



ORIGINAL RESEARCH ARTICLE

OPEN ACCESS

THE CASES OF POLICE DEATHS IN THE CITY OF BELÉM-PARÁ-BRAZIL

¹Thays Suelen Brito Santos, ²Edson Marcos Leal Soares Ramos, ³Silvia dos Santos de Almeida
⁴Tatiane da Silva Rodrigues Tolosa, ⁵Andréa Bittencourt Pires Chaves, ⁶André Luiz Nunes
Zogahib and ⁷Ana Patrícia de Oliveira Fernandez

¹Undergraduate student in Statistics (UFPA), science initiation scholarship (PIBIC/CNPq)
at Federal University of Pará

²Professor of the Post-Graduation Program in Public Security at the Philosophy and Human Sciences Institute –
IFCH/UFPA

³Professor of the Post-Graduation Program in Public Security at the Philosophy and Human Sciences Institute –
IFCH/UFPA

⁴Master's degree in Public Security (UFPA)

⁵Professor of the Post-Graduation Program in Public Security at the Philosophy and
Human Sciences Institute– IFCH/UFPA

⁶Professor of the Post-Graduation Program in Public Security, Citizenship and Human Rights.

⁷Professor of the Post-Graduation Program in Public Security at the Philosophy and Human Sciences
Institute IFCH/UFPA

ARTICLE INFO

Article History:

Received 15th October, 2018
Received in revised form
29th November, 2018
Accepted 03rd December, 2018
Published online 30th January, 2019

Key Words:

Mortality; Security;
Criminal Activities, Violence.

ABSTRACT

Police action is critical because it prevents, represses, and neutralizes criminal activities to ensure security. Police mortality in the state of Pará, Brazil, is a worrying factor, since the occurrence of such crimes only increase, mainly in the capital Belém. In view of the invisibility of this issue, and of the constant murders that occurred after the death of a police officer, this paper seeks to present and analyze the characteristics of the facts and the number of homicides registered in the 72 hours before and after the deaths of the policemen under study. We used the exploratory data analysis technique to organize and describe the data. On the whole, one may conclude that, once this type of violence is understood and detected, the State must adopt and promote new practices and structured actions aiming to interrupt or minimize such violent crimes.

Copyright © 2019, Thays Suelen Brito Santos et al. This is an open access article distributed under the Creative Commons Attribution License, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

Citation: Thays Suelen Brito Santos, Edson Marcos Leal Soares Ramos, Silvia dos Santos de Almeida Tatiane da Silva Rodrigues Tolosa, Andréa Bittencourt Pires Chaves, André Luiz Nunes Zogahib and Ana Patrícia de Oliveira Fernandez, 2019. "The cases of police deaths in the city of Belém-Pará-Brazil", *International Journal of Development Research*, 9, (01), 25151-25155.

INTRODUCTION

Violence is currently assuming alarming and complex proportions, proving to be an increasingly indissoluble phenomenon in capitalist society, where exclusion and inequality are latent. Therefore, it is in these conditions of inequalities created by an unequal appropriation of space and capital that violence and crime arise.

Violence and crime are great theoretical and empirical challenges in the present, given their social impacts in the development process of any country, since they can reach any person, as a result of victimization in crimes as well as their costs (LIMA; RATTON; AZEVEDO, 2012).

In this sense, Adorno (2001) states that:

Violence is not strange or even foreign [in Brazil]. The risk lies in all corners: on public roads, inside homes, in business and leisure environments, in transportation, in workplaces. It does not choose time or hour in a day. All space and time are

