter, they placed tires [to block the road]”. Then, in a tactic very akin to counter-insurgency operations, the Military Police of São Paulo contacted MPD and *PMs de Cristo* and asked them to intervene:

> MPD has a massive network of Churches, so the community was activated. And a church from that community, the Foursquare Church, together with *PMs de Cristo*, we sent books. This community was in the middle of the pandemic, so the Church donated food baskets, and the police was there to distribute the books and food. There was a gigantic approximation with the police (Almeida, MC coordinator, 2022).

Thus, much like in *PMs de Cristo*’s publications and activities, community policing was allegedly utilised to re-establish the police as a regulating social force within a

marginalised community. However, instead of having the state provide basic public services, it is the (Evangelical) church that takes on this responsibility. He continued:

> That's how crime functions: 'we are here to give you food and protection'. So the police cannot enter, but then [criminals] have the right to commit atrocities. When you have churches, however… Brazil has more than 150 thousand churches, it is a gigantic force, they function as a support [network] whenever there is a calamity, they serve as base, point of food collection. And inside the police, we have done many similar actions, this happens a lot (Almeida, MC coordinator, 2022).

As MPD's partnership with *PMs de Cristo* grew, so did their work with other police associations. Almeida refers to their work as one of "supporting associations" that previously operated independently and in a localised setting. Martins told me that "MPD brought a greater concern with professional qualification [...] they can help all voluntary chaplaincies in Brazil [...] They have a very good experience, capillarity, and a very large network of supporters, so they have a lot to contribute" (Martins, military chaplain, 2022). This was something heard from other interviewees, that MPD acts to qualify, strengthen, and regulate the work of military chaplains at the national level (Mendes, chaplain, 2022; Castro, government official, 2022). The best route for this, however, would be to work closely with the federal government.

Almeida mentioned that a window of opportunity to take on a more proactive approach was clear to him in 2018 during an Evangelical MC congress conjoining around 2,000 Christian police officers: "they discovered what was happening elsewhere, they talked about it, they saw our material, the experience of the Military Police in São Paulo, Santa Catarina, Maranhão, and they all became anxious to take this home" (Almeida, MC coordinator, 2022). At the same time, Bolsonaro's campaign was signalling political support to both Evangelicals and police forces, and MPD saw this as an opportunity to develop partnerships in the area of public security: "there was more willingness: 'look, the [non-governmental] organisations want to work? Let's open it. Let's hear them'. And it really surprised me because we had never worked with the Brazilian government, they're very technical people, it was not easy" (Almeida, MC coordinator, 2022).

At this point, we are able to observe two parallel processes developing simultaneously. On the one hand, Evangelical government officials, with the support of military chaplains, were pushing for the construction of a Spiritual Assistance policy at MJSP. On the other hand, MPD was attempting to articulate a national movement to strengthen Evangelical police associations and spread *PMs de Cristo*'s pacification model. There is not enough evidence available to infer if these were completely separate processes that met at a certain point, or different expressions of the same process. Given the way SENASP structured the Spiritual Assistance policy, and

how it was portrayed by Castro during our follow-up interviews, MPD appeared as a complementary actor wishing to cooperate with the government within an already existing policy framework. However, a closer analysis suggests MPD was much more central to the public security policy promoted under Bolsonaro's government.

There are two reasons for this. First, the official documents show that while the Spiritual Assistance policy was being legally structured in the period between January and April 2021, the policy team was already working to implement the cooperation agreement with MPD during the same period, as can be seen in two preparation meetings held in March and April of the same year (MJSP, 2021c, 2021d). When the cooperation agreement was signed, on 27 August 2021, the document stated that the partnership with MPD resulted from suggestions made by military chaplains during a meeting of the Spiritual Assistance Working Group, and that "subsequently, discussions were held to align common actions with the [above-]mentioned institution, and on March 4th of [2021], the representatives of the NGO presented their work activities to the *Pró-Vida* coordination" (MJSP, 2021e). A different version was told by Almeida. According to him, in 2020 a public call was opened by the *Pró-Vida* programme at SENASP, "inviting organisations wishing to participate and [to show] what they could offer" (Almeida, MC coordinator, 2022). This was emphasised three times during our interview. However, there is no information available about this public call, either publicly or internally, with the documents I had access to. Almeida mentioned this version again in an interview with *Estadão* in September 2022, when the cooperation agreement came under public scrutiny (Affonso, 2022).

Second, as the Spiritual Assistance policy progressed, it became increasingly clear that the majority of policy goals set by the federal government were outsourced to be implemented by MPD. As will be seen in the next section, the project was so dependent on MPD's backstage articulation that when the agreement was forced into suspension after being scrutinised by federal prosecutors, the whole Spiritual Assistance policy collapsed. In a follow-up interview in late 2022, Castro corroborated this view when saying that "the agreement [with MPD] was one of the first steps to create the Spiritual Assistance project", and that once federal prosecutors recommended its suspension, "by accepting this recommendation, the project basically ended" (Castro, government official, 2022b). The significance of this insight - that MPD was the main articulator of the Spiritual Assistance policy - is twofold. On the one hand, it demonstrates that a non-governmental organisation - a transnational Evangelical church - was not only lobbying for the creation of a public policy in the security area, but it was effectively mimicking the functions of the state as its promoter, funder, regulator, and

implementer. On the other hand, it shows that Evangelical pacification, constructed from the ground up in Evangelical MCs, was being taken as the basis on which the Spiritual Assistance policy would develop. The next section analyses the services and products created by the policy.

8.3 Spiritual Assistance in practice

The cooperation agreement between SENASP and MPD was signed on 27 August, 2021, and published in the government's official gazette on 3 September of that year. The main objective of the agreement was the "execution of actions of Spiritual Assistance, Chaplaincy, and Promotion of Health and Quality of Life for Public Security Professionals" (Brazil, 2021c). The agreement would last for 24 months, with no financial burden on the state - although this had been previously discussed as a possibility during the preparation meeting in April (Brazil, 2021).[68] In practical terms, the agreement included the delivery of four products by MPD to the state: 1) distribution of devotional booklets to security professionals; 2) cycle of lectures related to spirituality within security forces; 3) development of an online application called *Pão Diário Segurança Pública* (Our Daily Bread Public Security - PDSP), containing "devotional messages, reflections, lectures, podcast, online Bible, reading plans, web radio, and an online course area" for security professionals across the country; and 3) a Spiritual Assistance course to qualify and accredit voluntary military chaplains (Brazil, 2022). Almeida estimated a total of R$1,500,000 (~US300,000) invested by MPD across a three-year period (Almeida, MC coordinator, 2022).

Regarding the devotional booklets, internal documents stipulated 20,000 copies to be distributed by MPD in 2021, and 10,000 in the following years. MPD would invite around 80 security professionals to write short articles on the role of spirituality within public security, each venturing on relevant Biblical passages - contextualised to the reality of security professionals. According to a report on the ongoing development of the Spiritual Assistance policy, signed in February 2023, a total of 7,600 copies had been distributed to MJSP (Brazil, 2023).[69] According to Castro, these devotionals were part of the chaplain's "working tools",

[68] The cooperation agreement contract stipulated that the federal government was obliged to "publicise the object of the partnership", "support, where relevant, the dialogue with public security institutions", "support the formulation of content related to the products", and "commit with the logistics of delivering copies of the [devotional] books" (Brazil, 2021, p. 166).

[69] Almeida mentioned that in 2021 alone, 195,000 devotionals were distributed to security institutions, probably outside the remit of the cooperation agreement (Almeida, MC coordinator, 2022).

used during service to provide officers in need of spiritual assistance with a "reading plan" (Castro, government official, 2022). The devotionals were not the result "of a doctrine which MPD shoved down one's throat", but the work of "security professionals writing for other security professionals" (Castro, government official, 2022). The way Castro narrated how MPD pitched the devotionals to the government, made it appear like the partnership was in fact inevitable:

> When MPD presented the proposal saying, 'look, a guy during a police operation, he said that if it were not for a supernatural action, an action from a being he did not know who it was, he would not be able to survive or would've had a tragic ending'. And we [government officials] observed that, really, that was the language of public security, of a police officer speaking to another officer, they understand this.

