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ABSTRACT

In the 1980s and 1990s, violent crime in Brazil rose markedly and the issue of public security took center stage on the social and political agenda. The current scenario shows the failure of traditional policies to control crime and violence, which are generally reactive, militarized and repression-based. Many shortcomings could be identified in the traditional model: a lack of planning and of investment, flawed training, an authoritarian legacy, human rights abuses, institutional corruption, and so on. Despite this many supporters of the traditional paradigm continue to advocate not only its continuation but also the intensification of old policies, which are half-hearted, according to them. In addition to this failing but nonetheless prevailing model, several innovative initiatives have arisen within Brazil on several levels, some of which are identified and analyzed in this article. These examples should inform reflection on how a new democratic public security paradigm could be set up in Brazil.

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PUBLIC SECURITY POLICIES IN BRAZIL: ATTEMPTS TO MODERNIZE AND DEMOCRATIZE VERSUS THE WAR ON CRIME

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Introduction

In Brazil the term normally employed in order to refer to this issue is "public security", rather than "citizens' security", which is the term normally used in other countries of the region. The notion of "citizens' security" in Brazil is actually associated with a specific paradigm that is more democratic and community-oriented, and linked to the notion of citizenship.

Brazil, like other countries in the region, is facing a crisis in public security, with high crime rates that increased markedly over the 1980s and 1990s. Until the 1970s, crime was basically thought of as a policing problem; as in other countries, the left-wing thought that the end of dictatorship and the restoration of democracy would somehow solve the issue. The topic of criminality was seen as a "right-wing" issue, pertaining to defenders of law and order, and any emphasis on the question was seen as suspect. As a result there was no reflection and much less any concrete proposal from progressive sectors to offset the mere demand for order by conservative groups.

However, the marked advance of criminality put the issue of public security firmly on the political and social agenda, once and for all. The failure of traditional policies to control crime and violence has created space for innovative reforms and proposals. Some voices have even been raised, calling for a total paradigm shift in public security. The idea of a more democratic public security with a greater emphasis on prevention, the emergence of new players, the notion of community police or simply a police force that combines efficiency with a respect for human rights, are all symptoms of the new period of debate and effervescence.

In Brazil, public security is essentially the responsibility of the states. Each state
has its police forces—The Civil Police and the Military Police—and its Tribunal of
Justice, under the federative model. The Federal Police, in turn, is small in scale—
smaller than many state police forces—and the federal criminal justice system is
restricted in its jurisdiction to specific crimes. For this reason the role of the federal
authority has been to use funding in order to encourage interventions in states that
meet given technical and political requirements.

Municipalities, in turn, mainly play a role in prevention, although the
expansion of the so-called *Guardas Municipais*—municipal guard forces—has
included repression tasks.

Citizens' perceptions of increasing insecurity have in recent years led to pressure
on all authorities to take steps in the field of public security, regardless of their official
mandates. However, the financial difficulties faced by the states have hindered significant
investment, creating an increase in municipal and federal powers in this field.

Federal policies

Among agencies of the federal government in this area, the Federal Police stands out,
with its responsibilities of providing surveillance of frontiers and customs posts and
its involvement in federal crimes. Its restricted manpower, only a few thousand officers
in all of Brazil, hampers the efficient fulfillment of all its functions.

The National Anti-Drugs Secretariat (*Secretaria Nacional Anti-Drogas*), linked
to the Presidency of the Republic, and traditionally managed by military personnel,[1]
carries out tasks in the field of prevention that often overlap with those of other
government agencies.

Two elements have historically limited the federal role in this sphere. The first
has been the fear of raising suspicions among state governments of interventionist
intentions by the federal government, going against the spirit of the federative pact,
especially in such a sensitive area. The second was the fear among federal
administrations of becoming deeply involved in a complex issue in which failure
would involve a high political price to be paid.

However, as has been stated, the crisis in public security has led to a social
demand for public authorities to intervene more actively. In 2000, shortly after the
well-known incident involving the number 174 bus in Rio de Janeiro,[2] the Fernando
Henrique Cardoso administration launched its National Plan for Public Security
(*Plano Nacional de Segurança Pública*). The coincidence between the dates is not
accidental but reflects the trend for public powers to formulate immediate replies to
periods of crisis in public security, rather than choosing a planned approach based on
overall data and indicators.

The National Plan contained a series of 15 commitments and 124 concrete steps
by means of which the federal government pledged to intervene against violence, above

all urban violence. Some actions were the exclusive responsibility of the federal authority while others were to be carried out jointly with state and municipal authorities. Critics accused the Plan of simply reclassifying many actions already being carried out, or in the pipeline, linking them at that moment to the field of security.