*Corresponding author: Thays Suelen Brito Santos

Undergraduate student in Statistics (UFPA), science initiation scholarship (PIBIC/CNPq)

filled with danger, a feeling that intensifies when violence involves deaths, some of which are preceded by threats and committed with brutality (ADORNO, 2001, 315). Thus, the phenomena of violence and crime take on other forms, spreading throughout society and causing difficulties for public authorities to confront them, which makes it the greatest dilemma of public security and the main challenge of Brazil (SOUZA; MORAIS, 2011). The study of these social problems allows us to understand the characteristics of the crime phenomenon, its authors, its victims and their impact on the quality of life (SAPORI, 2007). Public security is part of the structural set of society and its importance can be understood through the dimension of the role that police plays in any society. The police as an institution consists of a set of procedures designed to ensure compliance with the law and maintain the public order, including actions to prevent and control manifestations of crime and violence, thus guaranteeing the exercise of fundamental rights. It has, therefore, the prerogative of the use of force as a legitimate and constitutive act of its function (LIMA; RATTON; AZEVEDO, 2012). In addition, insecurity in Brazil has been prominent at a global level, due to the high rate of victimization and police murder. According to a yearly report by the Brazilian Forum of Public Security (FBSP, 2014), in five years 1,770 police officers were killed, with 490 murders in 2013 alone, in which 121 were at service and 369 were not working at the time of the murder.

It is also important to highlight that between 2009 and 2013 there were 11,197 deaths caused by policemen, a period in which military and civil police killed six people a day in Brazil. For Lima, Rotton and Azevedo (2012) Brazil has large cities with complex and conflictive social spaces, and the risk is inherent to their profession [the policemen], since many end up wounding or killing, involuntarily or not, innocent or suspicious people, and executing offenders in confrontations or out of revenge. For Minayo (2012, p.522), Since there is a police force in the world, it is a target of victimization that materializes in traumas, injuries or deaths by firearm, melee weapons, physical aggression, psychological aggression and assassination attempts. It is also known that some situations make these professionals more vulnerable: training for confrontation, inadequate working conditions, precariousness of vehicles, armaments and action strategies, and the presence of gangs of armed, daring, adventurer and combatant offenders who are ready to fight for their lives. The high rate of violence induces directly the effective increase of police death, which is a matter of concern for the systematization of public security (DURANTE; JUNIOR, 2013). Police victimization represents a crisis of the structural set of society, and the main targets of criticism are the causes of such victimization, including the precarious infrastructure of public security, with low wages, lack of training and lack of maintenance supplies and new quality equipment, which contribute to the increased risk inherent in the profession.