These and other examples were sufficient for the government to consider that, "yes, that is interesting", because it "is contextualised with a Biblical citation" (Castro, government official, 2023). Even more: "MPD told us: 'we can do this for you [the government] with the print cover you want, narrating a little about the [security] institution [it will be distributed to]. Totally for free" (Castro, government official, 2023).

Regarding the cycle of lectures, whose content entailed "debates on themes related to spirituality for public security professionals" (Brazil, 2023), government reports only made reference to one event organised by the ministry together with MPD. This was held on 15 December, 2021, as a celebration of the cooperation agreement and distribution of the first batch of devotionals. Titled 'First Thanksgiving event of the Spiritual Assistance Project', it counted with the presence of important decision-makers at MJSP, politicians, and military chaplains. Alexandre Sérgio, then director of public security policies at the Ministry, hailed MPD's work and said that the "Our Daily Bread books have saved lives", while Katia Sastre, a former far-right congresswoman, said that "our agents are ill spiritually and psychologically, and this affects the family. Nothing better than to treat spirituality [...] this daily nourishment to our lives" (Sérgio and Sastre, 2021).

However, I was able to trace at least three other events that MPD participated either as main guest or as an authoritative representative in the area of public security, often lecturing on the importance of religious assistance within police organisations.[70] In these events, MPD

[70] These events were: *Conferência Nacional sobre Segurança Pública e Defesa Nacional – Valorização dos Profissionais de Segurança Pública* (National Conference on Public Security and Social Defence - Valorisation of Public Security Professionals), held in November 2021*; Ato Ecumênico em Ação de Graças em Celebração dos 94 anos da Polícia Rodoviária Federal* (Thanksgiving Ecumenical Act in Celebration of 94 years of the

was presented as an important partner of the government aiding in the consolidation of the MC at the national level. The events were also an opportunity for MPD to network with relevant stakeholders in public security, such as politicians, ministers, police commanders, as well as representative bodies from different police organisations, such as the National Federation of Federal Police Officers and the Brazilian Association of Fingerprint Experts of the Federal Police, which appear as partners in MPD's website. Further, they have allowed MPD to establish new partnerships with organisations, such as with the Military Police in different states and the Federal Highway Police, which began institutionalising its first chaplaincy project with the support of MPD, in 2022. Silvinei Vasques, then General-Director of the Federal Highway Police, said about this project during a ceremony with MPD, that his institution "had a gap, which was the religious gap":

> Often there is a lack of spiritual support. Who will I search [for help]? Our institution did not have who to search for [...] not even for funerary [services] did we have any help [...] With this strategic project we will want to work to advance a lot [...] We will expand this project to our 27 units [...] This care that we are beginning today will make a difference, we will save many lives [...] We will also bring security to those officers who, by virtue of law, the force of events, and by necessity, had to kill criminals, so that they can understand that the work within legality also has spiritual support, this is very important (Vasques, 2022).[71]

Regarding the online application, Almeida told me that it was designed to reach police officers who "do not have the habit of reading", so they could listen to recorded devotionals and share them with colleagues (Almeida, MC coordinator, 2022). The application features daily devotionals written by security professionals - 180, according to Almeida -, a series of videos by Evangelical military chaplains and officers, reading plans with short excerpts extracted from religious books, a series of podcasts such as "10 reasons to believe in the Bible" and "The Lord is my Shepherd", and online courses such as "The Primordial Era", which teaches about creationism, "learning how to pray", and "Who is Jesus?". [72] Much of the content

Federal Highway Police), held in June 2022; and *Primeiro Seminário de Direitos Humanos da Polícia Militar* (First Seminar on Human Rights of the Military Police), held in November 2022.

[71] The event happened on 20 June 2022 and was titled *Ato Ecumênico em Ação de Graças em Celebração dos 94 anos da Polícia Rodoviária Federal* (Thanksgiving Ecumenical Act in Celebration of 94 years of the Federal Highway Police). The video of this event was originally available on MJSP's YouTube account but has been turned into private mode (Vasques, 2022).

[72] The online app is available for free download on both Android and IOS devices. The version used for this research was downloaded via Google Store at: https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=paodiario.app.seguranca&hl=pt_PT&gl=US&pli=1 Access on: 29 September, 2023.

available in the application has been produced in partnership with *PMs de Cristo*, especially in the videos and readings sections.

According to Almeida, the application has a monthly user base of 5,000 people (Almeida, MC coordinator, 2022). It is a way of connecting readers to experiences lived by other security professionals in liminal situations: "it talks about issues of salvation of a firefighter [...], about an exchange of shots where a colleague helped [another officer]. It is one message every day of the year. All messages have this purpose" (Almeida, MC coordinator, 2022). Thus, it functions as an extension of the base-building activities developed by the Evangelical MCs. One devotional, for instance, dated from 14 September, 2021, narrates a shootout between the writer and "armed elements" during a car chase: "In that moment where my life was at risk, I cried to God and He listened. I'm certain that no shot hit me because the Lord was protecting and guarding me. If you confront daily dangers, trust your life and activities to the Lord". Almeida also mentioned that the content helps to strengthen the "military brotherhood" as it is written and consumed by both low and high-ranking officials: "It is the only place where you will find a colonel next to a soldier on the same page" (Almeida, MC coordinator, 2022).

The main features of Evangelical pacification doctrine, such as considering policing as a divinely-sanctioned activity, and which can promote the 'moral transformation' of marginalised urban areas through community policing, can also be found in the application. One devotional, from 18 October, 2021, reads the following: "Moved by the Holy Spirit, I have the absolute conviction that in this honourable profession, we are instruments of God to guarantee His Justice here on Earth [...]". Another, from 13 September, 2021, written by Colonel Neto (one of *PMs de Cristo*'s intellectuals) reads:

> There will be times when you will have to make use of force and, if you waver, your life, the life of a colleague or of an innocent will be at risk. In John 2:13-16, Jesus entered the Temple and was confronted with disorder [...] Jesus knocked over the tables and established order [...] Jesus was showing that sometimes, force should be used to establish the Justice of God. But never forget: it is only a tool which needs to be well used. Acting this way, you will always remain meek and humble.

Perhaps the most important aspect of the Spiritual Assistance policy implementation was the rollout of a chaplaincy course designed to train and certify voluntary chaplains. Almeida told me that the government's plan was to train a workforce of 10,000 voluntary chaplains who would be at the disposal of police forces across the country (Almeida, MC coordinator, 2022). The rationale for this was the same as the one mentioned by military

chaplains in Chapter 6: "I have one chaplain per state, and let's say I have 5,000 officers in that state. How can one institutional chaplain serve 5,000 officers? Not possible. So I [the government] call in the volunteers" (Castro, government official, 2022).

According to Castro, the course would be prepared and delivered by MPD and the government would have an input on content and allocation of places within security institutions.[73] The idea was to train military chaplains and integrate them into a "Spiritual Assistance network" comprising specialists in the field and representatives from Evangelical police associations; and from there, allocate volunteers according to the demands of each police institution (Castro, government official, 2022; Almeida, MC coordinator, 2022). Moreover, the government wished to create a national standardisation for chaplaincy qualification, implementing a set of guidelines chaplains should adhere to. "There are some regions", Almeida said, "where the voluntary chaplain did not go through training as strong as in places like São Paulo. And sometimes he takes his Christian ideology, sometimes he says he wants to build a church within the barracks, and this ruins the chaplaincy process" (Almeida, MC coordinator, 2022). Castro corroborated this viewpoint:

> As the Ministry of Justice, this is our idea: to create guidelines and say: 'my brother, this is what can be done in institution A and B [...] This course has 120 hours plus a placement [...] so 150 hours [in total]. Today, a chaplaincy course of 30 hours is sold more or less for R$300 or R$ 400 [~60-80 USD] [...] We will give it for free, also as a way to break the monopoly [of private courses] (Castro, government officials, 2022).[74]

