

## **Deconstructing Automatisms: Militia Practices and Neopentecostal Formations in Rio De Janeiro**

Fernando Brancoli  
Pedro Henrique Prado Ramos Vasquez

The 2012 elections for governor in Rio de Janeiro gather special attention from national and international media analysts. The city politics was under scrutiny with the mega events hosted Brazil, like the Summer Olympic Games and the Soccer World Cup. In this sense, the strategies of the candidates for the organization of the city - mainly for public safety issues - were dissected and analysed for months leading up to the election day.

In this context, as the disputes were being centralized in the candidates best placed in the pools, Luis Carlos Pezão (PMDB) and Marcelo Crivela (PRB), talks about the supposed contenders' governance mechanisms began to be galvanized. In the mainstream narrative, the first one would gather support, along other segments, from the "milícias", parastatal organizations that uses extortion of some communities to gather control of entire neighborhoods. The 'milícias' would be one of the greatest contemporary security issues of Rio, accused of violent actions and recurrent cases of murders and violence. In turn, Crivela would be mainly supported by the neo-Pentecostal religious groups (The Guardian, 2012; O Globo, 2012). This binary narrative, reinforced by accusations from both politicians in televised debates, strengthened the discourse of an 'militia assault' against the state, building the image that evangelical sectors could serve as an opposition movement to these groups. Both would operate on a complete and antagonic mechanism of governance and social organization.

The objective of this paper is to critically deconstruct these two premises. First, through a genealogical analysis of milícias groups in Rio de Janeiro, we will establish a reflection that these agents never behaved as "parallel states", as often described. Far from "invading the state," such actors establish enmeshment processes with government sectors, redefining practices and legitimacy in a complex system - involving elections and political support. We support this discourse with the concept of "parastatal" (Amar, 2014) to better represent these agents, believing that these considerations sophisticates the analysis, moving away from the narrative that the state, an isolated and sealed actor, would - and could - be attacked by external agents.

The second objective is to demonstrate that the relationship between neo-Pentecostal communities and militia groups in Rio de Janeiro is also more complex than the speech presented at the elections. Through qualitative analysis of polling data in areas controlled by the armed groups - but with strong evangelical presence - we seek to relativize the discussions that these two actors would intrinsically and automatically possess antagonistic models of social organization. The data collection rearticulates these relationships and propose a different mechanism of explanation - dissimilar from the "zero sum game" between these two elements.

This specific deconstruction of the binary narratives galvanize the complexification of the militias and the evangelical groups, demonstrating that a less absolute interpretation sheds light to a new framework of practices. We believe that these arguments promotes a potent reflection on the processes of power and legitimacy of violence in Rio de Janeiro, reinforcing how these actors can function on multiple and overlapping movements.

## **Genealogical Notes: militias as parastatal actors**

On an interview to a television program, in 2006, the then-Mayor of Rio de Janeiro, Eduardo Paes, ally of Pezão, made a clear public statement in support of militias (TV Globo, 2006). Although the groups were not recognized at that time by such nomenclature, Paes, using the term "policia mineira", congratulated the policeman and firefighters who decided to create the group, arguing that their main objective was to protect the communities against drug cartels. The logic advocated at that time was that these were "parties organized by the community", legitimately operating to guarantee the order in areas that the state could not act.

Also in 2006, the militia groups began to be more widely reported by the Brazilian press, mainly on charges that these groups were requesting "payment" of the local populations in exchange of protection against drug trafficking groups<sup>1</sup>. Furthermore, these groups were monopolizing the sale of illegal television services, gas and transportation. Although one can identify variations on the methods, the majority of the militias operate on five specific points, discussed by Cano (2008). The first one would be the control of territorial and population areas by irregular armed groups, (b) coercion, to some extent, against the inhabitants and traders, (c) individual profit as a central element, beyond the rhetorical justifications offered, (d) legitimating discourse on the liberation of trafficking and the establishment of a protective order. (e) participation of armed state agents in command positions.

---

<sup>1</sup> A specific case made these groups into the first pages nationwide, when a group of journalists, in 2008, investigating the role of militias in Rio communities, were tortured by some of its members.

The emergence of these actors, as pointed out by Misse (2001: 9), is not necessarily innovative - it can be included in a long history of non-traditional coercive forces in Rio de Janeiro communities. The 1960s and '70s, for example, witnessed the emergence of death squads formed by military policeman. These underground groups had been initially created within the police forces in order to carry out extrajudicial actions, mainly murders. Subsequently, this type of coercive setting also began to demand payment by local small businessman to inhibit certain criminal practices. These groups would work, at least discursively, essentially to protect the community against drug trafficking gangs.

Later, in the 1990s, some of these organizations, particularly in the community at the west area of Rio de Janeiro, Rio das Pedras, also began to extort the inhabitants of the localities, not only the businessman. In this dynamic, these groups, often described as "policia mineira", would have a more sophisticated *modus operandi*: in addition to effectively promoting a supposed protection of the communities, the groups established more complex power processes. For example, Alvito (2001: 12) indicates how these organizations began to control community associations and communal centers. By regulating the more legitimate sectors, these groups also began to control daily life routines of the residents, with threats to those seen as deviant. Arrival and departure times, as well as authorization for parties, would be systematized in a specific way. Also, according to Misse (2001), the groups remained to be formed by members of the military police as well as firefighters and prison officers.