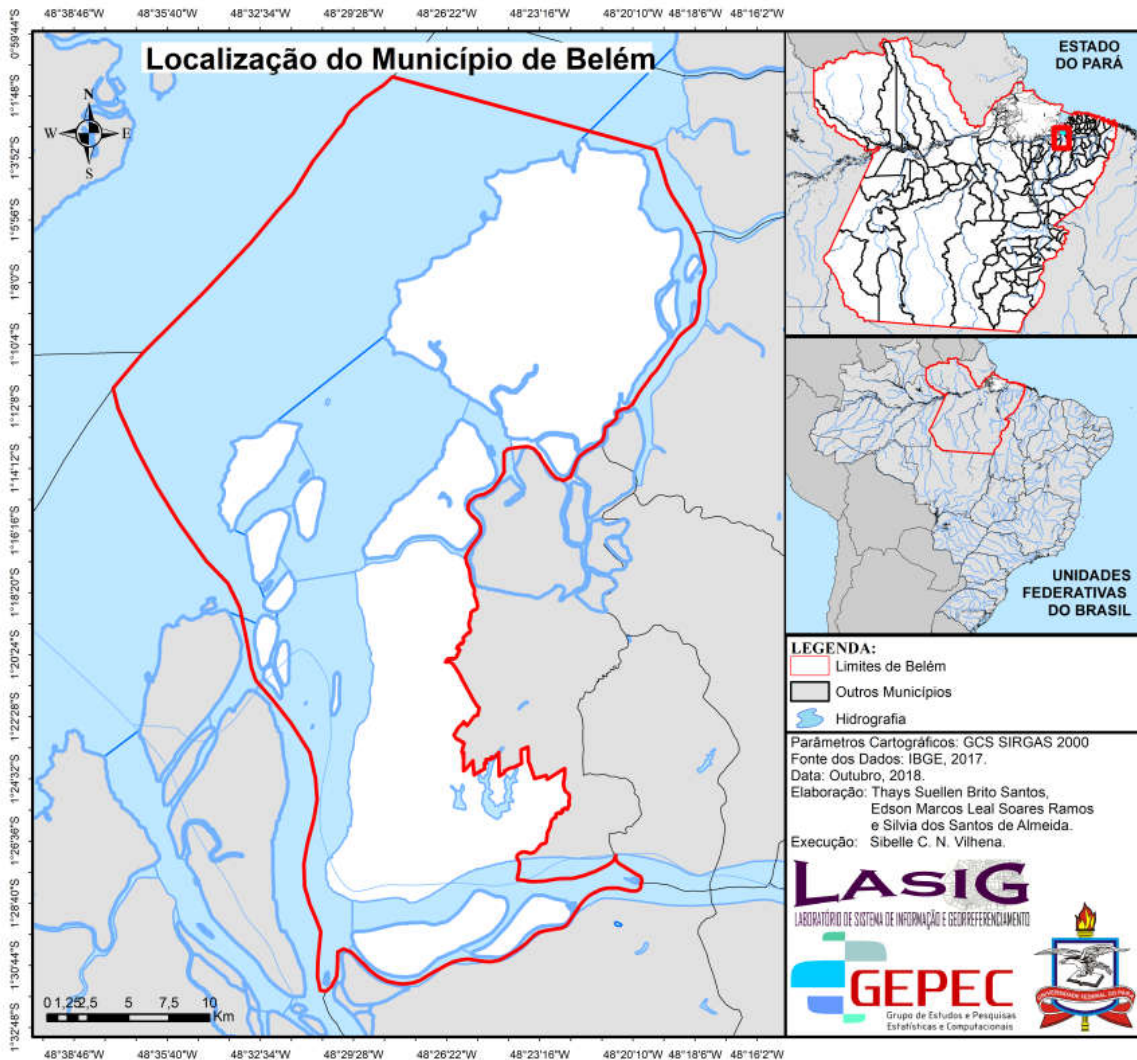


Figure 1. Location of the Municipality of Belém

Therefore, the death of police officers is a topic that has been much discussed in Brazil due to its specificity, with very distinct constraints, and the fact that it reaches a group linked to actions aimed at promoting the improvement of safety conditions within society (FERNANDES, 2016). According to a survey by the Public Policy Analysis Directorate of the Getúlio Vargas Foundation, the State of Pará was the fourth state with the most cases of police death in 2015, with rates of 0.3 for each group of 100,000 policemen, only behind the States of Rio de Janeiro and Maranhão, which are tied in the ranking with 0.6 for each group of 100,000 policemen, and the State of Mato Grosso do Sul with approximately 0.35 for each group of 100,000 policemen (FBSP, 2015). In order to better understand the cases of police mortality in this study, one must have in mind that homicide and *latrocínio* (robbery resulting in death) are criminal offenses in Brazil. Homicide is characterized by the killing of an individual, being explicitly stated in the Brazilian Penal Code in Section 121, which deals with crimes against people. *Latrocínio* is implicitly included in Decree-Law No. 2848/1940, being a denomination given to the crime of robbery, when it is followed by death or attempted death, therefore related to the crimes against property (NUÑEZ, 2015). Another constant feature of police death cases in the city of Belém is the occurrence of the so called *massacres* after the death of a policeman, consisting of a series of homicides motivated by revenge and retaliation against the offenders. The need to understand such events, as well as the possible agents of these violent actions, highlighted the importance of this study and the use of statistical methods in research related to the area of public security, in order to identify, analyze and monitor the issue, monitoring, with the purpose of controlling and improving the quality of services and the public safety system in the State of Pará.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Area Characterization: The study refers to the capital of the State of Pará, the municipality of Belém, which has a population of 1,393,399 inhabitants and an area of 1,064,918 km² (IBGE, 2010a). In addition, the municipality has a total of 71 neighborhoods and 39 islands distributed in eight administrative districts (Mosqueiro, Outeiro, Icoaraci, Bengui, Entroncamento, Sacramento, Belém and Guamá) (BELÉM, 2011). Since Belém is the capital of the state, and its territory is home to a greater concentration of employment (income) and services, the rural exodus contributed to the population growth of the municipality, which has today the largest population in the state. However, this growth was not accompanied by political improvements in infrastructure, sanitation and housing conditions, which eventually gave rise to new territories, called *invasions* (CHAGAS, PALHETA DA SILVA; SILVA, 2014). The expressive growth of the urban population, followed by little progress in demographic terms, and the interaction of several factors (economical, social and institutional) caused the development of many social problems, such as crime and violence. Although the municipality has the largest GDP of the State and the 21st of Brazil, with R\$ 29,280.972 (twenty-nine million, two hundred and eighty thousand and nine hundred and seventy two *reais*) and a growth of 5.05%, the resources for public safety are insufficient for the improvement of security structures, which did not follow the increasing complexity of criminal organizations (IBGE, 2010b). According to IBGE (2015) the police force in the State of Pará consists of 15,943 military agents and 2,766 civil agents, a total of only 18,709 police