Originally, the government had selected four cities as a pilot experiment to study "the differential [impact] of creating these groups of volunteers", but the policy project ended before this could be pursued (Almeida, MC coordinator, 2022). However, from conversations with participants, it was clear that the course was an important step in trying to transform the voluntary MC into a recognised activity regulated by the state. There are two dimensions to this form of regulation: first, it is a soft approach to regulation to avoid external control or questioning. Carvalho, who coordinated the MC in the Federal Highway Police, said "I see it this way [...] a very general regulation, not much in the sense of regulating, but in the sense of guaranteeing [the activity] [...]" (Carvalho, MC coordinator, 2023). This would allow "public security forces to have spiritual and religious assistance" while "each security force will dictate

[73] The pedagogical document of this course explicitly states that the curriculum is founded on "Christian humanism", although it says it refrains from "any proselytist or grooming connotation" (MPD, 2022).
[74] The course, however, is not free. The online application form charges R$620.00 (~U$120) (Cursos Qualicare, n.d.).

how it works in its institution" (Carvalho, MC coordinator, 2023). In MPD's view, a general regulation would mean easier access to police barracks, foregoing the ad-hoc basis on which cooperation agreements are made with individual police commanders: "many commanders get worried they might be doing something wrong, and when you have the 'OK', that it is regulated [by the federal government], then it is easier for them to accept it, you know?" (Almeida, MC coordinator, 2022).[75]

Given the limited timespan of the policy, it is hard to pin down the effects that it has had in policing beyond anecdotal evidence such as the ones provided by interviewees. However, a status report document showcased a collection of testimonies by police commanders and chiefs on their perception of the benefits of MPD's products (Brazil, 2023). For instance, a former general-commander of the Military Police of the state of Acre suggested it was common for some police units to "make brief studies [of the devotional] before the beginning of the shift" and that he had heard devotionals had been widely "utilised among family members" (Brazil, 2023). He concluded: "the truth is that the Daily Bread is of extreme and necessary importance for security professionals who are aided through readings, studies, and meditations that serve as a refreshment for the soul and relief from the inherent stress of the profession" (Brazil, 2023). The General-Chief of the Civil Police of the state of Mato Grosso also commented that MPD's products "fits perfectly with our needs and shortcomings. We all need a spiritual dimension and this project comes to support us very positively" (Brazil, 2023). However limited these testimonies may be, they do show that for many of stakeholders within the police, spiritual assistance is a crucial element in the fulfilment of strategic objectives, in a way very similar to the surveys conducted by *PMs de Cristo* in the Military Police of São Paulo.

8.4 Spiritual Assistance in crisis

In 2022, as MJSP was preparing to deepen activities of the Spiritual Assistance policy with MPD, a period of crisis ensued that ultimately led to its collapse. Given Bolsonaro's anti-democratic form of ruling and the plethora of political scandals and judicial investigations that

[75] Souza, from *PMs de Cristo*, corroborated this view: "We're close to signing a partnership with the Military Police of São Paulo [...] Today what we have is that some large [police] commands have their own normative framework, but not in the whole state [...] it becomes a policy of the police and not of the commander who sits in the chair. So I believe that SENASP [the national public security secretariat] as a national promoter could provide models for all police corporations to follow" (Souza, chaplain, 2022).

plagued his government,[76] any piece of news related to potential scandals was going to be widely scrutinised by the media and politically exploited by the opposition (from left to right), especially so in a highly polarised electoral year. This is what effectively occurred with the Spiritual Assistance policy.

On 21 January 2022, journalist Guilherme Amado published a short column on *Metrópoles* titled "Ministry of Justice partners with Evangelical app for [public] servants" (Amado, 2021). The column focused exclusively on the cooperation agreement with MPD, pointing out that the objectives for the agreement were vague and that it was only focused on the publicising of Christian content, at the expense of other religions. On the same day, congressman Ivan Valente of the leftist *Partido Socialismo e Liberdade* (Socialism and Freedom Party - PSOL) filed a representation in the Federal Public Ministry, the judicial prosecution office, questioning the constitutionality of the agreement and requesting a legal investigation. Valente characterised the agreement as an "illegal act", violating the "freedom of consciousness and belief", and accused MJSP of "foregoing public interest" by "prioritising one religion at the expense of others" (Valente, 2022). He continued: "Brazil is a secular state and hence there should be no linkage between public power and particular church or religion, as advocated by article 5 of our constitution" (Valente, 2022).[77]

Throughout the fieldwork period, I was able to conduct follow-up interviews with both Almeida (twice, on June 2022 and January 2023) and Castro (three times, on June 2022, November 2022, and January 2023), which provided valuable insights into the unfolding of the crisis, from the denunciation in January through to the electoral period and thereafter. Regarding the Valente's public denunciation, Almeida told me that it was a mere public stunt on the part of the left, as they were allegedly trying to force the argument that the cooperation agreement involved transfer of public funds to MPD:

> they do not have any evidence, this is a very common request congressmen make because it gives them media, they ask to inspect, it is like they are discovering

[76] Such as the mismanagement of the Covid-19 pandemic (Werneck and Rosa, 2021), deliberate relaxation of environmental protection standards (Brown, 2023), and consistent attempts to tension the political system with threats of military intervention (Larkins and Louback, 2022).

[77] Parallel to this, Valente had also requested detailed information about the agreement directly to MJSP .The answer came on 16 February, signed by Agrício da Silva, then Chief of Staff at SENASP. Da Silva explained that the agreement was signed as part of the Spiritual Assistance policy, which was summarised through a series of generic descriptions: "The project in question transcends religion, having spirituality as an action directed towards the meaning of life, interior integrity, emotional balance, optimisation of personal potential, ethics, morality, probity, responsibility, and humanity. Its main goals are not religious dogmas but the mobilisation of faith in favour of valorisation of organisational culture. Solidification of institutional values, humanisation of public security operators, increase of motivation, life of quality improvement, strengthening of family union, decrease of absenteeism, improvement of interpersonal reactions, human development, as well as decrease in conduct deviation, and reduction of rates of suicidal ideation, among others" (Brazil, 2022, p. 2).

> something which is occult [...] the only problem is that afterwards, they do not say that [the agreement] was made correctly, it stays in the limbo" (Almeida, MC coordinator, 2022).

Castro argued in the same direction, adding: "we [the government] did not spend one cent on this project. And what if we had done it? What would be the problem?" (Castro, government official, 2022a). Regarding Valente's criticism on violations of the secular nature of the state, Castro mentioned that it derived from distortions produced by "Brazilian universities", where academics "conflate" the secular state with an atheist state (Castro, government official, 2022a). He then went on to make a general claim about the left: "It is hard because you try to argue with an audience that sees it as a threat. But imagine… let's talk about the left. The security forces said: 'my brother, you spent 20 years massacring us [...]'" (Castro, government official, 2022a). For him, the left's legacy in security was to push for some "crazy data" such as gender related killings or femicide: "[they] put everything as femicide, and sometimes it was not femicide, it was a woman who died. But they put it like it was femicide, because it is an ideology turned towards feminicide" (Castro, government official, 2022a).

MJSP decided to proceed with the project. However, on 26 August, 2022, *Globo*, the largest news organisation in Brazil, reported on the distribution of thousands of MPD's devotional booklets to the Federal Highway Police, just six days after the launch of the latter's chaplaincy project, in partnership with MPD. The denunciation came from a group of officers who leaked an internal communiqué sent to all Federal Highway Police units with instructions on how to use the booklets: "we suggest the collective use of the book in the work environment" (Bonfim, 2022a). The officers complained about the blurring of religion with policing and the violation of religious freedom, since only a Christian perspective was being institutionally promoted. In response, the Federal Highway Police stated that if officers wanted other religions represented, they could request it by demonstrating a "justifiable demand" to do so (Bomfim, 2022a). This response was omitting that an institutional structure had been built by Evangelical actors to steer spiritual assistance policies, with very little regard to religious diversity. The news was widely circulated by other media vehicles, relating this case to the electoral campaign that was beginning in that same period, with one outlet saying that the "Federal Highway Police is considered part of the electoral base of president Jair Bolsonaro" (Affonso, 2022a).