By regulating these micro-governance points in the communities, these organizations also began to work as connection points between the state and the citizens. The "policia mineira" effectively operated as gatekeepers, negotiating the demands and services in these areas. It is at this time, with the creation of solidarity

channels, that the 'policia mineira' started the process of raising political support and to use the control of the communities to allocate allies within the state logic.

The traditional genealogical narrative points out that the complexification of these groups lead to the constitution of contemporary militias. The first alteration, as pointed out by Alba Zaluar (2007: 2), would be the emphasis on the control over territory and the creation of rules of conduct, which did not exist previously. In addition, these organizations would also emphasize their political pretensions, financing candidates for state and local offices positions.

Since the 2000s, the expansion of militias was explicitly galvanized. Data from the Undersecretary of Public Safety of the state of Rio de Janeiro indicate that these groups have settled preferably in places where there wasn't any presence of criminal organizations dedicated to drug trafficking, especially in small localities. Of the 171 communities where there is the presence of militiamen, 119 of them were not dominated by criminal organizations before. These numbers relativize the traditional discourse that the militias were created as a reaction against narcogroups. According to the Militia Research Group, headed by state representative Marcelo Freixo, currently the militias dominate 86 communities, with the most significant in 'Rio das Pedras' and the 'Liga da Justiça', which operates in Campo Grande.

It is also important to note that the militias are not a homogeneous group, but a broad umbrella terminology that can indicate a variety of strategies and discursive legitimization actions. Nonetheless, the traditional narrative, materialized by Burgos (2002), points out that the militias have emerged in a process of "state vacuum", articulating that the incidence occurred due to the absence of state action, especially in the security field. In this sense, the capacity of the militias would be intrinsically related to operate in areas of "barbarism", establishing an "oasis of peace" in territories not

occupied by the state (Idem, 2002: 7). This kind of reflection finds support not only in political speeches, as above, but even in the press. Describing these groups in 2013, the conservative magazine *Veja* pointed out that they were acting in areas described as "land without laws (...) areas without the state" (See, 2013). Even politicians pointed out that the militias would be a good alternative against drug trafficking, with then-Mayor Cesar Maia, in 2002, saying it was a "lesser evil".

Approaching these processes as a simple deterioration of the rule of law prevents the analysis of important variables - mainly changes taking place in the state and in the public space. The increase in non-traditionally actors capacity is directly linked to changes in the state space and, in most cases, occurs with the approval and encouragement of the state itself. As already pointed out, discussions on militias are enmeshed with deliberations on the role of government and a possible loss of its agency, since alien actors would be supplanting activities previously understood as unique to the central administration. This narrative ends up imposing a reality in which the split between public and private is seen as always consolidated and not subject to amendment. In a sort of "zero sum game", these considerations indicate that the strengthening of non-state actors would involve necessarily the weakening of state premises.

For this scenario, the alternative interpretation introduced by Williams and Abrahansen (2012) support the narratives to complexify this movements, especially on agents acting on spaces formerly understood as public. Much of the discussion in relation to non-state actors related to security practices are commonly centered on reflections about the threats that these agents can represent for government authority structures. In this sense, the growth of private actors would necessarily represent the decrease and erosion of the legitimacy of the use of force.

However, in this analysis, we prefer to address the issue through the lens of reframing: the presence of these actors indicates adjustments in the state dynamics and symbolic forms of legitimate use of violence. The incidence of these actors represents the emergence of new security structures that reconfigure specific practices. In this sense, it encompasses features that were previously dichotomically explicit in the public-private. State capacity, in this scenario, is certainly reconfigured, but not necessarily weakened. Again, we believe that the specific features of the aforementioned binomial are being re-articulated, generating actions that cannot be encompassed in the old classifications. These changes in the relations between public and private may indicate, as in Garland (2001), the emergence of a third force in the provision of security, in conjunction with the state institutions of policing and punishment.

Instead of imagining that they can monopolize the control of crime, or to exercise their sovereign powers in complete disagreement with the powers of other actors, state agencies now adopt a strategy of relating to other forces of social control (p.124).

This kind of argument finds echo in the analysis proposed by Amar (2013), especially the concept of "parastatal". The author uses this term to represent coalitions that can be formed by NGOs, private security companies, lobby groups or even real estate speculators (Idem, 2014: 15). More importantly for this discussion, Amar points out that 'parastatal' does not indicate a traditional private or paramilitary group, but actors performing state functions in a complex process of legitimacy and reconfiguration of what is normally understood as "public". These articulations point to the artificiality of analysing the state as a tight and unified object – enforcing the premises that emphasise

the militias as a re-articulation movement, operating even within the framework established by the state. The reinforcement of a narrative that indicates the militias as operators outside any state logic, in a binary structure, prevents an articulation that can highlight how these groups often use political and legitimate strategies to gain influence. The militias do not act as a "parallel state" or at the expense of the forces of government - but together, in collusion and sophisticated symbiosis.

