

YOUTH AND URBAN VIOLENCE IN SAN SALVADOR, RIO DE JANEIRO AND PRAIA: PUBLIC POLICIES, COMMUNITY-BASED RESPONSES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Peace Studies Group (NEP/CES)

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AUTHOR PROFILES

Carla Afonso

A researcher of the Centre for Social Studies and a member of the Humanities, Migrations and Peace Studies Group and OGAV, she has a master's degree in International Humanitarian Action from the University of Deusto, Bilbao, and a first degree in Law from the School of Law of the University of Coimbra. Her research interests include gender and armed violence, and the mechanisms of response and psycho-social support to survivors of armed violence.

Katia Cardoso

A researcher at the Centre for Social Studies and member of the Humanities, Migrations and Peace Studies Group and OGAV, she is a PhD candidate on the doctorate programme "Post-colonialism and Global Citizenship" at the University of Coimbra. Katia obtained her master's degree in African Studies at ISCTE, and has a BSc in International Relations from the University of Coimbra. Her current research interests include urban violence, youth in Africa, post-colonialism, deportation and the Cape-Verdean diaspora.

Rita Santos

A researcher at the Centre for Social Studies and member of the Humanities, Migrations and Peace Studies Group, she also co-coordinates OGAV. She is a PhD candidate in "International Politics and Conflict Resolution" at the University of Coimbra and holds a MA in Peace Studies from the University of Bradford and a BSc in International Relations from the University of Coimbra. Her current research interests include violence, gender and small arms, arms control movements, global civil society and demilitarisation.

Sílvia Roque

A researcher at the Centre for Social Studies and a member of the Humanities, Migrations and Peace Studies Group and OGAV, she holds a master's degree in African Studies from ISCTE (Lisbon, Portugal) and a BSc in International Relations from the University of Coimbra. She is completing her PhD in "International Politics and Conflict Resolution" at the University of Coimbra. Her current research interests include the trajectories of violence in post-conflict settings, namely its dissemination at the micro-social level and the strategies communities find to resist and prevent it, with a special focus on Guinea-Bissau and El Salvador.

Tatiana Moura

The Executive Director of Promundo, a Brazilian NGO that seeks to promote gender equality and end violence against women, children and youth, she co-coordinates OGAV/CES and is a researcher at the Centre for Social Studies. She has a PhD in Peace, Conflicts and Democracy from the University Jaume I (Spain), and a Master's degree in Sociology and a BSc in International Relations from the University of Coimbra. Her research interests include feminism and international relations, new wars and urban violence, and gender and armed violence.

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Overall, despite the differences between Rio de Janeiro, San Salvador and Praia in terms of the incidence of youth violence, historical approaches and experience in dealing with the issue, Brazil, El Salvador and Cape Verde have all favoured an enforcement-based approach, focusing primarily on repression and law-enforcement mechanisms (police action, specific youth violence legislation, and prosecution, prison and socio-educational systems), instead of interventions aimed at the root causes of violent behaviour. However, recent changes in federal government approaches to public security in Brazil, coupled with state level changes, suggest the materialisation of a discourse shift in the field of youth violence, which has been in the making since the late 1990s.

Another common feature in these countries is the incomplete availability of qualified information systems on violence and violent criminality, especially on organised crime and female involvement in urban violence.

Civil society actions to prevent and combat urban violence are very diverse. In Brazil, especially Rio de Janeiro, NGOs, associations and grassroots organisations have a fairly long track record when dealing with the issue of youth violence, promoting initiatives and programmes mostly aimed at youth violence prevention, especially at the primary level. These initiatives and programmes have been based on skills training, sports, culture, empowerment and, to lesser extent, professional training and labour market integration. In San Salvador, despite the severity of youth violence, civil society approaches are less diversified and effective. Like any other violence-afflicted country in Central America, violence prevention and especially intervention programmes, namely those aimed at the perpetrators of violence, face greater disadvantages and less funding and support from the region's crime-weary population. In Praia, the involvement of civil society in this matter has been slow. However, in recent years, the experiences of civil society organisations, sometimes in partnership with public institutions, have been singled out as good examples and as having had some direct impact on youth involved in violence in the Cidade da Praia.

Responding to and effectively preventing youth urban violence requires a comprehensive approach which takes into account the intra-social forms of violence committed by and against youth, as well as the structural conditions which determine the marginalisation of youth. This includes prevention programmes which help young people in vulnerable situations, intervention programmes which offer alternatives for those attracted to violence, rehabilitation prospects for those who wish to leave violent groups, and those leaving prison and socio-educational systems. Capable and accountable law-enforcement bodies, protection and support mechanisms for victims of violence, adequate arms control policies, up-to-date data collection and analysis systems on youth and violence, and whole-of-government and multi-disciplinary approaches to violence are also key.

2. INTRODUCTION

Globally, the most visible and feared actors in urban violence scenarios are youth gangs or youth involved in violent practices within wider and more organised illicit associations. Often defined as risk populations, youth have increasingly become targets of key governmental agencies and policies, specifically in those countries facing rising or epidemic levels of youth mortality as a result of violence. Simultaneously, the issue of youth violence has also become a main concern for civil society initiatives, principally those aimed at violence prevention and, to a lesser extent, to youth rehabilitation and reintegration.

The cases of Brazil, where youth have been involved in drug-trafficking and militia groups (particularly active in Rio de Janeiro); El Salvador, which is at the top of the world ranking on youth homicide and where youth gang violence is a major issue (particularly in the capital, San Salvador); Praia (Cape Verde), where political and media debate have highlighted youth involved in violence, especially the so-called “thugs”, as one of the main national concerns at the expense of other criminal and violence problems, are examples of this and offer particular insight on the way youth, despite being represented mostly as perpetrators of violence, also constitute the main victims of several types of violence, namely family and institutional violence¹.

This report provides an overview of key public security policies and programmes, as well as community-based projects and initiatives addressing the issue of youth violence in the three contexts. The analysis of public policies and other programmes, as well as the best practices and recommendations put forward by the report, is concentrated on nine general dimensions: data production and analysis on violence, and the involvement of youth in violence; political standpoint; family and gender violence; justice, law enforcement and victim support; prison and socio-educational systems, and social reintegration; opportunities and future prospects; youth values; arms control; whole-of-government and multi-disciplinary approaches to violence.