On 29 August, the Federal Public Ministry began an inquiry on the matter, requesting information from MJSP, to "investigate occasional distribution of religious material by the Federal Government in the dependencies of the Federal Highway Police, with orientations and suggestions of 'spiritual assistance' and Bible readings, contrary to what is predicted in Article

19, section I, of the Federal Constitution" (MPF, 2022).[78] This was followed by a news piece published on 29 September by *Estadão*, one of the largest circulating newspapers in Brazil, reporting on the cooperation agreement and the ideological affinities between MPD and Bolsonaro's government. According to the article, in 2021 the vice-president of MPD, Luís Seoane, held meetings with close allies to Bolsonaro, and had often posted in his social media account about gun culture, which is an important agenda of *Bolsonarismo* (Affonso, 2022b).

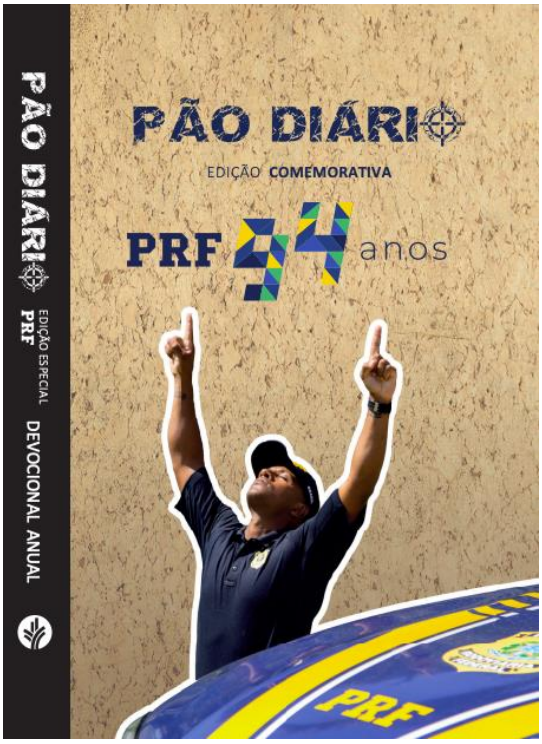
Speaking to interviewees about the investigation led by the Federal Prosecutor's Office, they associated it as part of an electoral strategy by the media as well by public prosecutors. To Almeida,

> Because the former director of the Federal Highway Police was very close to the president, they ended up trying to push that this was something else he (Bolsonaro) was trying to do. But for us nothing happened because even when CNN reported on it, they only said that Bolsonaro's government was distributing religious magazines. But there was no proof - even the TV said that in their inquiry there was no transfer [of funds], it was not purchased by the police. So it was just noise that week, and soon after they moved to something different, right? (Almeida, MC coordinator, 2022b).

Carvalho concurred, saying that "the media distorted events for electoral purposes" (Carvalho, MC coordinator, 2023). She also mentioned that the way the prosecutor framed the issue was "all part of the political game", and that, therefore, the Federal Highway Police decided to adopt "a strategy to ask for more time to answer, after the elections, because our response was only interesting [for investigators and the media] before the elections (Carvalho, MC coordinator, 2023).

[78] Article 19 of the Constitution stipulates that it is forbidden for public institutions to "establish religious sects or churches, subsidise them, hinder their activities, or maintain relationships of dependence or alliance with them or their representatives, without prejudice to collaboration in the public interest in the manner set forth by law" (Brazil, 1988).

Illustration 5 - MPD's devotional for the Federal Highway Police



Source: fieldwork material.

Castro reasoned along similar lines, arguing that the scandal arised from "political motivation" within the Federal Highway Police (Castro, government official, 2022). According to him, it stemmed from the latter's union leaders who were "unhappy with the current administration" and were trying to create some "kind of animosity within the institution", and thus began "politicising the matter" (Castro, government official, 2022). He continued saying that officers claimed they were being "constrained, [but] then the Federal Highway Police said: 'where'? So far we have nothing, no [formal] denunciation [...] And because they realised they would not succeed, they resorted to the Federal Public Ministry (Castro, government official, 2022b).

In early October, a couple of days after the first round of the election, the Federal Public Ministry concluded its investigation and published two legal decisions, one recommending the suspension of the MC project at the Federal Highway Police, and the other recommending the suspension of the cooperation agreement between MPD and MJSP.[79] The legal documents

[79] Although the decision was a recommendation, the document stated that non-compliance or lack of adequate juridical justification could lead the Federal Public Ministry to press charges against both institutions (Brazil, 2022d; 2022e).

made no formal accusations to the parties involved, but the legal reasoning implied that the cooperation agreement stood in violation of the secular character of the state: "the preservation of the principle of secularity is a demonstration of respect on part of the state and all religious orientations, beliefs and non-beliefs, which may be exercised in plain equality of conditions and within appropriate environment, without state interference or sponsorship" (Brazil, 2022d).

The documents further recommend MJSP to "abstain from continuing the distribution of Bibles or any other religious material" to any security institution across the country; to suspend "the use of the Daily Bread Public Security Application at federal institutions"; to suspend the organisation of "religious, proselytist, or devotional activities from any religious orientation, even in the modality of cooperation, lecture Cycles or Spiritual Assistance courses"; to abstain "from using public spaces, its services or servants, for the practice of any religious, proselytist or devotional act from any religious orientation, in all national territory"; and to immediately "withdraw every religious or devotional material" distributed via the cooperation agreement to any public security institution (Brazil 2022e).

With this decision, the Spiritual Assistance policy was forced to a halt at MJSP. The Highway Federal Police decided to appeal the recommendation, hoping that higher courts would reverse in its favour (Carvalho, MC coordinator, 2023). For both MPD and MJSP, however, there was a feeling that it was better to slow down and avoid more media exposure (Almeida, MC coordinator, 2022). Three civil societies organisations came out in favour of the MJSP. The Brazilian Commission of Chaplaincy published a motion of repudiation against judicial recommendations, claiming it had a "clearly prejudiced bias", and attacked the "right to religious freedom" (CBC, 2022, p. 1). The Federal Chaplaincy Commission also published a motion of repudiation, requesting higher legal institutions to reverse the order, "so that precious RELIGIOUS FREEDOM may continue in our beloved Brazil", and that chaplains may continue to "take peace and hope to those afflicted" (CONFECAP, 2022).

The Brazilian Institute of Law and Religion, a prominent far-right think tank whose many members participated in Bolsonaro's government, published a lengthy report in defence of spiritual assistance within the security forces, arguing that the Brazilian model of secularism "should be understood from concepts that valorise the cooperation between State and Religion, pointing towards the common good, never to restrict religious freedom and the spiritual element of human beings' dignity, as is happening in this case" (IBDR, 2022, p. 25).

The political tides were, however, changing. Bolsonaro's defeat to Lula in the second round, on 30 October 2022, signified not only a radical change in security policies, but the whole structure of MJSP came under intense scrutiny. There were widespread reports that

minister Anderson Torres, together with Silvinei Vasquez, the Highway Federal Police's chief, had ordered security forces to impose a police blockade in key electoral strongholds of the PT in some Northeastern states to avoid voters from reaching the ballots (Braga and Camargo, 2023). Further, officers at the Highway Federal Police were denouncing that they were being forced to attend Christian religious events promoted by the institution during work (Bonfim, 2022c). In this context, "the political climate became complicated" (Castro, government official, 2022b). According to Castro, the secretary at SENASP "became afraid and said: 'man, this will create problems in the future, I will not be in the post anymore and will have to respond [judicially], so let's do this: we comply with all [recommendations]" (Castro, government official, 2022b).[80] On 1 December, the Union's Gazette published the suspension of the cooperation agreement between MPD and MJSP (Brazil, 2022f).

Moreover, given the policy's dependency on MPD, "by accepting this recommendation, the [Spiritual Assistance] project basically ended" (Castro, government official, 2022b). In our last interview, in January 2023, Castro said that "The spiritual assistance [policy] ended. Well, it ended in air quotes. The cooperation agreement ended, the secretary complied with all the absurd recommendations from the prosecutors. But, like, these actions continued, at the state level" (Castro, government official, 2023). This was an important insight. Given that media attention, political opposition, and the judicial investigations aimed at the cooperation agreement, and not at the Spiritual Assistance policy, Evangelical base-building within the police was unchallenged. In fact, they continued to thrive outside the federal government. According to Castro, "the voluntary chaplaincy is being strengthened. The Spiritual Assistance project basically gave a vision: 'look, we need to have regulation, to improve qualification. I think we won regarding those points" (Castro, government official, 2023). In fact, already under Lula's government, Castro was requested to return to his home state, where he was originally a Military Police officer: "they are calling me to develop the chaplaincy in the state, to implement it in the Military Police. They do not have institutional chaplaincy" (Castro, government official, 2023).