These assumptions highlight the links with these parastatal groups and government agents, especially with coalitions to gather popular support on controlled communities. It is also relevant to note that the militia leaders are mostly members of government's coercion of forces, being interpreted sometimes as a "lesser evil" or even as actors of "self-defense". More importantly, members of the militias established an unprecedented policy to run for various positions in the legislative, proving the willingness to operate, occasionally, within legitimate structures. Returning to Amar:

Although their nature and function are public—and they should be publicly accountable and controlled—these institutions have been sold, transferred, or contracted to social actors operating in a nonstate realm of deregulation or, in the case of aggressive police actions and urban-clearance projects that explicitly express antagonism to rights regimes and judicial authority, in a space of paralegality or counterlegality.

A specific moment that develops this argument was the registration program of voters carried out by the militia that controlled the "Rio das Pedras" favela in 2006. According to Zaluar and Conceição (2007: 94), the leader of the militia, Nadinho, was one of the first to understand the latent electoral potential of the community: most of the residents



were migrants from the northeast region of the country, some living there for decades. Nevertheless, most of them had not officially changed their voting registers to Rio, in order to be able to vote on the municipal elections. The communal association, controlled by the militia, rented vehicles to carry people to the registration centres and scheduled meetings to convince them the importance to get the documents.

The campaign worked. According to the same informant, there were able to gather between 20,000 and 30,000 titles and, in the 2004 elections, Nadinho - *newly affiliated with the PFL and with the mayor César Maia support* - was elected, with 34,764 votes, winning 24% of votes valid the 179th zone (Jacarepagua) and 86% of the votes of Rio das Pedras School (Idem, 2007: 94), our emphasis.

These hybrid strategies of combining control of territory, illegal trade and violence, with articulations with traditional mechanisms, reveals that the militia practices are more multifaceted than the mere insertion of an alien agent on the state arena. As aforementioned, traditional politicians also developed schemes to use the symbolic capital mobilized by the militias. In this sense, one can use this same framework to sophisticate the narratives related to the political movements related to the militias and the neopentecostal religious groups, presented, as after mentioned, as necessarily antagonistic agents.

### **Evangelical groups in Rio de Janeiro and voting behavior in the 2012 and 2014 elections**

In 2000, 26 million Brazilians declared themselves belonging to the evangelical religion - equivalent to 15% of the total. According to the latest Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE) Census, in 2010, this figure already exceeds the mark of 42.3 million people (22.2%). In the municipality of Rio de Janeiro, evangelicals represent

23.05% of the population, making it the 19th city on a nationwide ranking - the first being the city of Rio Branco, state of Acre, where 39.54% of population is evangelical. The persistent growth of this group and their role in the political arena is the subject of several analyses. Here, based on the parastatal framework, we will seek to address the dynamics of the electoral behavior of this group in relation to the specific communities controlled by the militias.

**Table 1 - Percentage of supporters of evangelical religion in the Brazilian population (1980-2010)**

Religion	1980 (%)	2000 (%)	2010 (%)
Evangelical	6,6	14,6	22,2

Sources: IBGE (1982), IBGE (2000), IBGE (2012)

Although it is not the objective here to highlight the reasons for this exponential growth of this group over time, it is possible to emphasize that, from the last IBGE Census data - collected in 2010 - a significant part of the analysis prepared by Bohn (2004) still holds to date. For example, with regard to the growth of this religion heterogeneously across the country, the evolution of evangelicals in the north and northeast areas of the country is directly linked to the reduction in the number of Catholics. In the north, between 2000 and 2010, the percentage population of Catholics decreased from 71.3% to 60.6%, while evangelicals' numbers rose from 19.8% to 28.5%. When this analysis is applied to the northeast region, evangelicals go from 10.3% to 16.4% in just 10 years.

Another element reinforced by the census data is the question of the relationship of the Pentecostal evangelical and poverty. For authors like Pierucci & Prandi (1995), Montero & Almeida (2000) and Novaes (2001) there is a strong association between members of Pentecostal churches and poverty conditions – numbers that are not found

among evangelicals in general. This particular condition would allow the penetration of this segment of the evangelical religion in areas that are not reachable to other agents – such as socially insecure areas - where there is little or no presence of the government. According to the IBGE Census 2010, the poorest and least educated segments of the population are the majority among the Pentecostals. Regarding monthly income, the said the group concentrates 63.7% of its adherents in the range of “1 minimum wage per month” and on education: 6.2% have no education, and only 42.3% have completed elementary school.