¹ For an in-depth analysis of the relations between youth and violence in these three urban violence scenarios, see K. Cardoso, R. Santos, S. Roque and T. Moura (2011). *Youth, Collective Urban Violence and Security: Key Findings*. Brussels: IfP-EW.

3. PUBLIC SECURITY POLICIES AND COMMUNITY-BASED RESPONSES TO YOUTH VIOLENCE

3.1. SAN SALVADOR

In El Salvador, the legacy of war persists in the permanence of political polarisation, inter-generational conflicts and political and media manipulation of the urban violence phenomenon.

Overall, the policies supposedly aimed at ending gang violence put forward by the Flores and Saca administrations between 2003 and 2009, both elected by the conservative party ARENA, relied on repression rather than violence prevention or the rehabilitation and reintegration of young *pandilleros*².

In 2003, similar to other Central American countries, an *Antimaras*³ law was approved. This law aimed to criminalise *maras* membership, meaning simply being a *pandillero* became a reason for imprisonment. The law also aggravated sanctions on the individuals belonging to *maras* and decreased the legal criminal age. Gang-related crimes could be attributed to individuals as young as 12 years old⁴. This law was included in the *Plano Mano Dura* (2003) and *Super Mano Dura* (2004). The latter included the active participation of the military in public security.

In fact, since the passing of these plans, many poor youths who came from marginalised communities became targets of police assault and abuse. Simply having a tattoo would allow the police to imprison someone for investigation. These hard-line public policies were, simultaneously, highly publicised in the sensationalist press which, in turn, increasingly portrayed the *pandilleros* as the scum of society, holding them accountable for the majority of violent phenomena in the country, even pre-investigation.

This scapegoating of *maras* in a society where many other violent individual and collective actors exist ultimately conceals other types of structural violence: insecurity and criminality are considered of the utmost importance, rather than unemployment⁵. As such, the populist measures of *Mano Dura* have received wide social approval, despite failing to contain violence. In reality, these Plans seemed more like a form of controlling and manipulating society, as well as potential political and collective struggles, through fear and insecurity, opening up spaces to strengthen the market for private security companies.

2 Gang members.

3 Anti-gang.

4 M. Carranza (2005). *Detenção ou morte: aonde os garotos pandilleros de El Salvador estão indo [Detention or death: the destiny of the youth pandilleros in El Salvador]*. Rio de Janeiro: COAV. Available at <http://www.coav.org.br/publicue/media/elsalvadorport.pdf>.

5 PNUD (2003). *Armas de fuego y violencia [Guns and Violence]*. San Salvador: PNUD. Available at <http://www.enlaceacademico.org/base-documental/biblioteca/documento/armas-de-fuego-y-violencia/>

The ideology and the funding of these policies originate from the exact same country that had previously funded the war and the massacres in El Salvador: the US. To the US administrations, transnational *maras* were the same as organised crime; therefore, the strategies to combat them are based on militarisation⁶.

The results could not have been worse⁷. The imprisonment of the majority of *pandilleros* has led to the reinforcement of *maras* structures and to a change in their *modi operandi*. If violence originally occurred within *pandilleros* themselves and survival was guaranteed by thefts, robberies or drug trafficking, today, after the enactment of the Plans, new forms of survival have emerged, based on extortion, abduction (which sometimes ends up in homicide, if the victim refuses to pay) and *sicariato*⁸. These constitute new forms of violence, which have spread broadly both geographically and socially, therefore affecting more social groups⁹.

At the same time, some *clicas*¹⁰ and individuals were co-opted by networks of organised crime (drug and arms trafficking, among others), which directly and indirectly promote the use of violence as a way of controlling territories and acquiring resources. The transnational nature of the economy which supports these activities and the progressive association to drugs trafficking have led to the formation of a deep-rooted violent structure, which has made these groups less unwilling to stop employing violence.

In this scenario, *pandilleros* who have not been imprisoned have become increasingly hidden and socially isolated. Tattoos have tended to disappear and women have supposedly ceased to officially integrate into *maras* to retain their ability to perform undisclosed activities. Additionally, suspicion and mistrust of the police has increased. Families who have seen their houses destroyed, their children beaten up or abused by the police or the army end up further admiring *pandillas*. In part due to the way they are perceived and treated, *pandilleros* have also assumed a culture of “war”. In their conversations they often differentiate between themselves and “civilians”, and perceive the police as their enemy (not necessarily a target for offensive action but rather an actor to keep an eye on). This is confirmation that the idea of the gangs as highly armed actors who wish to control the country is not the most truthful image.

Contrary to expectation, the Mauricio Funes administration, elected by FMLN in 2009, has not changed this type of approach characterised by repression and militarisation. The control and policing of neighbourhoods in the metropolitan area of San Salvador were handed over to military forces¹¹. This measure was contested by several civil society organisations which work with human rights, violence prevention and gang members' rehabilitation¹². Nevertheless, in face of the intensification of drug-trafficking activities, which are increasingly perceived as associated to gangs, this type of intervention has in recent years been reinforced in Central America. The

6 The fact that the Bush Administration was mainly concerned with drug trafficking and transnational gangs in Central America resulted in the signature of several security cooperation agreements with partner countries in the region. El Salvador emerged as the “best student” due to the implementation of the *Manu Dura* plans. In 2007 the US-sponsored initiative “Mérida” was set up, constituting a large-scale version of the *Manu Dura* plans. It was based on security forces training (police and armies) and arms transfers to Mexico and Central American countries, thereby stimulating repression and human rights abuse. See S. Fitzpatrick Behrens (2009). ‘Le Plan Mexico et les migrations en Amérique Centrale [Plan Mexico and Central American Migration]’, accessed on 21st October 2011. Available at <http://risal.collectifs.net/spip.php?article2468>

7 ‘*Mano Dura* was a populist penal policy whose primary purpose was not to curb street gang activity, but to improve ARENA’s electoral advantage in the run-up to the 2004 presidential elections. Penal populism is a political response that portrays offending as the result of wilful anti-social behaviour rather than social exclusion and promotes imprisonment as the principal crime reduction strategy’ S. Wolf (2008). *The politics of gang control. NGO advocacy in post-war El Salvador*. Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, University of Wales, Aberystwyth, p.74.

8 Often *pandilleros* are “sub-contracted” by “civilians” (including politicians and businessmen) to commit homicides and other crimes.