One of the major initiatives was the setting-up of a National Public Security Fund (*Fundo Nacional de Segurança Pública*) to fund state and municipal projects meeting given requirements—efficiency, accountability, respect for human rights—that the federal government deemed to be its priorities. The idea that began to take shape was that the federal government would induce reform-driven public policies at state level through selective funding, without wounding anyone's sensibilities. The National Public Security Secretariat (*Secretaria Nacional de Segurança Pública*—SENASP) of the Ministry of Justice, a body whose performance had till then been very discreet, was reorganized and strengthened in order to monitor and carry out its new tasks.

One of the 124 actions within the National Plan was the so-called PIAPS, the Plan for the Integration and Monitoring of Social Programs for the Prevention of Urban Violence (*Plano de Integração e Acompanhamento de Programas Sociais de Prevenção à Violência Urbana*), actually set up in 2001, under the President of the Republic's Institutional Security Cabinet. One of its special features was that it did not enjoy its own funding, but acted to coordinate initiatives stemming from a range of ministries that had the powers to prevent violence. It was thus a cross-cutting program to coordinate and enhance the results of several government agencies. It simultaneously set out to cooperate with the three levels of public power—the federal, state and municipal levels—and boost local networks. It focused principally on children and young people up to the age of twenty-four.

In its first year, 2001, PIAPS prioritized the metropolitan regions of São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, Vitória and Recife, exactly where the highest levels of deadly violence occurred in Brazil. The following year it included Cuiabá, Fortaleza and the Federal District. The program attempted to link projects coming from 16 sectors of the federal government, both ministries and secretariats, within a prevention paradigm, through improving quality of life, respect for fellow human beings and access to citizens' rights. Theoretically these initiatives were in coordination with local agents, either directly with local governments or with non-governmental organizations and civil society. The goal was to establish formal agreements between central government and the municipal and state governments. The projects to be funded were chosen by federal government technical personnel. However, conception and execution of the projects fell to the agencies putting them forward—whether municipal or non-governmental—who did not need to comply with predetermined technical criteria.

In January 2003 the new government abandoned PIAPS for other programs in the field of security.

When running for the presidency, Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva drew up a National Public Security Plan and foregrounded the issue during the electoral campaign. After

being elected, his administration set up its so-called Single Public Security System (*Sistema Único de Segurança Pública*—SUSP), aiming to provide operational linkage among interventions by the states of the federation, and their respective police forces, in each region of Brazil. After a series of political crises, SUSP ran out of political support and much of the plan remained only on paper.

Even the National Secretariat has been unable to live up to the expectations created around it, after being set up. The lack of strict political criteria regarding the state programs funded by it and successive cuts in its budget have considerably weakened its role as a promoter at state level of policies to be carried out through the Fund. This year, for example, the initial budget of roughly US$180 million, insufficient in itself for a country the size of Brazil and the task it is supposed to carry out, has been cut twice and is now only a little over one-quarter of the original amount.

The Federal Police has in recent years devoted itself to well-planned and highly-publicized actions to dismantle high-level organized crime nuclei in several states. One highly successful example has been the investigation of several cases of corruption among its own members, which has earned it an image of being a less corrupt force than the state forces. However, recent scandals in the Rio de Janeiro Superintendency have tarnished this image. The Federal Police has been accused of overstepping the mark and above all of seeking publicity during its actions against organized crime.

Gun control is one area in which the federal authorities have managed to advance, both by bringing in the Weapons Law of 1997, which made illegal possession of a weapon, formerly a misdemeanor, now a crime, as well as by the enacting of the "Statute for Disarmament" in 2003.

State Policies

The states are the major players in the field of public security. Each state has its own Military Police, a uniformed force whose task is to carry out ostensive patrolling and the maintenance of order, and Civil Police, whose mission is to investigate crimes that have been committed. This means that neither force carries out the "complete cycle" of public security, from prevention to combating crime, which leads to problems of overlap and of rivalry between them.

State-level security policies—if they can be called that, given their lack of planning, goals and assessment—are generally reactive in nature and based on repression of crime rather than on crime prevention. State governments frequently react to cases with political repercussions, especially when they are high-profile cases in the press, so as to provide a short-term response. When the case leaves the front pages, initial steps dwindle. The press thus has a great deal of power to guide measures adopted by public bodies. Interventions are rarely planned on the basis of specific goals.