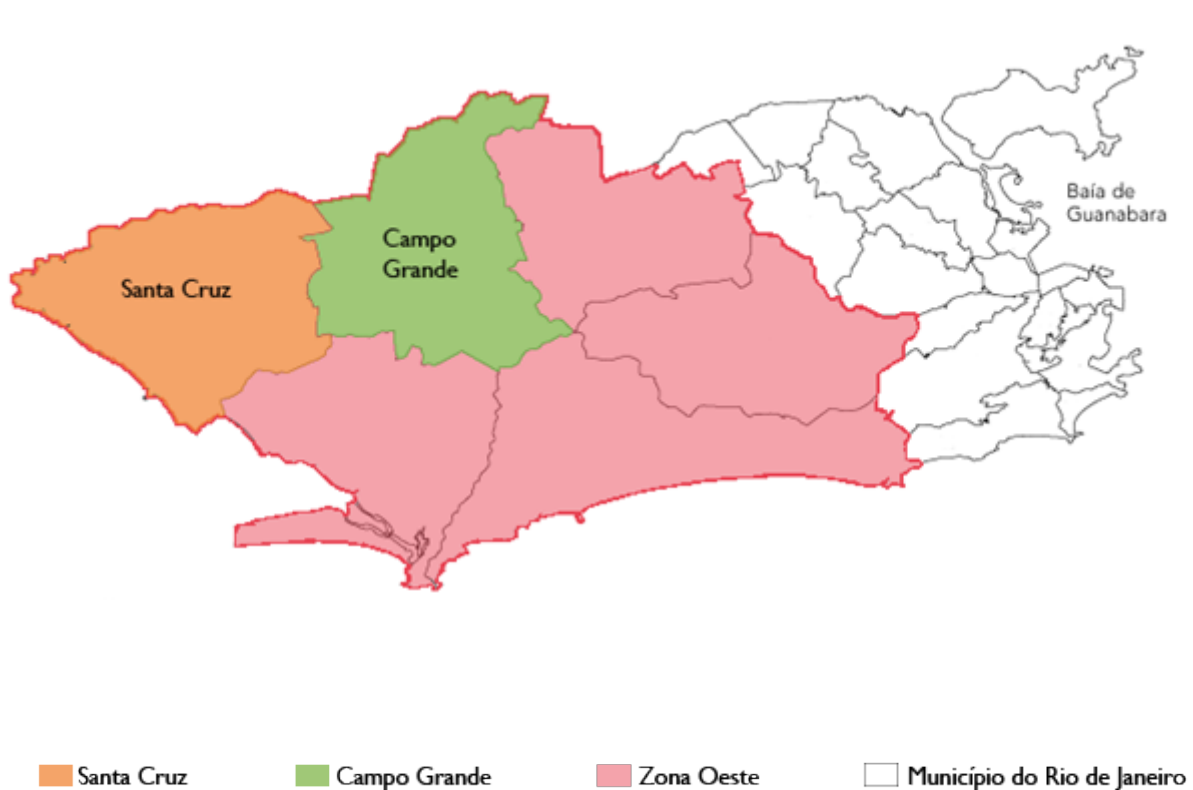
On the political field, a significant number of researches, such as Novaes (1985), Burdick (1993) and Gomes (1996), indicate that this specific group is particularly participant, with a specific relevance on the use of sacred and the profane arguments and how this is interlinked to the involvement (or not) with militia groups.

Understanding the existence of a politically active behaviour, one must address the determinants of their vote. According to Fonseca (2002), these groups vote for their peers, especially religious leaders. Nevertheless, Novaes (2001) disagrees with the existence of automatic religious loyalties, due to the enormous variety of evangelical churches. However, the seminal study by Bohn (2004) validates the thesis that evangelical religious affiliation tends to generate political loyalties, even during election periods. In order to analyse the relationship of evangelical groups with militia groups in election periods - which will be covered in the next topic – we selected two administrative regions (Santa Cruz and Campo Grande) that combines a significant evangelical presence and also areas considered 'occupied' by militias<sup>2[1]</sup>.

---

<sup>2</sup> Between 2008 and 2011, according to the report " No sapatinho - a evolução das milícias no Rio de Janeiro", prepared by the Violence Analysis Laboratory (LAV-UERJ), Campo Grande and Santa Cruz represent 23.4% of complaints on activities of milícias in the period. Available material: [http://br.boell.org/sites/default/files/downloads/no\\_sapatinho\\_lav\\_hbs\(2\).pdf](http://br.boell.org/sites/default/files/downloads/no_sapatinho_lav_hbs(2).pdf)