9 W. Savenije (2009). *Maras y Barras. Pandillas y violencia juvenil en los barrios marginales de Centroamérica [Gangs and youth violence in marginal neighbourhoods in Central América]*. Universitet Utrecht/Facultada Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales: San Salvador.

10 Sub-division of *pandillas*. Each *pandilla* is divided into different *clicas*, according to neighbourhoods or community lines.

11 This intervention was harshly criticised by civil society organisations: the armed forces are not prepared to ensure public security; the police have not only different capacities and skills, but also distinct philosophies and rationale which distance one institution from the other. This serious and authoritarian step back is worrisome in terms of public security, once it implies the army taking over of the functions that should be executed by the National Civil Police. This practice will not only affect the members of *pandillas*, but also every single person who, in the view of a soldier, looks like a *pandillero*. Moreover, the intervention of the armed forces has so far not succeeded in reducing violence levels, rather it has generated more violence through the rising hatred and intolerance towards the young members of the *pandillas* and increasing stigmatisation of poor youth. Meanwhile, crimes committed by criminal groups which constitute organised crime networks are left unpunished. For more information see <http://www.fespad.org.sv/planes-de-seguridad-fracasan>.

12 Fundeprode (2011). ‘INFORME SOBRE DD. HH. EN CENTROAMÉRICA LAS ONG ALERTAN SOBRE REPUNTE MILITAR EN ISTMO [Report on Human Rights. NGOs raise alarm in Central America over a militarist drive in the isthmus]’, accessed 20th December 2011. Available at http://www.derechoshumanoscostarica.org/noticias/informe_sobre_dd_hh_en_centroamerica_las_ong_alertan_sobre_repunte_militar_en_istmo.php

recently created *Antipandillas* Intervention Group¹³, constituted with the support of the Counter-Terrorism Unit of the FBI, is an example of this. Moreover, the Youth Penal Code has been revised, increasing the sanctions on young people responsible for homicide, kidnapping, extortion and other serious criminal offences aged between 16 to 18 years old.

The prolonged absence of effective violence prevention programmes and initiatives aimed at the reintegration of *pandilleros*, as well as the lack of structural changes in socio-economic conditions, have exacerbated the use of violence. 2011 was the most violent year since the signature of the peace agreements. Last year alone, more than 4,000 people were victims of homicides¹⁴.

During the ARENA administrations a few policies were also put in place with the purpose of softening the repressive image of the authorities. The *Mano Amigo* and *Mano Extendida* were based on two principles: the prevention of violence within affected communities and the rehabilitation of *pandilleros*.

These programmes of “prevention” and “rehabilitation” had three main gaps. The first was the lack of political will. In fact, these programmes did not receive the same political attention and resources as the *Mano Dura* plans, which continued to overfill prisons in El Salvador. As a result, the programmes ended up as a simulacrum of good intentions, despite the authentic goodwill of the staff. In some cases, *pandilleros* who participated in these programmes were detained while undertaking the programme, which increased the suspicions surrounding the programmes themselves.

The second gap was related to the segmented analysis of the causes of violence, i.e. the importance given to primary prevention methods while disregarding rehabilitation and dialogue with leaders. It is unclear whether participation in the programmes can eliminate the attractiveness of the *pandillas* and offer a viable alternative. As the *pandillas* remain the closest structures available to youths and communities, it is to be expected that youths continue to integrate themselves into such groups. If the *pandillas* remain excluded from these preventive programmes, little will change and the seductive attributes of *pandillas* are likely to stay a potent force among youths.

The third gap lay on the notion that the violence of the *pandillas* could be diminished without a holistic political programme aimed at combating youth problems. *Pandillas* can enable youth to enjoy rare freedoms in a highly conservative and sin-obsessed society, such as the one in El Salvador. Prevention programmes should not be based on the mere organisation of sports and cultural events. Neither should rehabilitation, as well as professional training and job creation, be regarded as a panacea, given their effective target audience (around 20 youths out of thousands). Additionally, the creation of micro-companies cannot be envisaged as a solution in a state which does not promote job creation.

The de-politicisation and the absence of the state from an education, employment and diversity approach favours a perspective where social control and authority are transformed into a continuation of the relations of dominance, and of the justification of violence between the state and its citizens, between women and men, youth and elders¹⁵. While different power structures are not questioned, polarisation between victims and perpetrators will continue, along with the inability to look beyond the criminalisation of poverty and youth. Youth will keep on searching for ways to escape this control, yet will simultaneously reproduce authoritarian and violent structures already existing in society.

In El Salvador, like much of Central America, most youth gang violence prevention, intervention and rehabilitation initiatives have been implemented by church groups (Catholic, Protestant and Evangelical), grassroots organisations, or local government with the support of civil society.

13 'Comandos contra terrorismo formarán a unidad antipandillas de El Salvador [Anti-terrorism commandos will train El Salvador's anti-gang unit]', *elsalvador.com*, 7th December 2011. Available at http://www.elsalvador.com/mwedh/nota/nota_completa.asp?idCat=47673&idArt=6448252

14 '2011 es el año más violento de la paz según la PNC [2011 has been the most violent year of peace according to the PNC]', *elfaro.net*, 28th December 2011. Available at <http://www.elfaro.net/es/201112/noticias/6985/>

15 M. Hume (2004). *Armed violence and poverty in El Salvador*. Bradford: CISS, University of Bradford.

While some civil society organisations have put forward initiatives aimed at preventing youth violence¹⁶ based on primary prevention (i.e. working with children and youth not associated with gangs), only a few work on the reintegration and rehabilitation of gang members¹⁷, and face several difficulties. Some staff members complain about the insecurity associated with this task and the difficulties of working with youths who are heavily involved in violent activities. The work of these organisations is also often met with suspicion by other individuals, the police and local authorities, who at times perceive them as gang accomplices. In addition to the lack of resources with which these organisations operate, few youths participate in these programmes in the long term, instead ending up seduced by the rewards of violence.