officers overall. When analyzing the proportion of police officers and the number of the population in the state, Pará is 8th among the worst proportions in Brazil, with one police officer for every 473 people. Although the rate is lower than the Brazilian average (one officer per 500 people), there is a notable deficit of public security agents in Pará and, consequently, in the capital, Belém (FBSP, 2015). According to IBGE (2015) the police force in the State of Pará and 15,943 military police and 2,766 civilian police, thus joining the number of police officers in the state, is only 18,709 police. When analyzing the proportion of police officers and the number of the population in the state, Pará is the 8th place among the worst proportions of Brazil with one police officer for every 473 people. Although the rate is lower than the Brazilian average (one police officer per 500 people), there is a notable shortage of public security agents in Pará and, consequently, in the capital of Belém (FBSP, 2015).

Data

An exploratory and descriptive quantitative-based study was carried out to analyze the data collected from the occurrence reports registered in the police stations of Belém. The database was made available by the Assistant Secretariat of Intelligence and Criminal Analysis, attached to the Secretary of Public Security of Pará, which is assigned to the Laboratory of Information System and Georeferencing and to the Statistical and Computational Studies and Research Group. The time cut was related to the years 2013 to 2016, in which we identified 115 occurrence reports, which were extracted from the Integrated System of Public Security and made available for analysis in August 2016. Then, the occurrences were analyzed with the following inclusion criteria for the study: (1) the victim had to be a military and/or civil police officer, which reduced the quantitative for 112 occurrence reports; (2) the report had to be related to a death committed by a person other than the victim (thus excluding cases of suicide), which reduced the number of occurrence reports to 110; and (3) the murder had to have occurred in the municipality of Belém-PA, which resulted in a total of 39 reports.

Variables / Analysis

After the identification of the 39 occurrence reports, a thorough reading and analysis of the occurrences was carried out to contribute to the estimate number of homicides registered in the 72 hours before and after the death of the policemen under study. The analysis was based on the use of the statistical technique of Descriptive Analysis (BUSSAB and MORETTIN, 2013), using the tables and graphs, with the help of the information obtained from the field research and the available literature.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Characterization of the Fact

According to the Brazilian Public Security Forum (FBSP, 2017), 437 civil and military police officers were murdered in 2016, an increase of 17.5% compared to the numbers of 2015. In view of this fact, there is a need to describe the cases of police mortality in the Municipality of Belém, from 2013 to 2016. Table 1 shows that the use of firearms (94.87%) was the most frequent medium used. It is also verified that the most frequent day of the occurrences was Sunday (25.65%), most of

which took place at night time (66.67%). The data are similar to the study by Garcia et al. (2016), in which the facts also occurred in the same day period with the use of a firearm. However, the studies differ in relation to the day of the event, since they found out that most of the facts occurred on Tuesday (16.85%). Regarding the labor situation, it is noteworthy that the majority of the police officers was out of service (83.78%). Despite the perception of risk in the performance of professional activity, the police have rules and procedures that protect them. Therefore, they are more likely to become victims of external danger than at work, mainly in their way back home or during a day off, in which more police officers die compared to those who are at service. Besides, in the out-of-work condition, a contributing factor to this vulnerability is the fact that many of them have the same social status and inhabit the same neighborhoods as the offenders (SOUZA; MINAYO, 2005). The study of Durante and Junior (2013) reports that police mortality out of work is related to the need to perform clandestine private security services, known as "*bicos*" ("filler jobs"). According to Santos and Lopes (2018, p.5), "despite the fact that police are [supposedly] being trained to minimize errors and act in precise moments", what we actually see is the lack of training and qualification of the police aimed at a greater personal protection and safety in and out of work. The results found reinforce the research carried out by the Directorate of Public Policy Analysis in conjunction with the Getúlio Vargas Foundation (FBSP, 2015), which identified the State of Pará as the fourth in police death in 2015, with rates of 0.3 for each group of 100,000 police officers (Table 1).