Among the most common shortcomings in the field of public security, we may highlight:

- insufficient investment, leading among other consequences to poor wages for the lower ranking police officers. These salaries force officers to moonlight in other jobs, often in private security firms, causing high levels of stress and a trend toward the privatization of public security;

- poor training for police officers, above all the lower-ranking ones;

- an authoritarian legacy: the Police was a body that protected the State and the elites who ran it, against citizens who might be seen as a threat to the *status quo*, the so-called "dangerous classes". The transition from a citizen-controlling police model to one in which the police protects people, is gradual and remains incomplete. Furthermore the Brazilian State retains traces of its oligarchic past, such as special jails for people with university degrees;

- insistence on warfare as a metaphor and point of reference for public security operations. The goal thus remains in many cases to annihilate the "enemy", often ignoring the social costs. The problem of public security sometimes appears to be an issue of caliber, or as a knot which will be undone when the police achieves superior firepower to its enemy. As a result, public security is highly militarized in its structures, doctrines, training, strategy and tactics. Public security operations in poor areas resemble military operations in enemy territory: invasions, check-points and so on;

- in this context it is no surprise that there should be countless abuses of human rights, above all concerning the use of force. Shoot-outs in poor communities produce a high death rate, including accidental victims. There are also frequent allegations of torture of prisoners and convicts;

- conflict with poor communities, above all in places where organized crime is strong. Young people living in these areas see the police as their enemy, and among some of the police this view is mutual. Studies show that there are communities where the inhabitants are more frightened of the police than of drug dealers, whose despotism is more predictable;

- countless cases of police corruption, ranging from small bribes to get off traffic fines, to protection of drug dealers. Abuse of force is often linked to cases of corruption (see Mingardi's[3] study of the São Paulo Civil Police and the recent case of the massacre in the Baixada Fluminense[4] area of Rio de Janeiro in March 2005).

Despite this long list of shortcomings, there have been modernizing reform attempts in recent years. They are still exceptions to the rule, but represent the possibility of a future paradigm shift in Brazilian Public security. The following list is not exhaustive nor does it intend necessarily to put forward the most important topics, since it was drawn up merely to illustrate. Among experiments, the following are worth pointing out:

- community policing projects in several states, usually bringing positive results,

at least with regard to the image of the police in its relations with the community. However, there has been no significant reduction in crime rates. The most important element is actually a shift in the relationship between the police and the community. In any case, no state has adopted the community policing model as the general model for the Military Police;

• The setting-up of Police "Listeners" (*Ouvidorias*) or Ombudsmen in several states. Their task is to hear reports of abuses committed by police officers and guarantee the anonymity of the informant if necessary. Tip-offs are referred to the Departments of Internal Affairs or "*Corregedorias*" to be investigated, and the *Ouvidoria* keeps track of the investigation. The Department publishes a periodical report on the accusations it has received and operates as an awareness-raising and mobilization tool in the matter. However, lack of follow-up communications with the members of the public who make denunciations and the low proportion of cases that lead to punishment of the accused, have caused a considerable degree of dissatisfaction among accusers, as is borne out by studies of three *Ouvidorias*. There has been little institutional buy-in, as yet, and performance depends greatly on the individual *Ouvidor* involved. *Ouvidorias* rarely have their own staff or budgets, and many operate within the same buildings as the Security Secretariats, which goes against their need for confidentiality;

• The use of geo-referencing technology to map areas and times when there is a high rate of crime, so as to guide preventive patrolling to these hot spots. Classical studies assessing the impact of patrolling, such as that in Kansas City in 1972, have in fact concluded that non-specific patrolling with neither a spatial nor temporal focus cannot reduce criminality. The Belo Horizonte Military Police, among others, is using geo-referencing;

• Pilot-programs to reduce deadly violence in outlying areas with a high homicide rate. Such programs include the GPAE of Rio de Janeiro and "Fica Vivo" (*Stay Alive*) in Belo Horizonte. They are a novelty in Brazil, because crimes against life, unlike crimes against property and kidnappings, have never been a priority in Brazilian public security policies. This is because, among other reasons, homicide victims are mainly from lower-income groups with no political influence, and without any say, unlike the middle and higher classes.

The GPAE program (Special Area Policing Group—*Grupo de Policiamento em Áreas Especiais*) was first implemented in the Pavão-Pavãozinho-Cantagalo complex of slums in 2000 and later extended to a further three poor communities in Rio de Janeiro. Replacing the traditional strategy of sporadic incursions with exchanges of shots, the police remains permanently in the community, tries to develop close relations with the local inhabitants, and focuses activities on reducing gun-related incidents rather than combating crime in general.

Additionally the police strives to help the community take part in social programs to help prevent violence, particularly programs for youth. It is a damage reduction initiative that is partly inspired on the Boston Cease Fire initiative. The results show that, given certain conditions, it is possible to reduce shoot-outs and insecurity in the affected communities. However, the experience was not deemed a new model of policing for problem communities, but only a special case.

The '*Fica Vivo*' program has been implemented in recent years within a Belo Horizonte slum with high levels of violence. It blends police intervention with social programs, especially for young people. Results are apparently positive concerning homicide reduction.