**Figure 1 - municipal policy Division of Rio de Janeiro and the West Zone**

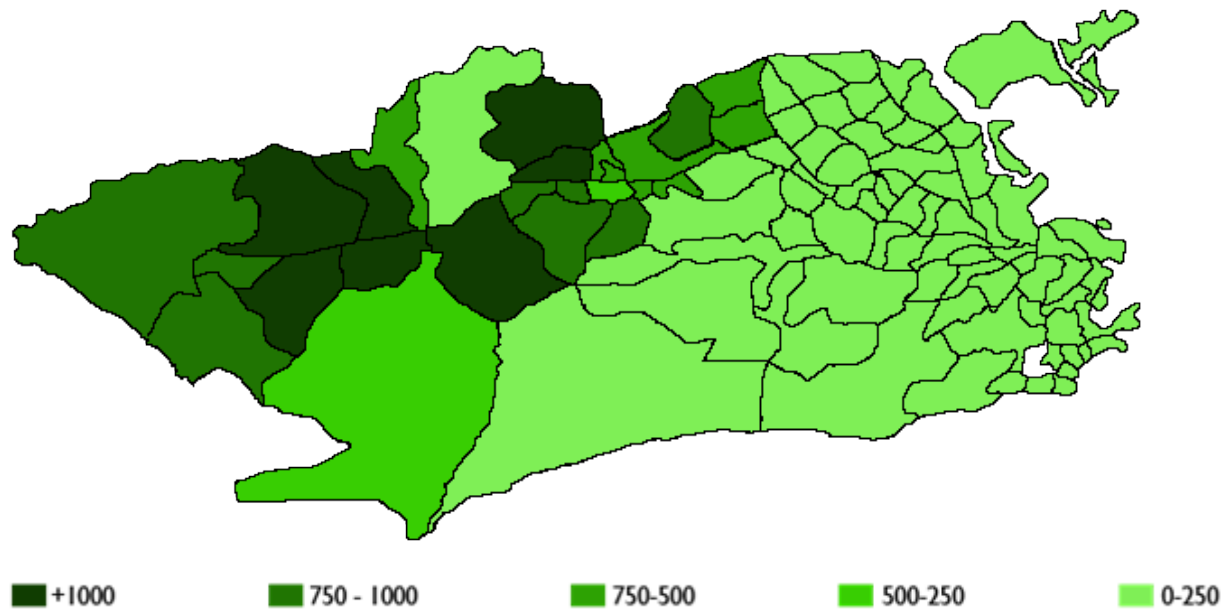


Source: own elaboration with data from the IBGE.

As we located the geographical area in which the groups operate, we can perceive the electoral phenomenon itself. For this, we selected two different electoral periods: the municipal chamber elections of 2012 and the second round of the governor election race in 2014, whose dispute was centered between an evangelical candidate, represented in the figure of Marcelo Crivella (PRB), and a candidate who allegedly had connections with militia groups, Luiz Fernando Pezão (PMDB). We believe these two scenarios highlight how complex the influence of religious narratives is that plays in the political landscape in Rio – especially in pointing out how these discourses connect and enmesh within militia influence. In this sense, we decide to emphasise the two candidates

connected to the episcopal bench that had the best performance in the electoral process (João Mendes de Jesus [PRB] and Elisha Kessler [PSD]).

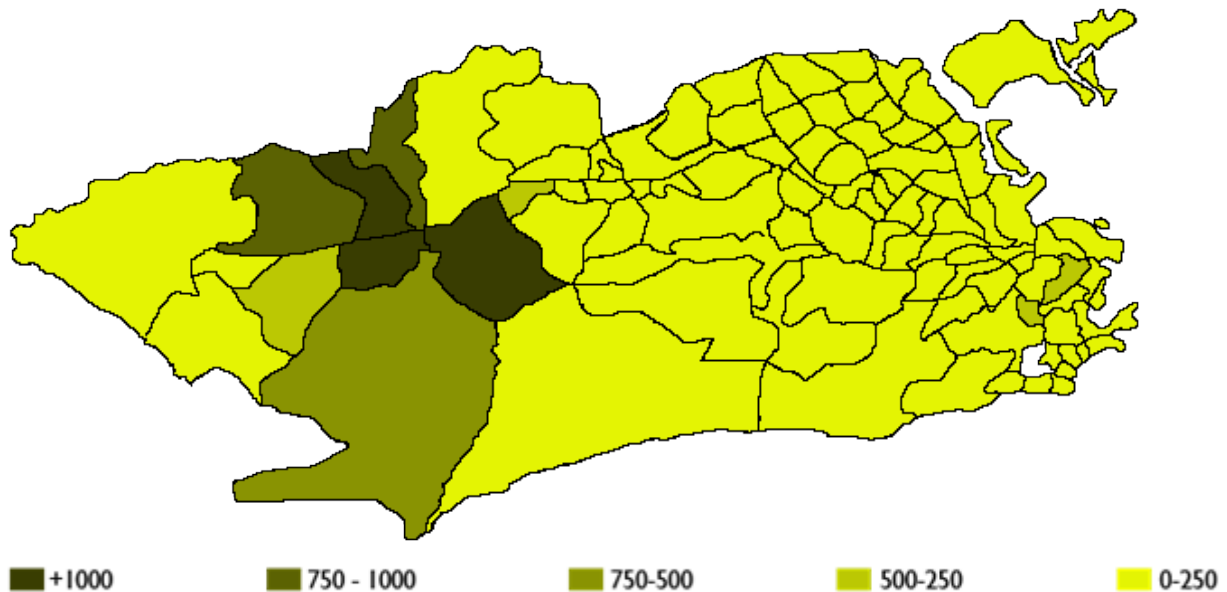
**Figure 2 - Performance by the candidate's electoral district councilor João Mendes de Jesus (PRB) in the election campaign 2012 (number of votes).**



Source: own elaboration with data from the IBGE.