Two organisations are noteworthy in terms of principles and innovative interventions. Firstly, the Quetzalcoatl Foundation seeks to work in an integrated fashion at three different levels of violence prevention: primary, secondary (youth involved in *pandillas*) and tertiary (imprisoned youths). Their work is based on psycho-social support which goes beyond the mere “poverty reduction” approach and is centred on behavioural transformation. Their approach entails emotional strengthening, mainly conducted in prisons, through life stories and art. The aim of this type of work is to see violence through the perspective of imprisoned youth, namely through the violence they have endured in their lifetime. One of the elements of this work, based on the life stories of youths, includes the questioning and reformulation of gender roles, challenging the masculinities and femininities which facilitate violence. The organisation also works on the emotional strengthening of prison staff and teachers, namely inspectors, sergeants and officers in charge of vigilance and control, as well as on conflict transformation at the individual and emotional level, as staff undergo great emotional stress as a result of constant threats and uncertainty. They find themselves isolated, living inside the limits of their compounds, without any type of support or attention. Their personal security as well as the security of their families is usually at risk and their stress is often channelled into the prison system and towards prisoners. In general terms, the vision of the Quetzalcoatl Foundation consists of working to change the culture of authoritarianism which dominates both politics and society and to broadly reassess and rethink power relations.

Secondly, *Fundación de Estudios para la Aplicación del Derecho* [*Foundation of the Study of Law Enforcement*] (FESPAD) provides juridical support to inmates and their relatives and friends, who are often victims themselves. This type of work results from the organisation’s denouncing of human rights violations. *Pandillas*, particularly through their relatives and friends, have reached out to FESPAD and asked for training on human rights and the prison system. Before, FESPAD had run several training courses on the prison system and on the rights and obligations of defendants for NGOs and penal centres. Since 2008 the Foundation has run a structured programme with *pandilleros* from different *pandillas* and their families. The relatives and friends of *pandilleros* and imprisoned youths are often victims of police harassment and intimidation both in their communities and when visiting prisons themselves (there are several documented cases of police officers carrying out unnecessary spot police searches of relatives before prison visitations – some body searches have been so intrusive and violent, i.e. of the female genitals, that there have been cases of pregnant female visitors who were required to have abortions following the searches). FESPAD has held joint meetings between *pandillas* to promote discussions. In January 2009 the relatives of gang members organised a human rights demonstration supporting inmates and opposing police harassment and brutality. It was a unique moment in the history of the country, since relatives of the two opposing *maras* met without any violent incident. The vision of FESPAD consists of changing police actions in order to prevent conflict and violence instead of inciting them (police violence has provoked outrage and subsequently vengeance from *pandillas* and even increased general solidarity with *pandillas*), and of guaranteeing the human rights of inmates living in degrading conditions.

3.2. PRAIA (CAPE VERDE)

In a country where 15-24-year-old people represent 54.4. percent of the total population (according to the 2010 Census), youth has long been perceived as a key factor for development. Having played an important role in the anti-colonial movement and in the establishment of an independent Cape Verde, youth is currently regarded as

16 Such as *Fundación para el Desarrollo Juvenil*, MOJE, and Crispaz.

17 Work is mostly undertaken by *Fundación Quetzalcoatl*, *Equipo Nahual*, *Homies Unidos*, and *Polígono Don Bosco*.

key actors in economic and social development¹⁸. Governmental investment in youth is visible in the creation of programmes in three main areas: business promotion (credit lines and tax incentives); professional (skills training sessions and youth sponsoring law) and political-cultural development (incentives for group creation, volunteering and the creation of youth centres)¹⁹. Youth thus occupies a key position in the political and social agenda as the object of an increasing number of policies, measures and strategic plans.

Regarding public policy, a set of initiatives and projects perceived as a 'multi-sector offensive'²⁰ was devised, comprising: a) youth centres, with internet access and spaces for information and training (in 2008 and 2009 training courses were offered on the topics of accessing the labour market and reproductive and sexual health, aimed at youth (both male and female) and young mothers); b) mobile centres: minibuses equipped with computer material, aimed at reaching distant towns and villages outside the main urban centres; c) youth inns; d) employment offices; e) the National Volunteering Programme, in partnership with the United Nations, the NGO Platform and the government; e) CCY/Culture and Art support: an artistic training programme, comprising theatre, dance, film making, photography and creative writing (includes training scholarships in countries such as the US).

Several health initiatives have been scheduled to implement the National Plan of Combating Gender-based Violence and Promoting Gender Equity, principally in the fields of reproductive health and alcoholism prevention. The chief employment promotion programmes are those conceived by the Ministry of Employment and Solidarity, namely the National Programme of Professional Internships, the Youth Learning Programme and the Qualification and Employment Database programme.

These plans and programmes, which aim to bring youth to the centre of the political agenda, should be interpreted in light of the objectives set by international donors and institutions, for example the Millennium Development Goals and the requisites for attaining middle income country status in 2008. Therefore, the main goal of these plans and programmes is to preserve the good image of Cape Verde internationally²¹.

However, the accomplishment of these concerns is far from guaranteed, especially if we take into account ongoing demands from youth for better living conditions and the country's unemployment figures (around 57 percent of men aged 15-24 years old are unemployed, most clearly in urban areas)²². This situation is worsened by the increase in obstacles to youth mobility, especially as a result of the reduction of emigration opportunities²³, which has historically been one of the principal means of social mobility in the country. Despite the positive economic performance of Cape Verde in recent years, youth remains most vulnerable to cycles of poverty and social exclusion.

The issue of youth transcends the demographic dimension (although this is associated with several social areas), and encompasses many socio-political, economic and cultural agendas. In the early 2000s, the emergence of youth groups began challenging the image of Cape Verdean youth. These groups are mainly made up of boys who were labelled as "thugs" and identified with particular neighbourhoods. Their *modi operandi* includes theft, robbery and, in some cases, homicide with firearms. While the references and inspirations for these groups was initially almost exclusively exogenous (such as hip-hop culture), they have begun to shape internal processes such as language, which has resulted, for example, in the creolisation of the expression "cash or body" to *kasubódi*. These groups brought a new image to the traditional representation of Cape Verdean youth, originally perceived as good students, and polite and good workers, capable of overcoming difficulties resulting from the strategic vulnerabilities of the country.