- improvements in handling police intelligence, through the computerization, rationalization and filing of tip-offs and intelligence data. The Civil Police of most Brazilian states lacks an efficient information system and a digitized, centralized program to collect tip-offs, which hinders the spread of information. Intelligence data, for example, tend to "belong" to the officer who obtains them, who, on leaving the district, takes the information with him or her. In the case of the state of Rio de Janeiro, the '*Delegacia Legal*' program, set up in the late 1990s by the state government, substantially changed officers' modus operandi. In addition to improving infrastructure and premises, such as by building modern open-plan police stations resembling offices that did away with closed rooms where abuse and torture could be carried out, and by eliminating cells inside the police stations, the initiative aimed to alter the daily investigation setting in order to make it more efficient. First contact with people making tip-offs was carried out by grant-receiving university students, which enhanced the treatment given to local population, and ostensibly freed up officers to concentrate on their investigative mission. Tip-offs were recorded in a centralized information system leading to several major advantages. Information circulates more quickly and can be accessed in real time, facilitating the production of criminal data. Officers cannot delete a file once it has been created. In the past corruption was made easier because files could be destroyed. When an officer is transferred to another unit, all the information remains in the unit of origin. The integrated system is of enormous assistance in the monitoring activities of the Department of Internal Affairs, which has real-time access to files about the quality of each officer's work. This procedure as well as the fact that the computerized system will not work if information is not entered correctly, has greatly enhanced the quality of data processed. Institutional resistance and difficulty in changing some negative routines, such as 24-hour shifts, have restricted the impact of the program, but there is no doubt that its implementation has been a watershed when one analyzes the performance of the state civil police in Rio de Janeiro;

- attempts to integrate the operations of the military and civil police forces. The Constitution of 1988 establishes the separation of the two police forces, which is why it remains impossible for the time being to unite the two forces.[5] As a result, some states have taken steps to integrate the work of the two forces in practice. The state of Pará, for example, set up a joint Academy for the two police forces, without, however, unifying them, so that sharing experiences from the early stages of training would help overcome distrust and divergences.

Other states such as Minas Gerais and Rio de Janeiro have set up joint security areas for the two forces, thus ensuring that the geographical jurisdictions of the two institutions—military police battalions and civil police precincts—overlap for the first time, in an attempt to promote joint operations. To date, this initiative has only enjoyed modest success.

Municipal Policies

Introduction

Local authorities are increasingly important players. Although the overwhelming majority of security duties lie to the state sphere, popular pressure and the improving economical situation of some municipalities vis-à-vis states has favored local intervention.[6]

Municipalities generally tend to become involved in prevention programs, both as a function of their natural vocation as well as because they do not tend to possess the traditional enforcement apparatus, such as police officers, prisons and so on. The slow paradigm shift in public security swings between greater efforts in prevention and the exclusive use of repression. Despite the advantages of a preventive approach, prevention programs are usually complex and often yield results only in the mid- or long-term.

Over the last 15 years, municipalities have exercised a growing number of public security interventions, sometimes as the result of initiatives stemming from other public spheres—as in the case of PIAPS, mentioned above, but mostly as the result of their own initiatives. In this case, the municipalities seek funding from other agencies, which does not change the fact that the initiative was local.

On some occasions the decision to launch a municipal program is triggered by some violent event that has repercussions within the municipality. There are a range of interventions. For example, there may be the setting up or expansion of a municipal guard force, the installation of alarms or cameras at key positions in the town, or the introduction of social projects. Although these interventions include crime suppression components in some cases, most initiatives have to do with prevention.

Several municipalities from inland São Paulo state, both mid-sized and larger, have launched this type of initiative with the available funds and a local administration

that is reasonably technically competent. It can be seen that when neighboring municipalities carry out prevention plans there is a greater likelihood that others will follow the same path. Brazil's National Public Security Fund is a fund that the Federal Government uses to finance some state-level public security projects, as well, secondarily, as municipal projects. Although the Fund aims at state security, many municipal projects have requested funding from the Ministry.

In fact, although the projects that arise in the municipalities suggest a haphazard situation, the general picture may be considered more favorable than that of the large national security plans. This is the case because the national plans are prone to pendulum swings, delays or stalemates, and may collapse or peter out rapidly when political conditions change. Actually, most programs show an alarming lack of continuity. On the other hand the appearance of spontaneous local initiatives may hold brighter long-term prospects despite the uncertainties that mark the projects in each municipality. The initiatives coming out of some municipalities, especially the smaller ones, may suffer from technical drawbacks and may not possess the homogeneity and linkage of a well-implemented national program. However, national programs do not usually achieve the universality and outreach that they are designed for, and run a permanent risk of interruption.