Table 1. Percentage of police mortality cases occurred in the Municipality of Belém, between 2013 and 2016

Variable	Category	Percentage
Medium	Firearm	94.87
	Other means	5.13
Day of the occurrence	Sunday	25.65
	Monday	20.51
	Tuesday	7.69
	Wednesday	5.13
	Thursday	7.69
	Friday	17.95
	Saturday	15.38
Consolidated fact	Homicide	69.23
	<i>Latrocinio</i>	30.77
Period of the day	Dawn	15.38
	Morning	7.69
	Afternoon	10.26
Place of occurrence	Night	66.67
	Public road	84.62
Labor situation	Others	15.38
	At service	16.22
	Out of service	83.78

Source: Assistant Secretariat for Intelligence and Criminal Analysis, AUGUST, 2016, elaborations by the authors

Homicide Statistics after Police Death

Table 2 shows that in all years there was an increase in the average number of homicides in the 72 hours after the death of a police officer in the city of Belém, specially in 2015, with a change rate in the average of +42.86%. The year of 2016 presented the lowest change rate in the average (+ 09.09%). The *massacres* represent an inefficiency of the State Public Security system, and in addition to the data shown in Table 2, the State has one of the worst proportions of the country in terms of the number of military and civil police in relation to the number of inhabitants (IBGE, 2015). According to the

news, the *massacres* have become trivial in the metropolitan area of Belém, and homicides in series after the death of a police officer have been steadily surpassing records.

Table 2. Statistics for comparison of the 72h period before and after police homicide, in the municipality of Belém, from 2013 to 2016

Year	Period	Average	Standard Deviation	% of Variation
2013	Before	6.58	3.09	+30.38
	After	8.58	2.87	
2014	Before	6.71	2.43	+25.53
	After	8.43	2.07	
2015	Before	4.9	2.23	+42.86
	After	7	3.65	
2016	Before	6.6	2.95	+9.09
	After	7.2	3.55	

Source: Assistant Secretariat for Intelligence and Criminal Analysis, AUGUST, 2016, elaborations by the authors.

Note: Before – Period of 72hours before the homicide of a police officer. After – Period of 72 hours after the homicide of a police officer.

For Vedovello (2015), the word "massacre" is used to define the acts perpetrated against individuals considered as "dangerous", from a prejudicial point of view based on their social status, clothing and color. The victims are chosen at random and regardless of their participation in the events that triggered the massacre.

Conclusion

The problem of violence, which causes police mortality, reaches Brazil as a whole. Given that the State of Pará has a high occurrence, controlling this social issue is an arduous task for the public security system. In the State of Pará, the greatest evidence of such cases occurred in the municipality of Belém, the state capital. Thus, the intention of the research was to carry out a survey that identifies the characteristics of the cases and the homicides after the death of a police officer. In this way, police activity should not be merely an oppressive instrument, but considered as a public service essential for the preservation of order, a means of protecting citizens and safeguarding human rights. The situation experienced by the police is constant stress and vulnerability, reaching the psychological and physical aspects of their life. Thus, it is important to invest in professional qualification, as well as in the health and social improvement of these professionals. The institution must seek ways to accompany its public security agents, identifying their problems, difficulties and improving and enhancing the public policies aimed at the State Police, both in service and out of work. Finally, the State and the society have an essential role to play in the implementation of public policies in the short and long term, in order to minimize the high levels of police mortality and combat exterminations after the death of a police officer.