18 Governo de Cabo Verde (2006). 'Programa do Governo para a VII Legislatura 2006-2011 [Programme for the VII government 2006-2011]', accessed 8th November 2011. Available at http://www.governo.cv/index.php?Itemid=91&gid=41&option=com_docman&task=cat_view

19 Ibid., p.51.

20 Ministério da Juventude e Desporto (2010). 'Respostas à Juventude. Políticas Públicas para a Juventude [Responses to the Youth. Public Policies targeting the Youth]', accessed on 12th November 2011. Available at http://www.juventude.cv/index.php?option=com_docman&task=cat_view&gid=5&Itemid=12

21 See, for instance, the position the country occupies in the Democracy Index of the Economist Intelligence Unit (26th generally and 1st among Portuguese-speaking countries) and in the African Governance Index of the Mo Ibrahim Foundation (3rd). In October 2011 this Foundation awarded the ex-president of Cape Verde, Pedro Pires, with the prize of Excellent African Leadership.

22 Instituto Nacional de Estatísticas (INE) (2008). *Resultados da revisão das projecções demográficas-Cabo Verde 2000-2020 [Results of the revision of the demographic forecasts-Cape Verde 2000-2020]*. Praia: Instituto Nacional de Estatísticas.

23 In his 2004 study, Carling already emphasised the decrease of the transnational migration rate. J. Carling (2004). 'Emigration, return and development in Cape Verde: the impact of closing borders', *Population, Space and Place*, Vol. 10, No. 2, pp.113-132.

The design and implementation of youth violence prevention and combat policies has placed little attention on the micro- and macro-social conditions which shape it. There has been an emphasis on individual variables to the detriment of more holistic structural changes which have taken place in Cape Verde over the last few decades, particularly growing inequality and social exclusion, individualised and consumer-based society, changes in family structures, unemployment, educational drop-out and mistrust in institutions, namely the justice system.

The policies aimed at addressing youth violence have generally entailed the expansion of police presence on the streets (especially the military police in peripheral neighbourhoods) the creation of socio-educational centres and the reinforcement of the punitive dimension of justice (i.e. increasing jail terms). This illustrates an alignment with the current global logic, characterised by repression, securitisation²⁴ of youth, 'zero tolerance policies'²⁵ and the 'criminalisation of the poor'²⁶.

In recent years, the Cape Verdean police has undergone a process of deep restructuring motivated by exogenous and endogenous factors: on the one side, the need to respond adequately to the security demands of the population and also to the incompetence charges voiced by parties of the opposition and the media; on the other side, the need to adapt to new international security demands as a result of the signature of several partnership agreements with European police forces.

The restructuring includes the change of name of the *Polícia de Ordem Pública* [Public Order Police] to the *Polícia Nacional* [National Police] in 2005, the creation of the Anti-Crime Squad (BAC) and the Criminal Investigation Squad (BIC), as well as the forces which constantly patrol the neighbourhoods of Praia, the increase in the number of Judiciary Police officers, and more resources for criminal investigations. Another particularly controversial measure was using the Military Police to patrol the streets of Praia, especially those neighbourhoods perceived as sources of insecurity.

Recently, in December 2011, the Community Police was established. The rationale behind its creation was twofold: to address the claims of human rights violations by the police and establish a more proximate and continuous control of the population, especially youth in neighbourhoods perceived as problematic. This new patrolling force, often labelled the 'family police'²⁷, has 40 agents on call, is set to function in neighbourhoods and tackle crimes such as 'domestic violence, drug use and trafficking, disruption of order and juvenile delinquency'²⁸.

Another aspect of the new security perspectives in Cape Verde is the blossoming of the private security sector, which since 1994 has been 'constituted by 13 companies and 2500 guards that provide services to banks, restaurants, public offices, ministries and companies all over the country'²⁹.

The rise of insecurity in Praia has led to some changes in existing legal frameworks, namely in terms of socio-educational intervention (institutionalisation of young offenders), the administering of alternative punishments and youth reintegration. In November 2006, decree n° 2/2006 was approved, establishing a social reintegration service in Cape Verde, which aims to operationalise public social reintegration policies and hence the prevention and fight against youth delinquency, interventions in the prison system and in the community, the monitoring of parole, and the implementation and monitoring of alternative punishments to prison.

The decree establishes community measures and the institutionalisation of children and youth, in conflict with the law. The first socio-education centre, "Orlando Pantera", was inaugurated in Praia in 2007 but only two years later began to receive youths. In April 2010, five youths were institutionalised under different regimes (open, semi-open and closed).

24 We understand securitisation as a complex process through which a specific theme is defined as (or becomes) a security matter. As a result, it requires emergency-type policies in order to address the issue. O. Wæver (1993). 'Securitization and desecuritization', *Arbejdspapir [Working Paper] 5*. Copenhagen: Copenhagen Peace Research Institute; B. Buzan, O. Wæver and J. de Wilde (1998). *Security: A new framework for analysis*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner.

25 L. Bordonaro (2009). 'Cabo Verde: juventude e guerra ao crime' [Cape Verde: the youth and the war on crime], *P@x, Boletim Online*, No. 13, December. Available at <http://www.ces.uc.pt/nucleos/nep/media/PAX-13-pt-dez.pdf>

26 L. Wacquant (2001 [1999]). *Les Prisons de la misère [Prisons of Poverty]*. Paris: Raisons d'agir.

27 'Cabo Verde: Polícia Nacional cria Polícia Comunitária [Cape Verde: National Police establishes Community Police]', *PNN Portuguese News Network*, 12th December 2011. Available at <http://www.jornaldigital.com/noticias.php?noticia=28541>

28 Ibid.

29 L. Bordonaro (2010). 'Semântica da violência juvenil e repressão policial em Cabo Verde' [The semantics of youth violence and police repression in Cape Verde], *Direito e Cidadania*, Ed. Especial "Política Social e Cidadania. Year XI, No. 30, p.182.

Over the last decade the prison population in Cape Verde increased by over 100 percent³⁰. The overcrowding of prisons and recurrent cases of human rights violations at the hands of prison guards are two of the key dominant notes of a system which is essentially punitive and where few initiatives of rehabilitation and social reintegration have been put forward. The main prison in the country – São Martinho prison – was designed for 250 prisoners but in 2008 housed 630 inmates, placed in overcrowded cells with few sanitary conditions, mixing old and new inmates. In 2010 a new prison facility was opened in an attempt to overcome these issues.