The capacity for liaison between municipalities to face the challenge is interesting. Among advantages in this option are economies of scale in technical investments, especially in smaller municipalities. Planning, supervision and assessment of programs can be carried out by a single technical team hired for this purpose by the towns in a given region. There are also methodological advantages when it is a single program that is applied in a group of municipalities. For example, one can use a larger sample, and treat some places as control groups and others as experimental groups, and so on. Another point that underscores the importance of inter-municipal linkage is the movement of criminals. When there is a greater crackdown on crime in one particular place, criminals often move to other places, change their modus operandi, or target different types of people. For this reason any assessment of a local intervention against criminality must take into account the chance that crime may increase in neighboring areas. This happened, for instance, in Diadema, a district of Greater São Paulo, when a "prohibition" style law was brought in, and which will be examined below. The measure helped reduce the rate of violent incidents in Diadema, while the rate simultaneously increased in neighboring regions. This conclusion was made possible by crossing data from several municipalities, and led administrators to the conclusion that some inhabitants of Diadema had begun to frequent other nearby towns in search of fun that was no longer available in their own town. The advantages of inter-municipal intervention are clearer in metropolitan regions where problems are shared and where the movement of victims and criminals is more intense.

One example of an attempt at inter-municipal coordination is the setting up of the Public Security Metropolitan Forum (*Fórum Metropolitano de Segurança Pública*)

in greater São Paulo. The forum brings together the municipal secretariats or their equivalents with representatives of the state-level government to plan joint initiatives, share experiences and exchange information.

Institutional architecture of municipalities

As the core competence of public security had always fallen to the states, there were no municipal security structures. As municipalities took upon themselves this responsibility, they eventually created agencies, normally secretariats, whose mission was to coordinate all the relevant programs. In some cases, above all in the state of São Paulo, these are municipal public security secretariats. In other cases they adopt a different nomenclature, or former secretariats acquire new roles.

Among municipalities where former secretariats were restructured to take on new roles is Vitória, the capital city of the state of Espírito Santo. Diadema, in Greater São Paulo, is a municipality that set up new bodies to deal with public security.

Vitória is the center of a densely populated metropolitan nucleus that has been hard hit in recent years by one of Brazil's highest homicide rates. Additionally, the state of Espírito Santo has always been traditionally deemed one of the places where organized crime has put down the deepest roots, affecting large sectors of the Legislative, Executive and Judicial branches, to the point where federal intervention has been requested. Paradoxically, alongside such negative traits, Vitória has also stood out owing to the efforts of its local government, over several administrations, to reduce crime and the feeling of insecurity. The Municipal Secretariat for Citizenship was set up in 1994, to provide service to the lower-income population and provide the more vulnerable portions of society with access to rights. A public security nucleus was set up within the secretariat in 1997. Shortly after that, the secretariat was restructured and was renamed the Municipal Secretariat for Citizenship and Public Security.

The main roles of the secretariat are to coordinate projects and liaise with police forces, NGOs and civil society at large. It also manages the borrowing of funds from the federal government.

The CIC or Integrated Citizenship Center (*Centro Integrado de Cidadania*—CIC), housed in a building loaned by the Federal University of Espírito Santo, offers services to promote rights and access to justice for the least privileged. The CIC is coordinated by the secretariat and has been funded by the federal government through PIAPS.

In the case of Diadema, São Paulo, the municipality created a Public Security Secretariat from scratch to deal with the issue. Diadema was one of the most violent neighborhoods in greater São Paulo in the 1990s, and thus by extension, also in Brazil and Latin America. When the new municipal administration began its mandate in 2001, it set up a secretariat specially to deal with the issue. Its duties were to define guidelines for the work of the Municipal Guard and coordinate it with the state police forces in carrying out joint crime prevention programs.

The participation of society

Many municipal projects aim to foster the participation of the community and of society in the process of formulating and introducing projects.

Vitória decided to intervene actively in the area of violence while simultaneously setting up the Municipal Council to draft a strategic plan for the city. Violence was only one of several issues addressed. The Council brought together 350 components of several public authority agencies and representatives of civil society to take part in the plan. In the second stage the Municipal Security Council and the Regional Municipal Councils for Public Security were set up.

The Municipal Security Secretary, the presidents of the Regional Security Councils and one representative of the Municipal Chamber sit on the Municipal Security Council. In addition, representatives of the state authority such as the department head of the Vitória Judicial Police, the commander of the 1st Battalion of the Military Police and one member of the state Attorney's Office (*Ministério Público estadual*), one representative of the Commercial Association, one member of the state of Espírito Santo Federation of Industries, the president of the Vitória People's Council and one representative of the Bar Association, all have a seat on the Council.