REFERENCES

- ADORNO, S. Crime, justiça penal e desigualdade jurídica. In: SOUTO, Cláudio; FALCÃO, Joaquim. Sociologia e direito: textos básicos para a disciplina de sociologia jurídica. 2.ed, São Paulo: Pioneira Thomson Learning, p. 311-336, 2001.
- BELÉM. Anuário Estatístico do Município de Belém. v.16, 2011 – Belém: Secretaria Municipal de Coordenação Geral do Planejamento e Gestão, 2012.
- BUSSAB, W.O.; MORETTIN, P.A. Estatística Básica. 8.ed., São Paulo: Editora Saraiva, (2013).

- CHAGAS, C. A. N.; SILVA, C. N.; PALHETA DA SILVA, J. M. Território, Produção do Espaço e Violência Urbana: Uma Leitura Geográfica dos Homicídios na Região Metropolitana de Belém. In: Congresso Brasileiro de Geógrafos. VII. Espírito Santo: AGB, 2014. Anais do VII CBG. <http://www.cbg2014.agb.org.br/resources/anais/1/1404308058_ARQUIVO_ArtigoCompletoCBG_ClayChagas_.pdf>. Acesso em 10. fev. 2018.
- DURANTE, M. O., JUNIOR, A. O. Vitimização dos policiais militares e civis no Brasil. Revista Brasileira de Segurança Pública, São Paulo v. 7, n. 1, p. 132-150, fev./mar, 2013.
- FBSP. FÓRUM BRASILEIRO DE SEGURANÇA PÚBLICA. Anuário Brasileiro de Segurança Pública. 8.ed., São Paulo: Urbania, 2014.
- FBSP. FÓRUM BRASILEIRO DE SEGURANÇA PÚBLICA; FUNDAÇÃO GETÚLIO VARGAS; MINISTÉRIO DA JUSTIÇA. Pesquisa de vitimização e percepção de risco entre os profissionais do sistema de segurança pública. São Paulo, 2015.
- FERNANDES, A. Vitimização policial: análise das mortes violentas sofridas por integrantes da Polícia Militar do Estado de São Paulo (2013-2014). Revista Brasileira de Segurança Pública, São Paulo, v. 10, n. 2, p.192-219, 2016.
- IBGE. Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística. Resultado da Amostra do Censo Demográfico 2010, 2010a.
- IBGE. Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística. Perfil dos Estados e dos Municípios Brasileiros 2014. Rio de Janeiro: IBGE, 2015.
- IBGE. Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística. Produto Interno Bruto dos Municípios 2004-2008. v. 11, 2010b.
- LIMA, R. S.; RATTON, J. L.; DE AZEVEDO, R. G. Crime, polícia e justiça no Brasil. Editora Contexto, 2012.
- MINAYO. M. C. S. Vitimização Profissional. In: DE LIMA, R. S.; RATTON, J. L.; DE AZEVEDO, R. G. Crime, polícia e justiça no Brasil. Editora Contexto, p.519-526, 2012.
- NUÑEZ, I. S. Latrocínio e Homicídio: uma distinção processual que separa criminosos e pessoas que cometeram um crime. Confluências – Revista Interdisciplinar de Sociologia e Direito, São Domingos - Niterói – RJ, v. 17, n. 2, p.128-149, 2015.
- SANTOS, R. L.; LOPES, A. A. S. O Policial Militar como Vítima da Violência Urbana. 2018. Disponível em: <https://acervodigital.ssp.go.gov.br/pmgo/handle/123456789/1382>. Acesso em: 09 de abril de 2018.
- SAPORI, L. F. Segurança Pública no Brasil: desafios e perspectivas. Rio de Janeiro: Editora FGV, 2007.
- SOUSA, R. C.; MORAIS, M. S. A. Polícia e Sociedade: uma análise da história da segurança pública brasileira. In: V Jornada Internacional de Políticas Públicas, 2011, São Luiz - MA. Estado, Desenvolvimento e Crise do Capital, 2011.
- VEDOVELLO, C. L. Era das Chacinas – breve discussão sobre a prática de chacinamento na era democrática. Revista Liberdades, São Paulo, n. 20, p. 134-146, 2015.