The Human Rights Report of the United States State Department in 2010 concluded that, despite improvements, mainly concentrated on the São Martinho prison, ‘conditions remain deteriorated’³¹, without state monitoring or supervision. This conclusion was seconded by the president of the Human Rights and Citizenship National Commission, Zelinda Cohen, and by the *Associação Zé Moniz* president, Manuel Faustino.³² According to the report, police abuses, impunity and the rise of sexual tourism constituted some of the main human rights challenges in Cape Verde.

The involvement of civil society in this matter has been slow and has generally been characterised by the delegation of many functions to the government. Youth violence is not a central and mobilising theme in the agendas of civil society organisations and institutions. However, in recent years experiences of civil society organisations, sometimes in partnership with public institutions, have been singled out as good examples and as having had some direct impact on youth involved in violence in Praia. Different associations have their headquarters in these problematic neighbourhoods, for example, the organisation *Espaço Aberto*, which is based in the Safendi neighbourhood, and *Black Panthers*, which is based at the Várzea neighbourhood. Despite being in their early stages, these organisations have been developing interesting programmes aimed at youth in general, particularly “thugs”. Programmes include different kinds of training and the promotion of cultural activities. Due to its innovative character, the ACRIDES project (Association for Poor Children), in Achada Grande Trás, a neighbourhood where three different rival thug groups used to exist, should also be highlighted.

3.3. RIO DE JANEIRO (BRAZIL)

Despite recent advances, Brazil remains one of the most violent countries in the world, with gun-related mortality rates similar to many war scenarios. Brazil is currently ranked 18th in the world ranking of violent homicides, with 28 deaths per 100,000 inhabitants (average annual violent deaths from 2004-2009)³³. The state of Rio de Janeiro is ranked 7th in the country’s index of violent homicide. This represents an important shift since 1998, when the state was ranked 3rd in the index of the states with the highest prevalence of gun-related deaths. A significant proportion of the victims of lethal violence are young males aged 15-29 years old³⁴.

The legacy of the military regime which ruled the country from 1964 to 1985 played a particular role in the emergence of organised crime and in the permanence of significant structural and cultural violence in the democratic period. In fact, those who participated in repressive practices during the dictatorship later became members of extortion and extermination groups, illegal gambling societies (*jogo do bicho*), drug-trafficking factions³⁵ and militia groups, but were also responsible for negligible justice reforms and the permanence of violent police practices, especially those aimed at the poor segments of the population³⁶.

At the root of the explosion of direct urban violence at the end of the 1980s and which continues today in Rio de Janeiro are rapid urban growth and the absence of sufficient housing structures (which led to the increase of poor communities on the outskirts of big cities since the 1960s); high inequality in wealth distribution; slow

30 Ibid.

31 United States State Department (2010). ‘Human Rights Report’, accessed on 25th October 2011. Available at <http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/2010/>

32 Jornal Expresso das Ilhas (2011). ‘Direitos Humanos nas prisões: Reclusos também têm direito a ter direitos [Human Rights in prison: Inmates have the right to have rights]’, accessed on 25th October 2011. Available at <http://www.expressodasilhas.sapo.cv/pt/noticias/go/direitos-humanos-nas-prisoas--reclusos-tambem-tem-direito-a-ter-direitos>

33 Geneva Declaration (2011). *Trends and patterns in lethal violence, Global Burden of Armed Violence 2011*. Geneva: Geneva Declaration Secretariat, p.53.

34 J. Waiselfisz (2011). *Mapa da Violência 2011. Os Jovens do Brasil [The Map of Violence 2011. The Youth of Brazil]*. São Paulo: Instituto Sangari and Ministério da Justiça.

35 A. Zaluar (2004). ‘Urban violence and drug warfare in Brazil’ in K. Koonings and D. Kruijt (Eds.) (2004). *Armed actors. Organised violence and state failure in Latin America*. London/New York: Zed Books, pp.139–154.

36 Ibid.

economic growth; low living standards; growing firearms availability³⁷; the emergence of drug-trafficking factions and other armed groups, particularly in Rio de Janeiro; the ineffectiveness or the lack of presence of the state; widespread impunity; the culture and practice of violence maintained and perpetuated by the police and private security groups.

In the megacity of Rio de Janeiro, homicide as a result of drug-trafficking conflicts and police incursions do not account for all lethal victims of gun violence in the city. Violent practices by the militia and corrupt police officers, interpersonal violence and conflicts in the home also have to be taken into account. Despite the variety of violent incidents, the main victims are invariably the same: poor young black men. While in 2010 the overall homicide rate of the Brazilian population was 25.2 per 100,000 inhabitants, in the 15-24 age bracket this rises to 50.1 per 100,000 and to 49.7 per 100,000 for 15-29 year olds.³⁸

In Brazil, particularly Rio de Janeiro, public security policies aimed at addressing urban violence and drugs trafficking have been long characterised by the use of military confrontation and repression³⁹, which has been characterised by military-style incursions into poor communities and the increasing number of people imprisoned for drugs trafficking. In 2008, youths between 18 and 29 years old represented around 60 percent of the prison population in Brazil⁴⁰. The latest available data confirm that 16,940 adolescents are in socio-educational systems as a result of a criminal offence⁴¹.

Black and poor youth in particular constitute the dominant proportion of those who are imprisoned or undergo socio-educative programmes as a result of involvement in drugs trafficking⁴². Both are frequently detained in dilapidated, overcrowded and understaffed facilities. In addition to this, they often face delays to the announcement of their sentence.

Unequal access to justice – which starts with the criminal policies indicating what is crime and what is not, moving on to a focus on public security policies (which give priority to certain types of crimes and overlook others), the selectivity of police action (which often treats white middle-class people and poor black people residing in peripheral areas differently), judicial inquiry and proceedings, ending with the announcement of sentences – allows the black, poor and youth populations to be the preferred target of the state's repressive control. The number of adolescents involved in criminal offences is worrying, yet youth violence is not the main factor for the rise in crime. Youth in conflict with the law⁴³ committed only 10 percent of all offences in the country, most of them patrimonial⁴⁴. Major offences, such as homicides, only represent a small percentage of the infractions committed by youths (around 5 percent)⁴⁵.