Regarding MPD, the blowback to the cooperation agreement was also seen as an opportunity to strengthen the Evangelical MC's national network from other levels. First, by articulating with the Evangelical caucus to "work on a law project, we're presenting it to

[80] In our last interview, in January 2023, Castro reinforced the view that MJSP managers felt constrained given the many imprisonments of officials from Bolsonaro's government.

deputies and senators, it is a necessity" (Almeida, MC coordinator, 2022b).[81] Second, MPD continued to work with state governments: "because in reality who makes things [happen] are the states, the Military Police and Fire Brigades of the states have MCs. And because there are only one or two chaplains for troops of 15,000-20,000 people, they need voluntary chaplains" (Almeida, MC coordinator, 2022b). Third, both the online application and the national chaplaincy course continued, as these products were being developed prior to the cooperation agreement.[82] Lastly, Almeida claimed that MPD was seeking to make a new cooperation agreement with Lula's administration, as they saw it was a government that "will not want to be enemies with the police. He [Lula] realised that [the previous government] was too much associated [with the police], and he will want to demonstrate work for them. He will not want to stop something that is important. We perceive this" (Almeida, MC coordinator, 2022b). Thus, if the policy fell at the federal level, Evangelical MCs could continue to expand organically at the state level given the largely autonomous nature of police organisations, which are overseen by state, not federal, governments.

Conclusion

This chapter has analysed the process of consolidation of the Evangelical MC at the national level and, relatedly, how the far-right attempted to institutionalise Evangelical pacification as a public security policy at the federal government - something which previously had been limited to the state government level. There were two simultaneous processes in this: a political opening since Temer's government which was carried on to Bolsonaro's government, and the activism of Evangelical military chaplains and government officials who pushed for the construction of a Spiritual Assistance policy at MJSP.

This policy, however, was constructed in partnership with, and became highly dependent on, the workings of an Evangelical transnational church, MPD, which had been working to strengthen Evangelical MCs nationally. Basing their base-building activities on *PMs de Cristo*'s Evangelical pacification doctrine, MPD managed to sign a cooperation agreement with MJSP and became the main protagonist of the policy's implementation, providing for the budget as well the delivery of the spiritually-related services to security

[81] He did not specify what type of legislation MPD was working on, but it is likely to be on allowing spiritual assistance to take place in security institutions at the federal level, something which he acknowledged was lacking (Almeida, MC coordinator, 2022b).
[82] However, MPD still advertises the course as part of the partnership with MJSP (Cursos Qualicare, n.d.).

forces. Once the agreement came to public attention, after a series of denunciations claiming the project was violating constitutional rights, the policy entered a period of crisis. A judicial investigation ensued, resulting in the suspension of the cooperation agreement, which was followed by the collapse of the whole spiritual assistance policy. This coincided with the electoral defeat of Bolsonaro in the 2022 elections. However, the impact that public scrutiny had on the government as a whole was considerably less consequential than other scandals.

This happened for three reasons: first, the focus of media attention was limited to isolated facts around the cooperation agreement, leading the whole structure of the Spiritual Assistance policy to be overlooked. Second, other political scandals with higher stakes for the electoral cycle were prioritised by the opposition, which overshadowed any deeper scrutiny into the political significance of Evangelical activism within the police and its relationship to police politicisation. Third, as judicial investigations began and the government lost the election, MJSP policymakers quickly decided to shut down the project for fears of exposure and imprisonment. Within pro-Bolsonaro policy circles, common perception was that government supporters were being persecuted by the establishment, especially so after the coup attempt on 8 January 2023, which saw many close allies of Bolsonaro imprisoned. Together, these factors would allow the actors involved to re-articulate, and in fact deepen, the Evangelical MCs outside the remit of the federal government. As was shown, MPD continued to deliver its services and support to police organisations at the state level.

At this point of the investigation, it has become clear that the new Christian Militarism has become a consolidated social force at the national level, and is likely to continue to exert influence in the security field in Brazil. However, this is also the point where the research ends. In the last four empirical chapters, I have demonstrated that Evangelicals have gained prominence and emerged as key actors of bottom-up pacification strategies, notably through articulating base-building projects within the police forces, under a democratic setting. Having investigated the relationship between far-right politics and pacification theoretically, historically, and empirically, it is now time to piece the research puzzle together and answer the main questions asked in the introduction. This is what the conclusion sets out to do.

Chapter 9 - Conclusion

This thesis investigated the impact of religious activism in the security sector in Brazil in the context of far-right mainstreaming from the early 2010s until the end of Bolsonaro's government (2019-2022). Specifically, the thesis analysed the role of Evangelical MC projects with the police, which in recent years have succeeded in constructing socially effective and politically consequential solidarity networks aiming to win the hearts and minds of officers. I argued that this type of activism reflects a broader trend of merging Evangelical ideology with militarised social practices, which has been central to the far-right's political agenda. I called this merger the new Christian Militarism and provided, first, a qualitative historical analysis of its development in Brazil and, second, an idiographic case study of Evangelical MCs as an illustration of a wider strategy of social ordering pursued by far-right groups.

To conduct the investigation, I mobilised the theoretical framework of pacification, considered the "coercive reordering of social relations" (Baron et al., 2019, p. 203). The framework addressed key gaps found in the far-right literature, such as the lack of engagement with conceptualising the far-right in the Global South and a persistent functionalist view of far-right agency in periods of crisis. The framework had two important consequences for the research: the first was to conceptually consider the far-right as a long-term feature of Brazilian politics, developing historically as pacification strategies were shaped and reshaped. The second was that, in a democratic context, pacification is seen to rely more on achieving legitimacy in civil society compared to authoritarian regimes, which opened the space for other actors to articulate their own pacification strategies from below. The expectation was that the theoretical framework would aid in understanding the historical relationship between Christian militarism and the far-right in Brazil on the one hand, and how Evangelical actors mobilise influence with the police forces, on the other.

This conclusion utilises the main findings of this thesis to answer the research questions set in Chapter 1. Then, it considers the contribution of this research to the wider literature and points to future venues of research.

9.1 Answering the research questions

This thesis asked four research questions. First, what are the social bases of the far-right in Brazil? Second, what is the relationship between security concerns and religious activism in the Brazilian far-right? Third, how do Evangelical groups mobilise influence with the police forces? Fourth, what are the political implications of this activism? Those questions were logically structured from the more general to the particular level. I begin answering the empirical ones (questions 3 and 4), and then build up to the more general aspects of the Brazilian far-right (questions 2 and 1).

How do Evangelical groups mobilise influence with the police forces? Evangelicals and the police constituted one of the main forces of Bolsonaro's elections in 2018. As argued in Chapter 1, the merger of Evangelical ideology with militarism has become increasingly prominent in the last decade. My research has shown that in the case of Evangelical activism with the police, this merger is not the mirror-image of the far-right turn at the macro-level. Rather, I demonstrated that this type of phenomenon goes beyond electoral politics and the far-right's ideological hook to *Bolsonarismo*. In fact, it is a highly organised movement comprising a variety of Evangelical organisations operating across the country in the form of MCs, both institutional and voluntary. While these organisations did benefit from far-right mainstreaming, as evidenced in Chapter 8 with the construction of a federal security policy under Bolsonaro's government called 'Spiritual Assistance', I argued that the base-building work MCs develop precedes *Bolsonarismo* and grows independently of party linkages and elite-level articulations. Thus, both Evangelical and police radicalisation to the far-right of the spectrum has other sources of legitimation and includes an array of social practices.

Via the MC, Evangelical base-building has become increasingly institutionalised within the police forces and has become a key ingredient of police politicisation. This is not only due to the strength of missionary activism within the police, but because police commanders and security actors increasingly perceive Evangelical military chaplains as strategic assets in policing. In fact, as shown in Chapter 6, there are many parallels between the way the MC is strategically designed to the historical dynamics of pacification, which has combined notions of religious moralisation as an instrument of 'civilisation' and 'progress'. From interviewing project coordinators, pastors, and chaplains; visiting project headquarters; as well analysing the intellectual work of Evangelical MCs, it was possible to dissect three interrelated factors related to Evangelical mobilisation within the police: their social base, ideology, and political project.