Regional Municipal Councils for Public Security were established in accordance with the city's administrative regions: one for each of its seven regions. They include representatives of the Civil and Military Police forces, members of the communities and an agent from the local government. Their goal is to put forward proposals for interventions and to bring public authorities – particularly the police forces – closer to the beneficiary communities.

The municipality of Recife, the capital city of the state of Pernambuco, another city with one of Brazil's highest homicide rates, has also drawn up a strategy for social mobilization. Two bodies were created: the Municipal Council for Human Rights and the Committee for the Promotion of Human Rights and for the Prevention of Violence. The responsible politicians take the view that public security and human rights are goals to be sought simultaneously.

The Municipal Council for Human Rights is a body with eight members from the local government and eight from civil society. Its theoretical function is to hear accusations of human rights violations and involve public policies to defend human rights; however, it has not yet satisfactorily performed these roles.

The Committee for the Promotion of Human Rights and for the Prevention of Violence is a body made up of members from a range of municipal secretariats, without the participation of civil society. Its mission is not to carry out projects, which is the responsibility of the secretariats, but to effectively coordinate municipal efforts. Two important initiatives that sprang from the Committee were the setting up of a forum for debate, and the drawing of maps of violence showing risks in every zone of the city.

Generally speaking, social mobilization and participation can entail several beneficial effects:

- effects relating to the conception, management and follow up of programs in terms of their decentralization, democratization and so on;

- the preventive impact that the growth of social networks and enhanced community relations can have on fear and on violence, either indirectly by reducing fear and encouraging the use of public spaces, or directly by promoting the peaceful resolution of daily conflicts;

- a change in the social perception of violence, with assimilation of the new prevention paradigm.

Similarly, participation faces several challenges. Firstly, the most obvious risk is that this participation may be no more than mere rhetoric with no practical application, especially when it is a top-down prerequisite.

In the state of Rio de Janeiro, the state government ordered the setting up of Municipal Security Councils as a condition for funding municipal public security projects. Very few local governments set up such councils. The municipality of São Gonçalo, in Greater Rio de Janeiro, launched its council in 2004, but with a very limited impact. The candidate representing society itself did not have much support and several authorities would not take the institution seriously.

Secondly, mobilization is extremely difficult in certain communities. Unfortunately, those who stand to gain the most from participation and intervention are generally the most reluctant to take part. Thus in communities with high levels of violence, social networks tend to deteriorate and inhabitants do not trust each other.

Thirdly, mobilization of the population is sometimes very intense in moments of crisis or as a result of specific goals to be achieved, but falls off in the mid-term or when there are no longer any clear goals, such as obtaining a police station or receiving funds for a specific project.

Fourthly, the make-up of bodies representing society, and how representative their members are, continue to be issues that remain far from solution. One of the most obvious risks is that of reducing the participation of the population to segments with greater influence or better organization. For example, shopkeepers often take on the leadership of people's councils.

Fifthly, there are many cases of the use of participatory agencies by agents of the State as a means of obtaining resources from the community. This is the case of the funding of maintenance costs for state police forces by local traders, represented on the councils.

Finally, each process of open participation, above all those that work like assemblies, has its own dynamic and the final outcome is unpredictable: unexpected problems may arise.

One example took place in the Regional Municipal Council of Maruípe, in Vitória. The council meetings were traditionally open to participation. However, the participants began to feel intimidated when they were informed that a criminal wanted by the police had been present at the meeting where they had discussed strategies for capturing him. Whether this had actually happened or not, the feeling of insecurity that pervaded the meetings led to the banning of any person who was not an effective member of the Council. This restriction gave rise to heated debate. In the opinion of some, Councils are open agencies by definition and to restrict them meant denying their principles. The banning of people who were not effective members would mean becoming a representative but non-participatory body and run counter to its original purpose.

Vitória is sadly paradoxical. The city's Regional Municipal Councils, formerly an example of social participation, were dissolved when the public authorities realized that several council members became opposition party candidates in the municipal elections, precisely as a result of the high profile achieved through their being council members.

Existing types of preventive programs

The types of prevention projects fall into three groups: situational prevention projects, social prevention projects and policing prevention projects. A program will often encompass more than one type at the same time.

Situational prevention projects aim to reduce opportunities for crimes or acts of violence to happen in particular places by acting directly against them. The goal is to modify the social environment in order to make the occurrence of offences less likely. Behind this model lies the theory of opportunities, which highlights the importance not of changing the potential offender but of trying to reduce opportunities for that person to break the law. The traditional counter-argument is that if a potential offender does not find favorable conditions in one place, he or she will seek another place, but will in any case go on committing offenses. However, it is undeniable that the reduction of opportunities in several places will eventually reduce the total number of offenses, since not everyone can easily "transfer" to another place. Some crimes are also committed on a momentary impulse—street brawls, for example—so that they are linked to a given context and will not necessarily take place in a different context.