The candidate's performance was essentially concentrated in the West Zone of the city of Rio de Janeiro, a region where there is the highest percentage of evangelicals in the city. In the electoral zones that compose the administrative region of Santa Cruz, the candidate has a total of 6,056 votes. In Campo Grande, the numbers are still significant in relation to the performance in the rest of the city, with a total of 3,539 votes. The Congressional District that João Mendes had the best performance was the 246th, also in the region of Santa Cruz. Following this logic, one can analyse Eliseu Kessler's electoral results.

**Figure 3 - Results by congressional district candidate Elysee Kessler (PSD) in the election of 2012 - (number of votes).**



Source: own elaboration with data from the IBGE.

With a similar result, we note that the number of votes of the other candidate is mainly restricted to the city's West Zone<sup>3</sup>. In the electoral zone that comprises the region of Santa Cruz, Elysee has a total of 2,127 votes. Unlike the other studied candidate, this one presented a performance slightly more significant in the area of Campo Grande, gaining a total of 4,850 votes. The Congressional District where Elysee had the best performance was the 120th, also in the area of Campo Grande.

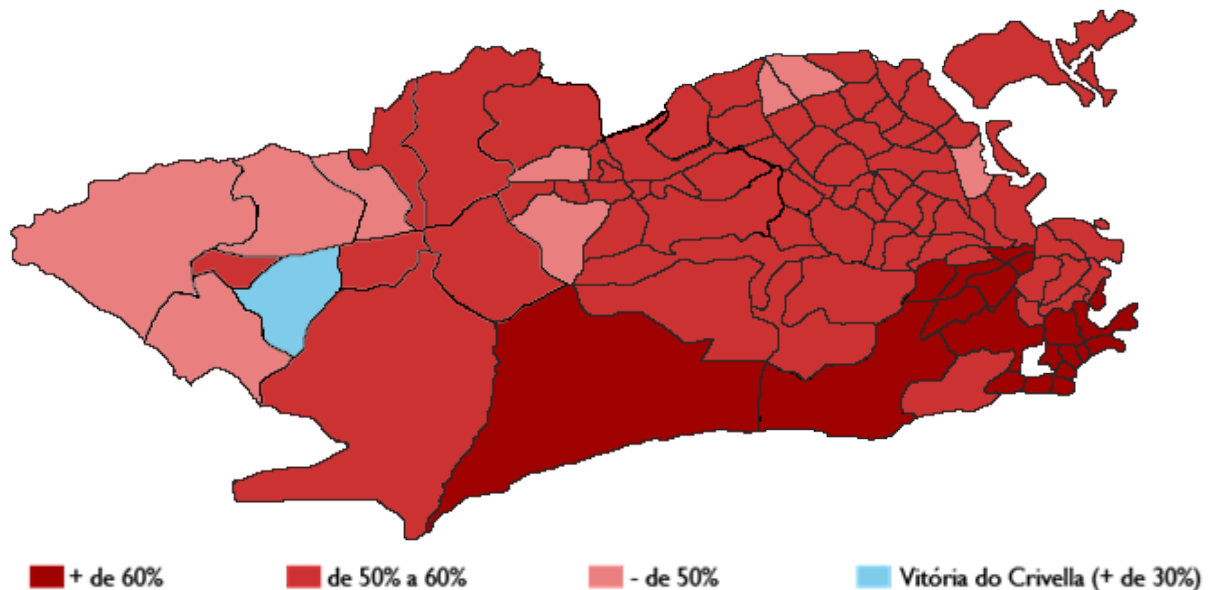
Moving on to the elections for governor of the state of Rio de Janeiro, held in 2014, it is interesting that this momentum is maintained. Although the candidate Luiz

---

<sup>3</sup> In order to make a more robust explanation, we also verified the performance of other components of the municipal evangelical coalition elected in 2012 (ie, Jorge Braz [PMDB] Tania Bastos [PRB], Alexandre Isquierdo [PMDB], Jorge Manaia [PDT], Marcia Teixeira [PR]) and we found that the concentration of votes in the west zone, in those cases, was constant.

Fernando Pezão (PMDB) has been successful in the electoral process, the region in which he had lower votes at the polls was precisely the West Zone of the city, a place with a high concentration of supporters of the Gospel Religion. It was also in that space of Rio territory that the evangelical candidate, Marcelo Crivella (PRB), won the majority of his ballots, reinforcing the hypothesis that the influence exercised by religious leaders and evangelical institutions play a significant role in the choice of candidates, either on the municipality election or on a larger scale poll. It is still not possible to rule out, at least at the local level, that several other practices, in addition to the exercise of religious worship, could also mitigate (or enhance) the interference produced by leaders and religious bodies.