In terms of its social base, Evangelical base-building connects to real-life issues affecting police labour such as mental health problems, rigid hierarchy, precarious work conditions, and productivity pressures. MCs develop base-building activities ranging from providing spiritual assistance (prayer, mental health counselling, Bible studies, funerary rituals), social assistance (charity activities, donations to families of police officers, financial loans), and career valorisation (events celebrating police as heroes of society, concession of church infrastructure for police meetings, conferences and ceremonies, and targeted campaigns during national holidays). These activities are typically marketed as 'humanising police labour', with the potential to 'solve malaises' associated with police violence and corruption (Alves, 2017).

The issue of career valorisation, arguably one of the most politicised themes by conservative and far-right actors, have been developed efficiently by these Evangelical solidarity networks, providing a place of community and solidarity - often framed as a 'religious brotherhood' - to precarious police officers. This means that these networks tend to grow organically and in a grey zone combining both formal and informal institutional channels. Thus, the exponential growth of Evangelical MCs in the last decade has been closely associated with constructing a social base that capitalises on career issues that have been at the heart of police politicisation.

In terms of ideology, the research was able to uncover what I consider to be a coherent and well-articulated Evangelical pacification doctrine. This doctrine, constructed over the years by *PMs de Cristo* and adopted by other MC projects - institutional and voluntary - is rooted in an intense process of intellectualisation, which can be found in the many books they produce, the surveys they conduct within police institutions, the conferences they organise, and the partnerships they establish with like-minded organisations across the country. Concretely, this doctrine has two dimensions, one internal and the other external.

Internally, at the level of individual officers, I found that chaplaincy activism goes much beyond simple mental health practices as marketed by those organisations. As such, prayer interventions, counselling, and doctrinal activities are also focused in displacing tensions and contradictions associated with police activity, especially in relation to the use of force, and a reinterpretation of the social purposes of policing through theological arguments. Thus, it was common to see references to police authority being divinely-sanctioned, and acts of police violence justified Biblical grounds.

Externally, At the level of police-community relationships, I found that chaplains have been used as para-legal 'back-ups' to solve local conflicts, with cases ranging from mediating community relations to some more peculiar instance of crimes being addressed by chaplains through the use of exorcism or evangelisation. From a more strategic perspective, police have used military chaplains as a means of building enduring police-community relations in marginalised urban areas where tensions between local communities and police have been historically high, leveraging the penetration of Evangelical churches in the social fabric of marginalised urban spaces to aid building trust with the police. To both Evangelical chaplains and police commanders involved in such community policing projects, the goal is to use religion as an instrument of transformation of society through correcting morals of individuals and seeking their spiritual conversion.

In terms of political project, this thesis has shown that Evangelical MCs have gained considerable political prestige with key security stakeholders, often leading to the institutionalisation of voluntary MC projects within police units. Evangelical MCs have been engaged in networking across states, seeking to actively expand the space of missionary base-building within the police through sharing best practices and successful chaplaincy models. Further, investigating the cooperation agreement between one particular organisation, *Ministérios Pão Diário* (Our Daily Bread Ministries – MPD), and Bolsonaro's government, led to an unexpected discovery: this agreement was part of a broader federal security policy being constructed at *Ministério da Justiça e Segurança Pública* (Ministry of Justice and Public Security – MJSP) named 'Spiritual Assistance'.

Concretely, the policy represented the consolidation of the Evangelical MC at the national level and the attempt to institutionalise Christian Militarism as an ideology and policy promoted by the state. MPD became the main stakeholder of this policy, mimicking the functions of the state as promoter, funder, regulator, and implementer of 'Spiritual Assistance' for the police forces. Although the policy officially ended at the federal level following an investigation led by the prosecutor's office, I found that this project has continued at the state-level, mainly due to police organisations being largely autonomous.

What are the political implications of this activism? Impact is something difficult to measure objectively. For this research, I did not investigate the extent to which officers make policing decisions based on religious beliefs, or whether community policing projects have been utilising spiritual assistance tactics with local communities, beyond anecdotal evidence from interviews and fieldwork material. Instead, my research has demonstrated that powerful Evangelical groups are engaged in base-building activities with the police, and that this has a

social base that allows them to grow, an ideology with a very particular conception of the role of policing, and a political project to expand base-building activities nationally. Thus, in terms of impact, the findings can only make inferences based on the content of what Evangelical MCs are pursuing, not whether their project has succeeded or not.

I claim that Evangelical activism has important political consequences for democracy, which can be broken down into two arguments. First, given that police institutions in Brazil are overtly autonomous and enjoy close to little external control, Evangelical activism may become deeply embedded in police politics and therefore a lot more difficult to be held accountable by traditional institutional channels. Second, given that Evangelical missionary activism is guided by a politics of domination as much as humanitarian concerns over the well-being of police officers, Evangelical base-building may be an important vector in de-democratisation as the entwinement of religious ideology with militarism has the potential to enhance violent forms of policing.

Evangelical actors considered their missionary activism as a process of strengthening democracy. For some, the MC was seen as an important tool to advance strategic objectives of the state and to enhance policing. For others, it represented a historical justice to the 'hypocritical secularism' of Brazilian security institutions, which for centuries has been dominated by Catholic hegemony. For yet others, the participation of Evangelical chaplains in community policing projects reflected the idea of "democracy on the frontline", that is, popular participation of morally correct individuals in the security governance of a municipality or a state. Costa, a member of *PMs de Cristo*, said that "intrinsic to chaplains is this very interesting dimension of democracy which is to work diversity" (Costa, MC coordinator, 2022). He mentioned that the work of chaplains reflected "everything that a democracy should have, the protagonism of good people, so that Evil does not take hold of public spaces with corruption" (Costa, MC coordinator, 2022). Moreover, in his view, the work of spiritual assistance within communities functioned like a "communitarian armour", that is, "the tendency is that if this is taken good care of, it will persist in time, irrespective of government or party", and hence "you have something pure, which is democracy in practice, on the frontline" (Costa, MC coordinator, 2022).

On the other hand, academics and security experts I interviewed saw potential risks of this type of activism to democracy. According to Pontes, this type of activism is anti-democratic as it is based "on suppositions that go against universal rights, such as the principle of rationality of public decisions" (Pontes, academic, 2022). She reasoned that if subjective things like faith are used as principles of decision-making, especially in policing where the use

or threat of violence is always a possibility, then it becomes harder for the officers to be held accountable. Monteiro, a security expert, concurred. In his view, this was due to the "institutional disarticulation" of Brazilian policing and the ways that decisions to deploy violence are overtly autonomous for officers: "the less institutionality there is regulating the police in the streets, more space there is for their individuality to take decisions, for their discretion to operate" (Monteiro, security analyst, 2022). This space of discretion, in turn, is "certainly influenced by the values that constitute that individual", and if those values are "strongly marked by religiosity, then it can impact" (Marques, security analyst, 2022). On the other hand, Monteiro argued, the more regulation and oversight over police activity, the "less space there would be for this. Today religious values are competing not only for the hearts and minds, but also for the institutions" (Marques, security analyst, 2022).

This research has shown that Evangelicals mobilise influence on two levels: police mandates broadly understood, which relates to notions concerning the role of state violence in the making of social order; and and police-community relations, which reflect key elements of democratic politics, such as participation, justice, and citizenship. In liberal countries, the police is considered a secular institution whose mandate and operational practice derive, in principle, from rational procedures and the rule of law. In Brazil, the federal constitution, in its article 19, forbids public institutions to "maintain relations of dependency and alliance" with religious institutions, and to "create distinctions between Brazilians or preferences favouring some" over others (Brazil, 1985). Based on the findings of this research, it is clear that the base-building work of Evangelicals within police institutions represent a relativisation of the secular character of the state. This relativisation, however, takes on a very peculiar form, which may contribute to shaping hybrid forms of democratic governance, where appropriations of democratic principles are re-mapped onto dominant forms of police culture that are historically racialised and violent.