The simplest intervention along these lines is improving urban street lighting, increasing visibility, reducing the feeling of danger, and possibly reducing the risk of an assault or a mugging. The recuperation of degraded public spaces—overgrown waste ground, for example—in order not to create insecurity, is another strategy observed in several interventions.

Situational prevention through the installation of cameras at busy places or high-risk spots in a city is a classic example. The cameras are linked to a supervision center, normally operated by the police, and enable rapid response when a crime is committed. A significant number of municipalities in the state of São Paulo have

opted for the installation of cameras, along with an integrated surveillance center, generally operated by the *Guarda Municipal,* which calls in the police when necessary.

Social prevention programs are interventions that seek to change the condition of life of those people at high risk of developing aggressive or criminal behaviors, so as to reduce this risk. They are prevention programs by antonomasia: they are the most common type, receiving most funding, and those that have always been closest to the daily routines of the local governments. There are normally three levels of social prevention:

- primary prevention, aimed at the population at large, like universal attention programs;
- secondary prevention, targeting groups that risk suffering or committing violent acts;
- tertiary prevention, aiming to relieve the plight of victims of violence or help offenders reintegrate into society.

Local governments traditionally act more in the field of primary prevention, which is more wide-ranging. However, their ability to achieve results depends greatly on their capacity to channel their funds to the groups at highest risk.

Social prevention programs are often slow to yield results since they are based on changing living conditions, or changing relationships between people. However, when they do achieve the desired target outcome, their impact may be more intense and longer lasting than that of situational programs.

The philosophies of the different intervention programs emphasize different concepts, such as human rights, citizenship, improvement of the material conditions of life, and so on. This gives each program a different profile, even when the overall approach may be the same.

Here are some common examples of social prevention:

- educational projects to increase schooling among young people and avoid truancy, thus enhancing personal and professional options;
- professional training projects for young people with the same purpose;
- citizen training projects—with differing specific sub-issues—for young people living in at-risk areas, enabling them to exercise positive leadership in their communities and become catalysts in the struggle against violence;
- youth-oriented cultural and recreational projects. One example would be cultural activities organized in schools outside class-time. Recreational activities are sometimes held in places where there is, and at times when there is, a high risk of violence. Social and situational prevention actions are thus carried out simultaneously. The aim of these programs is to boost children's self-esteem and offer them constructive ways of using their time;
- health projects, especially for the youngest;
- legal and administrative support projects aimed at a population that is unused

to dealing with the mechanisms of the formal State;
- social assistance or community work projects aiming at young people so as to discourage violence;
- public education campaigns on issues such as domestic violence or mediated conflict-solution;
- support centers for victims of violence (domestic violence and so on).

In many local governments, violence prevention programs are actually a terminological redefinition of older traditional social welfare projects. This redefinition may stimulate a reflection on, and an approach toward, how to make the activities of different projects mesh together in practice.

In Recife, for example, the *Bolsa-Escola* (school grant) program provides a grant to the mothers of poorer families to enable them to keep their children at school. It is the main program of the city administration, which invests much more in it than does the Federal equivalent. As part of a reflection upon violence prevention, the program now includes not only the income component as a criterion, but a benefit to wives of prison inmates with children of school age.

In Vitória, the *Agente Jovem de Desenvolvimento Social e Humano* (young social and human development agent) program trains young people in disease prevention, environmental conservation or citizenship. One of the program's selection criteria is to incorporate young people who have been condemned for petty crimes. It also works closely with the *Terra* environmental deterioration prevention program, since the same young people trained under the program are the people who will raise awareness among their communities as to the work carried out to preserve the mangrove swamps.

Policing prevention programs are initiatives in which the local authorities act through the police force to reduce the crime rate, either through street patrolling measures, or through community actions or some other means. These programs obviously depend on the liaison ability of the municipal police forces. One option is cooperation with state police forces, but there is great resistance to real municipal control in the political, administrative and cultural areas. Experiences in community policing – the best-known paradigm of police-linked prevention activities – are actually nearly always an initiative taken by the state public security authorities.

Another more common option is the participation of the Guarda Municipal, in the case of municipalities that have one. The profile and set-up of the Guarda Municipal are a core issue in the municipal public security debate in Brazil. The constitutional role laid down for the GM is to guard public buildings, parks and monuments. However the range of situations is very broad in practice. Many municipalities do not yet possess a Guarda Urbana and others have set one up recently. Vitória, for example, with its prevention initiatives dating back to the 1980s, had no "Guarda" until 2004. In other cases they were reformed and expanded. Some forces, especially in São Paulo, use firearms,[7] which increases the risk for their officers and may reduce

their ability to carry out community work. If the "Guardas" become ordinary police forces, they lose their differentiation in terms of public security. The situation in Brazil ranges from "Guardas" that would desire to become military police forces, to "Guardas" that carry out the surveillance of public buildings, schools and parks, or to organizing the traffic.