**Figure 4 - Votes for the election of governor of the State of Rio de Janeiro between Luiz Fernando Pezão (PMDB) and Marcelo Crivella (PRB) (number of votes).**



The analyses of Figure 4 demonstrate that there is a significant vote in the PMDB's candidate throughout the city of Rio de Janeiro. However, it is the 241st zone, comprising part of the administrative region of Santa Cruz, which was the only electoral territory that the evangelical candidate got the majority of votes. In the same region, the candidates for municipality positions, scrutinized in the article, also had an impressive performance. In this sense, at least with the variables appointed, the hypothesis that evangelical groups tend to prefer candidates connected to their religion was reinforced.

Finally, to emphasize the presented condition, we highlight the last conclusion appointed by Bohn (2004) on the influence of evangelicals in the electoral process. In his analysis, the author identified that evangelicals, in comparison to other groups, would also be less exposed to the influence of mass media. At the same time, evangelicals would possess a high degree of exposure to the religious leaders of their respective services. According to this narrative, this lack of access to information sources, combined with the high level of exposure on religious centres, makes the evangelical audience a social segment significantly susceptible to mobilization by religious leaderships. And more importantly, the author also argues that if the various denominations were able to overcome their differences and unify on a common political platform, its adherents might eventually set up a captive clientele to certain political deals.

As we characterized the political and territorial scenario where evangelicals are established in the city of Rio de Janeiro, the next section of this article aims to verify how the relationship between this group and militia organizations occurs particularly in the election dynamics. This scrutinization is especially relevant to confront the argument that there would be an intense confrontation between militiamen and evangelicals, who become repellent to any attempts of agglutination between these two spheres. We



believe that the electoral dynamics and the interest of the two groups to occupy strategic positions within the state would be a sufficient motivator for some enmesh, specially on the election period.

### ***Milícia* and evangelicals in dispute: the relationship between the two groups in the electoral process in the city of Rio de Janeiro**

As evidenced so far through this work, in recent years there was a clear expansion of the territories controlled by militias, especially in the West Zone, despite the efforts of some public officials in conducting activities to weaken these groups, with the reference, for example, of the parliamentary inquiry of *Milícias*. On the other hand, supporters of evangelical religions were booming across the country, and, although the city of Rio de Janeiro does not stand out as a major evangelical capital, the west zone of the city concentrates a significant percentage number of adepts. In this sense, in this particular area of Rio's territory, there would be more intensely the relationship between militiamen and evangelicals.

Given that this dynamic has an essentially complex nature depending on the characteristics of the regions where these groups are inserted, we selected the electoral period as a particular moment to understand narratives that, otherwise, could remain diffuse. To observe this dynamic, we attempted to check in the discourses and practices of agents, militia participants and evangelicals, highlighting moments of interaction. Therefore, the task was divided into two distinct levels. The first sought to observe these processes in electoral disputes perceived as more distant, for governor, for example. The second was centralized on actions and performances directed to the City Council. In both cases, the analyses were restricted to the state or the city of Rio de Janeiro.

At the more broad level, it was observed that the polarization of the evangelical discourse against militia practices remains significantly evident. In this sense, candidates for governor of the State of Rio de Janeiro, linked to evangelical practices, sought at all times during their campaigns to distance themselves from any elements that could connect them to the militias, and, whenever possible, attacked their opponents with arguments that approached these groups.

On an particularly explicit discourse, it is possible to cite Anthony Garotinho's (PR) interview excerpt given to the magazine *Carta Capital* during the campaign in the first round of elections for governor in 2014:

CC: Speaking of militias, recently you made a statement that assessed that militiamen are less problematic than a corrupt politician. It was a controversial phrase, very criticized by your opponents. How do you explain this position?

AG: No. What I said is that *the governor was paying attention to militias driving illegal buses and at the same time there were militiamen close to him, inside his group.* I brought today some picture and I would like to ask who are these figures here (the candidate shows old photos). Who is this one here? (Former governor) Sérgio Cabral (PMDB) with Francisco Dornelles, vice-candidate at Pezão. And these two here? The two largest militia leaders: the state representative Natalino José Guimarães (DEM) and Jerominho (PMDB). This at a rally organized by them in 2010. (In: *Carta Capital* <http://www.cartacapital.com.br/politica/sou-alvo-de-perseguido-da-globo-diz-anthony-garotinho-3869.html> - emphasis added)

In this interview, the candidate Anthony Garotinho (PR) seeks to ward off claims that he possesses links with militia groups and simultaneously uses arguments to approach his main competitor, the governor Luiz Fernando Pezão (PMDB) of these actions. This discourse of complete opposition to militia groups is perceived repeatedly when the analysis was restricted to the electoral dynamics more distanced from the voter, as in the governor election. However, this polarizing discourse becomes a bit more diffuse when one observes the electoral dynamics for the position of municipal representative, “vereador”. At this stage, the speeches not only become more fluid, but also the practices between militiamen and Evangelicals reveals, in some cases, a slight convergence.