After the transition to democracy, the militarised approach to public security, inherited from the dictatorship period, was

37 Small Arms Survey (2007). *Guns and the city*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

38 J. Waiselfisz (2011). *Op. Cit.*

39 After the demise of the military dictatorship, the management of security in Brazil was permanently allocated to the military and civil police of each federative unit. While the transfer of this responsibility from the military regime represented an important step towards the obsolescence of the doctrine of national security, in practice each state government dealt with the issue of violence in similar ways to those used during period of the military rule. The lack of experience in this field, coupled with the absence of consolidated knowledge and data on violence and violent criminality, the inability to counter resistance towards the democratisation of police action, as well as the inability to address both the material and human structural deficits of the police force, led to renewed investment in repression and the use of force. See R. Willadino, J. Sento-Sé, C. Dias and F. Gomes (Eds.) (2011). *Prevenção à violência e redução de homicídios de adolescentes e jovens no Brasil [Violence prevention and the reduction of teenage and youth homicide in Brazil]*. Rio de Janeiro: Observatório de Favelas.

40 Departamento Penitenciário Nacional do Ministério da Justiça (2008). *Sistema Integrado de Informações Penitenciárias – InfoPen. Relatório Estatístico - Análítico do sistema prisional – Brasil: junho de 2008 [Integrated System of Penitentiary Information – Statistical Report. Analysis of the prison system – Brazil, June 2008]*. Brasília: Ministério da Justiça. Available at <http://www.mj.gov.br/data/Pages/MJD574E9CEITEMIDC37B2AE94C6840068B1624D28407509CPTBRNN.htm>

41 ILANUD (2010). *Projecto Juventude e Prevenção da Violência. Sistematização de experiências de prevenção da violência entre os Jovens. Relatório Final [Project Youth and Violence Prevention. Systematisation of violence prevention experiences among youth. Final Report]*. Brasília: Ministério da Justiça, p.12.

42 L. E. Soares (2011). *Justiça. Pensando alto sobre Violência, Crime e Castigo [Justice. Thinking out loud about Violence, Crime and Punishment]*. Rio de Janeiro: Nova Fronteira, pp.115–121.

43 Youth in conflict with the law are young people who are held judicially accountable as a result of committing an offence, according to the norms established by the *Estatuto da Criança e do Adolescente [The Statute on Children and Adolescents]* (ECA), i.e. any conduct perceived as crime or penal offence by article 103 of ECA.

44 ILANUD (2007). *Mapeamento Nacional das Medidas Socioeducativas em Meio Aberto – Listagem dos processos de execução de medidas socioeducativas nas varas competentes [National mapping of socio-educational measures in semi-open regime – List of execution of socio-educational processes]*. Rio de Janeiro: ILANUD.

45 Ibid.

consolidated and began to target the most impoverished segments of the population: the young, poor and *favelado* (those who live in the *favelas*), perceived as the main *loci* for drugs trafficking and violence. Armed confrontation and criminalisation, the two major cornerstones of this approach, have resulted in some difficulties promoting security among the general population and addressing the issue of drugs trafficking besides the localised trade in the slums. It has also contributed to an increase in human rights violations and summary executions perpetrated by the police, as stated by the UN Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions⁴⁶.

The permanence of the territorial control exercised by drug factions, despite the crisis of this model⁴⁷, and the quick expansion of militia groups in poor areas of the city alongside the prevalence of high levels of extrajudicial killings and forced disappearances perpetrated by state agents, constitute other examples of the limitations of this model of public security.

There are, nonetheless, some signs of change in public security in Brazil, particularly in public policies targeting youth. The approval of the Statute on Children and Adolescents (ECA) in the 1990s and more recently the setup of the National Plan on Security Policy (2000), the Public Security for Brazil Project (2003) and the National Programme of Security and Citizenship (PRONASCI) in 2008 are the main cornerstones of a trend based on making security policies compatible with human rights, reinforcing the rule of law and engaging new actors in public security, namely the federal government, municipalities and civil society organisations.

After the new Brazilian Constitution (1987), policies aimed at children and youth became priority concerns. The ECA, approved in 1990, constituted a landmark regulatory framework for children and teenagers which followed the commitments assumed under international agreements such as the International Convention on Children's Rights⁴⁸, substituting the previous law (Law n° 6.697, 1979), which only intervened in juridical processes of children and teenagers in irregular social situations.

With the ECA, children and teenagers became entitled to specific rights (right to life, health, food, education, leisure, culture, dignity, freedom, family, free from discrimination, negligence, exploitation and other violent acts) to be guaranteed by the state. The state is in charge of assuring the rights of children and teenagers and also defining the system of accountability for those who commit infractions (socio-educational measures to be applied in situations involving children and youth in conflict with the law).

Although the ECA can be interpreted as being of prime importance in preventing youth violence, the National Plan on Security Policy (2000) and the Public Security for Brazil Project (2003), the two first federal public security initiatives, took this further, presenting public security beyond repression and emphasising the importance of social investment, the improvement of livelihood conditions and the reduction of vulnerability factors, alongside investment in the prison system, police reform and police training. They also promoted community and municipal participation, underlined the integrated and multi-disciplinary nature of public security, valued data-producing systems as the basis for public policies and reinforced the preventive component in public security policies.

In 2008, as a result of a federal government initiative, PRONASCI was initiated. Developed by the Ministry of Justice, it articulated security policies and social actions, prioritising the prevention of violence and criminality. Its resource allocation was innovative: between 2008 and 2012 the budget prevision was R\$6.7 billion. In addition to public security agents, the main priority population of the programme were youth between 15 and 24 years of age, especially those who were homeless, exposed to urban violence or had been victims of violent criminality; female victims of violence; those youths residing in metropolitan regions or urban centres with high rates of homicide and violent crime. The repressive focus of the programme entailed combating organised crime.

Taking into consideration the fact that poor, black youth constitute the main victims of violence, the *Farol [Lighthouse]* project was created within the PRONASCI framework. It seeks to support black youth in situations of social vulnerability, in conflict with the law or recently released from prison. One of the main challenges of the

46 P. Alston (2008). *Report of the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions. Mission to Brazil*. Rio de Janeiro: United Nations Human Rights Council. Available at http://www.extrajudicial-executions.org/application/media/A_HRC_8_3.pdf

47 S. Ramos (2009). 'Meninos do Rio: Jovens, violência armada e policia nas favelas cariocas [Rio's boys: Youth, armed violence and police in Rio's favelas]', *Boletim do CESeC*, Year 8, No. 13, December.