A good example of police prevention activities is the so-called "*Lei Seca*" or Prohibition-style Law of Diadema. As explained above, Diadema had a high homicide rate in the 1990s, and was in fact an icon of violence in Brazil. A study of homicides showed that 60% of them took place in or around bars during the night. In 2002 the town ordered bars to close after eleven in the evening. Some places were given a special license to operate after this time provided they met certain prerequisites: a closed area, their own security service, and no recent recorded incidents of violence. This measure brought in bar owners as active players in violence prevention.

Night patrols by the Guarda Municipal and the Military Police, in a carefully planned intervention so as to obtain the support of the Attorney's Office and the courts, enforce the law. Any bar given three warnings for non-compliance loses its license. The owner is free to choose an alternative commercial activity if he or she so wishes. Bars are closed down during the daytime so as to avoid unnecessary conflict with the clients at night.

Assessment of the projects

Federal programs as well as state and municipal programs need outcome assessments that will point the way ahead and raise public and political support for successful initiatives. However, the situation is bleak. The programs do not undergo impact evaluation to show whether they have attained the proposed results.

There are some assessment reports that usually refer only to implementation assessments—activities carried out, number of beneficiaries and so on—or that are audits of expenditures. The core issue of the impact is ignored in both cases. Furthermore, these reports often concentrate on measuring people's participation and mobilization, which are intermediate variables. They do not reflect the changes that were the programs' main goal: reductions in crime and in fear.

The traditional lack of data in this field hinders a thorough assessment. Many municipal plans actually include among their goals enhancements to production and access to public security information. Very few show satisfactory outcomes.

"Assessment reports" are usually drafted by the technical personnel who carry out the projects, which is why they tend to be self-congratulatory or take for granted that the sought-after effects will appear when the activities are put into practice. The assessment is rarely carried out by an independent, technically competent and program-neutral agency.

A high-quality assessment should be planned along with the intervention itself so that funds can be allocated, assessment activities scheduled, and above all a pre-

intervention study should be carried out, so that comparisons can be made in order to record changes that take place. Impact assessment is methodologically complex. The ideal way to carry it out requires an experimental group and a control group, qualified personnel, and accurate data. It cannot be done if you do not know the situation prior to the intervention whose impact you wish to measure. Ideally, every assessment of a project of a given scale should be carried out, at least partly, by independent institutions whose work is not directly linked to the outcome of the project.

Assessments in the field of public security and prevention are particularly difficult[8] owing to a range of phenomena (migration of crime from one area to another, multiplicity of dimensions, mid- and long-term effects, and so on). However, they are extremely important if the continuity of programs is to be assured and resources are to be allocated efficiently. Most programs suffer from a lack of continuity and are carried out over short timescales, which makes assessment difficult. It is, however, true that without assessments that show clear effects, it will be difficult to obtain long-term funding for these projects.

NOTES

1. In this particular it follows the U.S. trend toward militarizing the fight against drugs.

2 What happened in this event was that the police surrounded a thief who was on an urban bus, holding several passengers hostage. After hours of tension, broadcast live on television, the police called off the negotiations and tried to kill the criminal. One hostage was shot accidentally by a police marksman. The thief was captured and choked to death inside a police car.

3. G. Mingardi, *Tiras, Gansos e Trutas. Segurança Pública e Polícia Civil em São Paulo (1983-1990),* Porto Alegre, Corag., 2000.

4. This was a massacre in which military police officers randomly killed 29 people, apparently to destabilize the commander of their battalion who was bringing in measures to clean up and control police actions. CESEC/ FASE / JUSTIÇA GLOBAL/ Laboratório de Análise da Violência / UERJ/ SOS QUEIMADOS/ VIVA RIO, Impunidade na Baixada Fluminense. No Prelo.

5. There is a bill proposing the ''deconstitutionalization'' of the police force model, in other words to remove the mention within the Constitution, so each state can choose the model it deems most suitable.

6. J.T. Sento-Sé (org.), *Prevenção da Violência: O papel das cidades*, Rio de Janeiro, Civilização Brasileira, 2005.

7. This issue, which is not laid down in the legislation, was legitimated *a posteriori* by the *Estatuto do Desarmamento* of 2003, for municipalities above a certain size.

8. WORLD BANK Department of Finance, Private Sector and Infrastructure, Latin American Region, *Prevenção Comunitária do Crime e da Violência em Áreas Urbanas da América Latina:Um Guia de Recursos para Municípios,* 2003.