Considering that officers are viewed as 'street-corner politicians' due to their informal community interactions and influence on law-and-order politics (Muir, 1979), I claim that the pacification model of Evangelical MCs can potentially enhance authoritarian methods of social control. On the level of police mandates, a consequence of treating policing from Biblical interpretation is that it shifts any discussion of structural issues related to police violence to individual responsibility, which can be supposedly corrected via spiritual interventions. On the level of police-community relations, Evangelical pacification seeks to generate consensus that police officers are trustworthy public figures and legitimise militarised forms of policing. Further, it envisions the 'moral regeneration' of urban territories affected by violence through

evangelisation. The chaplain is a key figure in this outward activity, acting as a broker of police-church-community relations and as someone who, together with the police, can bring about a "transformation of the social fabric' (Costa, MC coordinator, 2022) as well as a process of "political change" (Alves, 2012). Rather than demanding the state to invest more in public policies targeting inequality and crime prevention, the position is to altogether reject any interventionist policies related to welfare, leaving it for religious groups in civil society to correct socio-economic distortions whilst simultaneously being supportive of increased policing and militarisation, that is, increased enhancement of the state's coercive powers. Thus, the pacification model adopted by Evangelical MCs points to a process of far-right order-building that goes beyond *Bolsonarismo*. Mobilising ideals of militarised warfare against 'evil', Christian ethics and discipline, anti-statism, and policing as the quintessential function of democracy, Evangelical pacification condenses the far-right's political agenda into a model of grassroot base-building unmediated by party linkages, law, and democratic accountability. The result is the defence of the established social order, radicalising its points of tension related to structural problems such as inequality and racism, and the reproduction of authoritarian modes of policing with theocratic undertones.

What is the relationship between security concerns and religious activism in the Brazilian far-right? This research has shown that the concept of pacification has had a strong purchase among political elites in Brazil, becoming institutionalised in state legislation and mutating in the course of centuries to deal with different types of challenges to the dominant order. In all cycles analysed (colonial, imperial, National Security, and democratic), pacification has combined a logic of warfare with moralising, Christian ideology, enacted due to fear elites had of revolts from marginalised social groups and the dissolution of social hierarchies.

There were three main findings associated with the historical analysis of pacification. First, that militarism is a founding political force in Brazil and one that continues to guide the material and ideological components of social relations and institutions in the country, even in the current democratic period. Historically, Brazil's development as a dependent capitalist country has been inseparable from the construction of a centralising, militarised state anchored in structures of war and violence directed against marginalised populations, with the imperative to protect and reproduce a racialised, hierarchical, and authoritarian social order.

Second, that far-right is inseparable from Brazilian militarism. In fact, it can be argued that militarism *is* a far-right project. In the transition from Empire to Republic, the military constituted itself as a 'moderating force', periodically intervening in politics to uphold the

dominant order when it was challenged either by revolts or attempts to democratise institutions and incorporate the popular sectors through redistributive social policies. Militarism reached its highest expression during the military dictatorship in Brazil (1964-1985), where a far-right regime was sustained via a pacification strategy that used repression and political terror to neutralise working class mobilisation in the context of the Cold War. Thus, the political re-activation of the military under Bolsonaro's government was a testament not only to vestiges of the military regime during the democratic period, but of a much older tradition of militarisation of political life that dates to the colonial period.

Third, Brazilian militarism has always been a Christian Militarism, for centuries of Roman Catholic monopoly. The Portuguese colonial project made no distinctions between its messianic ideal to Christianise the New World and the violence that followed it, as espoused by the Luso-Hispanic Just War tradition. The military functions of territorial occupation, the founding of settlements, and war making in the form of conquest against natives, were all heavily influenced by Counter-reform ideology spearheaded by Jesuits, who led the conversion of natives. The transfer of the Crown to Brazil in 1808 assured the continuities with the *ancién regime*, in stark contrast with the new-born Republics in Latin America, whose independence struggles represented a rupture with Europe. With Catholicism being the official religion of the Empire, there was continuous theological justification for the social order founded on slavery. Although the military developed as a more autonomous political actor toward the end of the nineteenth century – leading the Republican movement that called for the separation of church and state – the hegemony of Catholicism remained unquestioned throughout the twentieth century.

Just like pacification did not disappear with re-democratisation, Christian Militarism continued to play a key role in what I called democratic pacification. This new cycle of pacification entailed a decentralised policy design that while still focused on militarism, incorporated new actors from civil society, such as NGOs and churches, in a paradoxical coalition between progressive and conservative forces. Thus, policing combined militarism with the mobilisation of human rights discourse and actors in a wider strategy of social control of marginalised populations, as seen with the military's engagement in the *Mission des Nations Unies pour la stabilisation en Haïti* (United Nations Mission for the Stabilisation of Haiti - MINUSTAH) and the *Unidades de Polícia Pacificadoras* (Pacifying Police Units – UPPs) project. Democratic pacification reflected the context of *Lulismo*, the guiding ideology of the *Partido dos Trabalhadores* (Workers' Party – PT) in power, especially with the discourse of 'non-indifference' and 'solidarity diplomacy', which incentivised the military to participate in

peace-keeping operations at home and abroad (Finazzi and Amaral, 2017; Soares, 2012). For the PT governments, this was also an opportunity to set a new role and public image for the military as an institution guided by human rights principles. However, democratic pacification ended up having the opposite effect: it contributed to strengthening the far-right through a military re-capture of politics, as a large portion of the high-ranking military elite that participated in pacification operations at home and abroad enabled the military to take a more prominent role in Brazil's security politics. Discursively, Bolsonaro's government also made frequent associations between his political agenda and the long tradition of pacification in the country.

A key feature of democratic pacification was the mobilisation of Evangelicalism. In both Haiti and Rio, the military learned that success for operations could not rely on force alone and that mobilising symbolic, religious elements was an effective way of bolstering ideological support and justify military occupations. Via the Army's MC, Evangelical conservative ideology was activated as part of a wider project of order-building and violence regulation in marginalised urban areas in Rio's *favelas*. However, as I demonstrated, this strategy went beyond the UPPs in Rio de Janeiro. With the base-building activities developed in MCs, Evangelical groups constructed a pacification strategy from below within the wider policing milieu.

This type of base-building, in turn, has found novel ways of institutionalisation from bottom-up articulations, and with the far-right in government, a window of opportunity was opened for Evangelical actors to institutionalise the MC, especially voluntary ones. Thus, what separates the 'old' Christian militarism from its newer versions is, one the one hand, a shift from top-down strategies centralised on the military, to bottom-up articulations that are decentralised within many police organisations; on the other, a shift from Catholic monopoly to emerging Evangelicalism as an alternative ideological strategy to pacify marginalised populations and engage them in order-building. Importantly, both historically and presently, Christian Militarism has been a key element in far-right politics, as it taps into the far-right's political project of a Christian national identity that violently controls marginalised populations through military force.

What are the social bases of the far-right in Brazil? This is a broad question with many possible answers depending on the angle analysed. The Brazilian far-right is shaped by, and receives support from, many social forces: the Christian far-right (comprising Evangelicals as well as Catholics), security forces, economic elites (big business, finance, and neoliberal technocrats), *ruralistas* or 'ruralists' (large landowners and anti-environmentalist activists),

neo-fascists, cultural authoritarians, transnational movements (like the *Tradição, Família e Propriedade* or 'Tradition, Family, and Property'), among others (Webber, 2020; Gallego et al., 2019; Firmiano, 2020). In this research I focused specifically on the activism of Evangelicals within security institutions, whose merger can be considered a social force of its own. The findings of this thesis, however, contribute to a better understanding of the social base of the far-right in two ways.