About this local aspect, we can highlight, for example, the condition occupied by former vereador André Luiz da Silva Ferreira, Deco. Accused of belonging to the militia in Jacarepagua, he was imprisoned from April 2011 until October 2012, after which habeas corpus was granted by the Supreme Court. Deco had close relations with evangelical groups, this condition proved by his leadership position on local churches, besides been married to another “pastora”, Marcia Teixeira.

Another example that reinforces the thesis that there is a degree of convergence between these actors is the case of ‘pastor’ Dijanio Aires Diniz. According to state Prosecutors, since 2007 the group led by Dijanio had been running a variety of crimes, such as murders, extortion, illegal possessions of firearms and loan sharking, among others.

According to statements from a member of the Enforcement Police Against Organized Crime (DRACO): “The church functioned *as militia office*, where the pastor made the loans, charged interest and also *directed the faithful to vote for certain candidates*”.

These practices, which connect militia agents with religious leaders, strengthen and sustain the argument that the polarization between militiamen and Evangelicals do not seem to be as clear and absolute. Rather, the reality identified through the material presented above suggests a more complex scenario which must be observed in more detailed levels, considering, for example, practices and speeches of various Christian groups.

This argument gains special explanatory potential that is seen on a horizon where the militias are built not as alien actors of the state process - but agents that overlap, articulate and are (re)legitimized practices. The inclusion of the evangelical groups is not out of place: as a growing and influential political force in Rio de Janeiro, it has been presented by media agents and rulers as an antagonistic element against militia forces, reinforcing the narrative that presents such elements as separate objects, not susceptible to re-framing.

## **Conclusions**

The emergence of militia groups, especially after the surge of the 2000s, provoked a significant change in the way that public security analysts and experts discuss the use of violence in the city. However, the mainstream media and political leaders reinforce a classification that indicates that these groups are actors outside the state body, paramilitary organizations that would act in areas where government officials cannot or will not operate. The reflection of militia groups as parastatal agents enhances the hybrid character of these actors with the state apparatus, galvanizing that the actions of such movements possesses less clear and binary contours with actors interpreted as

legitimate. This argument promotes a more complex analysis with which to observe the interaction between militia groups and evangelical communities. Mobilizing electoral data, we analyze how these relations are more fluid and dependent of local variables. Far from behaving like opposing forces trying to overcome the state, militias articulate alliances in different scenarios, reinforcing the need for research that takes into account empirical and narrative aspects.

## Bibliography

Abrahansen, Rita & Williams, Michael (2011). *Security beyond the State: Private Security in International Politics*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press

Alvito, Marcos (2001). *As cores de Acari: uma favela carioca*. FGV, Rio de Janeiro

Amar, Paul (2013). *The Security Archipelago: Human-security States, Sexuality Politics, and the End of Neoliberalism*. Durham: Duke Univ. Press

Bohn, S. *Evangélicos no Brasil. Perfil socioeconômico, afinidades ideológicas e determinantes do comportamento eleitoral*. *Opinião Pública*, 10, (2), Outubro, 2004.

Burdick, J. *Looking for God in Brazil. The progressive Catholic Church in Brazil's religious arena*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993.

Cano, Ignacio & Duarte, Thais (2012) *No Sapatinho: A evolução das milícias no Rio de Janeiro (2008-2011)*. Heinrich Boll Stiftung.

Fonseca, A. *Secularização, pluralismo religioso e democracia no Brasil: um estudo sobre a participação dos principais atores evangélicos na política*. São Paulo. 262 páginas. Tese (doutorado), Universidade de São Paulo, 2002.

Gomes, W. *Nem anjos nem demônios*. In: Antoniazzi, A. et al. *Nem anjos nem demônios: interpretações sociológicas do pentecostalismo*. Petrópolis: Vozes, 1996.

Misse, Michel. (2011) "Crime organizado e crime comum no Rio de Janeiro: diferenças e afinidades." *Revista Sociologia e Política*, Curitiba, v. 19, n. 40, p. 13-25, out. 2011.

Montero, P., Almeida, R. O campo religioso brasileiro no limiar do século: problemas e perspectivas. *In: Rattner, H. (org.). Brasil no limiar do século XXI. Alternativas para a construção de uma sociedade sustentável*. São Paulo: EDUSP & FAPESP, 2000.

Novaes, R. Os escolhidos de Deus. Trabalhadores, pentecostais e cidadania. Rio de Janeiro: Marco Zero, 1985.

\_\_\_\_\_. A divina política: notas sobre as relações delicadas entre religião e política. *Revista da USP*. São Paulo, 49, p. 60-81, Março-Maio, 2001.

Pierucci, A. F. O. Representantes de Deus em Brasília: a bancada evangélica na constituinte. *Ciências Sociais Hoje*. São Paulo, 11, p. 104-32, 1989.

\_\_\_\_\_; Prandi, J. R. Religiões e voto: a eleição presidencial de 1994. *Opinião Pública*, 3 (1), Junho, 1995.

Zaluar, Alba; Conceição, Isabel Siqueira. (2007) "Favela sob o controle das milícias no Rio de Janeiro: que paz?", *São Paulo em Perspectiva*, v. 21, n. 2, p. 89-10