First, that the far-right is much more entrenched in the political system than the narrative on the current 'Global far-right' suggests. While we certainly live in a context of global crises that have been capitalised by far-right movements and parties through economic and cultural backlashes against globalisation and multiculturalism, the far-right in Brazil has also been much more structural to the political system rather than a symptom of its shortcomings. This is because, in Brazil, the far-right is connected to the inherited legacies of colonialism, slavery, hyper-inequality, and authoritarianism, which shaped the state-making process and development of capitalism in the country throughout centuries. Although the far-right has tended to emerge more in periods of crisis, this has been to uphold the dominant social order founded and sustained on those very legacies. Thus, I claim that the far-right, especially in its Christian Militarism form, is a stabilising force of the dominant political order in Brazil. Although it certainly works in the sense to destabilise liberal democracy, I do not consider democratic norms and institutions as structural features of Brazilian political order like the legacies of colonialism, slavery, hyper-inequalities, and authoritarianism. Rather, democracy should be seen as an ongoing struggle and unfinished political project, of which the far-right is a key contestant.

Second, relatedly, the far-right does not depend solely on an electoral movement to continue growing. The emphasis on electoral cycles, party politics, and elite-level articulations, while certainly important, overlook the extent to which far-right movements expand organically from networks that combine both civil society and state actors, such as the solidarity networks I have investigated in this thesis. As shown in Chapter 5, the progressive ideology of *Lulismo* contributed to Evangelical growth and mobilisation in the security sector. This was in part led by the process of incorporation of subaltern classes into a new consumer culture, and in part as the result of the failure to address violence and insecurity in marginalised urban areas. Evangelicals became key mediators in the regulation of violence and provision of safety nets to vulnerable populations, while in Congress they became increasingly more

articulated with conservative and punitivist agendas.[83] Likewise, since the fall of Bolsonaro in late 2022, and under Lula's new progressive government, the far-right has not weakened, because those bottom-up, organic networks continue to thrive. This is not to dismiss the importance of far-right parties or leaders, but to emphasise that the far-right's political project can be constructed from other, more informal, channels.

9.2 Contribution and future venues of research

This research contributes to the wider literature on far-right politics in one important way. First, by providing a deeper understanding of the dynamics of far-right politics in Global South countries. As shown in Chapter 2, Western-centric studies on the far-right lack engagement with far-right politics in the Global South and tend to interpret the 'global far-right' from the template of Global North far-right movements and parties (Pinheiro-Machado and Vargas-Maia, 2023). While this thesis was not methodologically designed for hypothesis generation or comparative inferences with regards to other Global South countries, insights from this research can be potentially used to inquire on the far-right in other places in the Global South where religious fundamentalism, militarism, and violent forms of capitalist restructuring entwine. While the interaction and intensity of these factors can vary greatly across the Global South, their combination can indicate the construction of hybrid regimes, where formally liberal and democratic institutions exist while some sectors of state and society undergo a process of far-right radicalisation.

This research also adds to the pool of knowledge on the intersections between religion and security in Brazil, especially in policing. Brazilians know very little about the values and worldviews police officers have. This has resulted in a view that the politics of punitivism and militarism are a given, amorphous force. Who the police are, what they think, how they perceive the role of violence in their duty, and the effects of work conditions in police culture are therefore overlooked as a political issue. Such dispositions have also impacted academic research, where a static view of police culture is reproduced and defined in relation to its negative attributes, to a degree that "violence and corruption appear as something endemic, and even inherent, to police areas" (Muniz, et al., 2018, p.169). While this thesis has not measured or surveyed police culture in Brazil, it contributed to understanding how religious activism -

[83] While this type of activism in the security sector is certainly not exclusively far-right, the far-right turn in Evangelicalism cannot be disconnected from this previous mobilisation.

which seeks to shape the politics of policing - functions and why it has expanded so much in recent years.

In terms of future research, three lines of inquiry appear as potential venues to explore. First, research should continue following the developments of Evangelical MCs nationally. As shown in the last chapter, after the Spiritual Assistance policy was disarticulated in the federal government, the groups involved decided to continue their work at the state level, where activities remain deregulated and police institutions enjoy a wide degree of autonomy to decide whether to accept or not such initiatives within the barracks. A second line of inquiry would be to conduct overt ethnographic observations with military chaplains to follow their activities on a day-to-day basis, which this research was unable to do due to Covid-19 restrictions at the time of fieldwork. This would aid in providing a much more comprehensive portrait of what base-building (at the internal and external levels) looks like in practice beyond anecdotal evidence or doctrinarian principles. The third line of inquiry would be to trace the transnational activism of Evangelical MCs. During fieldwork, I had access to materials that pointed towards similar developments in other countries like the United States, South Korea, Philippines, Zimbabwe, and South Africa. Moreover, I learned that many Evangelical police associations have constructed transnational networks, engaging in the exchange of ideas and practices that advance the notion of policing as a religious phenomenon. Because of my single-case focus in Brazil, I was not able to utilise this material and analyse its broader significance within the Global Evangelical movement. A good starting point would be to conduct studies about the Association of Christian Military Fellowships (ACFM), an international forum comprising Evangelical MCs from all regions of the world, and which also encompasses policing.

Appendix 1 - List of Nvivo codes

List 1 - Evangelicalism and policing (chapters 5-8)		
Main themes	Evangelicals and security	Democratic pacification
Sub-themes	1. Christian Militarism 2. Police and Religion in Brazil 2.1 Evangelical police culture 3. Regulation of violence in the urban margins 4. Spiritual Warfare	1. Community policing 2. Effects of the UPP 3. The strengthening of the far-right 4. The Evangelical Military Chaplaincy 4.1 Internal role 4.2 External role 4.2.1 Redemption model 4.3 moral education 5. MINUSTAH 5.1 counter-insurgency tactics 6. Why the Army mobilised Evangelicals 6.1 6.2 Operation Archangel 7. Operation St. Francis

List 2 - *PMs de Cristo*'s pacification doctrine			
Main themes	The sources of violence (contextual)	Career valorisation (internal role)	The transformation of the social fabric (external role)
Sub-themes	1. Social violence 2. Spiritual Warfare 3. State Fragility 4. Base-building 4.1 Church and Police 4.2 Chaplaincy 4.3 Evangelisation	1. Police Career 1.1 Mental and Physical Health 1.1.2 Ethical conduct 1.2 Authority 1.3 Equivalence of Christ and Police Officers 1.4 Justification of violence 2. Deviance 2.1 Family issues 3. Sentimentalisation 3.1 Role of miracles	1. Community Policing 1.1 Participation 1.2 Legitimacy 1.3 Transformation of society 2. Operational issues

Appendix 2 - List of interviewees

The list below is organised according to name (pseudonymised), profession, date of interview, and place of interview.

Almeida, MC coordinator at *Ministérios Pão Diário* (Our Daily Bread Ministries - MPD), June 2022 (Zoom) and January 2023 (Google Meets).

Carvalho, MC coordinator at Federal Highway Police, December 2022 (Zoom).

Castro, government official at *Ministério da Justiça e Segurança Pública* (Ministry of Justice and Public Security - MJSP), June 2022 (Google Meets), November 2022 (Google Meets), and January 2023 (Google Meets).

Costa, MC coordinator at *PMs de Cristo* ('Officers of Christ'), August 2022 (face to face).

Garcia, MC coordinator at *Universal nas Forças Policiais* (Universal in the Police Forces - UFP), from *Igreja Universal do Reino de Deus* (Universal Church of the Kingdom of God - IURD), August 2022 (face to face).

Martins, military chaplain at the *Polícia Militar do Distrito Federal* (Military Police of the Federal District – PMDF), January 2023 (Zoom).

Mendes, chaplain at *PMs de Cristo* (Officers of Christ), August 2022 (face to face).

Monteiro, security analyst, February 2022 (Zoom).

Moraes, academic, June 2022 (Zoom).

Moura, ex-military chaplain in the Army, June 2022 (Zoom).

Pontes, academic, January 2022 (Google Meets).

Ramos, Evangelical pastor, May 2022 (Zoom).

Reis, Evangelical pastor, June 2022 (Zoom).

Ribeiro, academic, March 2022 (Zoom).

Silveira, MC coordinator at *Universal nas Forças Policiais* 'Universal in the Police Forces - UFP), from *Igreja Universal do Reino de Deus* (Universal Church of the Kingdom of God - IURD), April 2022 (Google Meets) and August 2022 (face to face).

Souza, chaplain at *PMs de Cristo* ('Officers of Christ'), August 2022 (Google Meets).

Vieira, academic, February 2022 (Zoom).

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