48 The Convention was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1989. It was ratified by Brazil in September 1990.

project was to integrate youth into the school system and labour market. However, from 2008–2010 no resources were allocated for the initiative⁴⁹. Another PRONASCI project aimed at youth is *Protejo – Jovem Cidadão [To Protect – Youth Citizen]*. It intends to protect and assist youths exposed to domestic and urban violence, and encourage them to become involved in their communities and complement the activities of the “Women for Peace” project⁵⁰, with the support of a monthly stipend. The project was designed to operate within a two-year period. However, the project only used 78.1 percent of the R\$58.1 million budgeted for the first year and 43.5 percent of the R\$46.7 million approved for the second year. As a result, the necessary protection and training actions expected evidently could not have been adequately implemented. The project *Reservista Cidadão [Citizen on reserve]* has not yet been implemented, yet aims to protect youths who have left military service, in cooperation with the Ministry of Defence. In particular, it will seek to provide youths living in territories with a high incidence of violence and criminality with human rights, citizenship and ethics training, and will encourage them to become agents of sensitisation and change in their own communities. To this end, they will be offered a stipend of R\$100 a month over the course of a year.

Therefore, despite interesting examples of a new approach to public security, most of the aforementioned actions have thus far been extremely limited in their implementation. A focus on gender also appears to be inexistent.

The overall trend of change should not be taken for granted; for example, the national plan for the reduction of homicides, one of the pillars of the public security policy of the Rousseff government announced in 2011, was interrupted suddenly in 2012, apparently by the President herself⁵¹.

In Rio de Janeiro in particular there have also been signs of change, especially since the introduction of the pilot UPPs (Pacifying Police Units) project, which has gradually begun to replace the practice of military-style incursions into poor communities with the *de facto* state occupation of these territories. This pilot project is an initiative of the state's Secretary of Public Security, set up in 2008, which aims to disband criminal groups and seeks to break away from the logic of confrontation.

Instituted by decree 41.650 in 2009, UPPs perform pacification actions and maintain order in poor communities which are characterised by widespread crime, territorial control by drug-trafficking factions and strong prevalence of weapons. On the project's website, it is stated that UPPs⁵² aim to disrupt territorial control of drug-trafficking factions and reduce the amount of weapons in communities, rather than to extinguish drug trafficking once and for all.

So far, 18 units have been mobilised, mainly in the southern area of Rio and in the areas controlled by drug-trafficking factions (only one is in a territory controlled by militia groups, Batan *favela*). Among the main criticisms and tensions of UPPs is mistrust between *favela* residents and the police, especially in the early stages of the units' mobilisation, which is deeply rooted in the previous routine of military police interventions in the *favelas* and amplified by the use of heavy weapons by UPP officers. In some cases, residents have highlighted cases of corruption and bribery of police officers, mostly connected with inaction against drug traffickers⁵³. Another key source of tension has been the over-regulatory role UPPs have played in neighbourhoods, especially imposing curfew hours and prohibiting *funk* dances in the community. Other negative aspects include an increased financial

49 All budgetary informations about the implementation of the PRONASCI programme can be found in Instituto de Estudos Socioeconômicos (INESC) (2010). *Segurança Pública e Cidadania. Uma análise orçamentária do Pronasci [Public Security and Citizenship. The budget analysis of Pronasci]*. Rio de Janeiro: Inesc.

50 The project “Women for Peace” aims to encourage women exposed to violent and crime-afflicted environments to build and reinforce social networks for the prevention of youth violence and to combat and prevent youths from joining drug-trafficking factions or other armed groups. Women selected by the programme are entitled to a monthly stipend of R\$190 over the course of a year. This project was terminated six months ago in Rio de Janeiro by the Economic Court. In nine other states the project has faced several irregularities. See ‘No Rio, Mulheres da Paz naufraga [In Rio, Women for Peace sinks]’, *O Globo*, 16th January 2012. Available at <http://oglobo.globo.com/pais/no-rio-mulheres-da-paz-naufraga-3677482>

51 ‘Governo engaveta projeto de redução de assassinatos [Government dismisses project of homicide reduction]’, *O Globo*, 17th January 2012. Available at <http://oglobo.globo.com/pais/governo-engaveta-projeto-de-reducao-de-assassinatos-3536649>

52 According to the decree, police occupation is divided into four stages: 1) reoccupation of the territory by the state police; 2) stabilisation through keeping police in the community and constructing a UPP headquarters; 3) definite occupation, in which police officers become part of the community's day-to-day life; 4) post-occupation, i.e. consolidation of police occupation and the employment of state services rather than those connected to public security.

53 ‘PM investiga denúncia de corrupção e afasta comandante de UPP no Rio [Military Police investigates corruption claim and UPP Commander in Rio steps down]’, *O Globo*, 12th September 2011. Available at <http://g1.globo.com/rio-de-janeiro/noticia/2011/09/pm-investiga-denuncia-de-corrupcao-e-afasta-comandante-de-upp-no-rio.html>

burden on populations in the aftermath of the occupation (before UPPs, residents did not pay for electricity, water or television; rent values have also tended to increase).

The occupation of regions previously dominated by drug-trafficking and militia groups must be accompanied by the ongoing qualification and external monitoring of the police, as well as by a reduction in weapons. As such, it is imperative to reflect upon the format and the timing of UPPs by challenging their military nature, apparent from the number and type of weapons its police officers carry⁵⁴, and also to support ongoing nation- and state-wide small-arms-control initiatives and civilian disarmament campaigns. Finally, it is essential to ally this police project with social and cultural initiatives aimed at integrating these spaces into the city, namely through the improvement of medical and school facilities, job creation, the establishment of grant programmes and the promotion of cultural initiatives. In April 2010, the state office for Social Relief and Human Rights was given the responsibility to coordinate social policies in UPP communities, namely the provision of basic services and equipment, and to ensure community participation. In January 2011, Social UPPs were instituted by decree to coordinate, monitor and articulate all social actions and public services in UPP territories and their responsibility was attributed to the municipal institution *Instituto Pereira Passos [Pereira Passos Institute]*. This shift from state to municipal responsibility has led to some scepticism about the success of the project and its sustainability⁵⁵. Finally, despite being hailed as the main state investment in public security, until now UPPs have no formalised programme, no defined goals, strategies or monitoring schemes besides what is laid out in the decrees. This not only creates uncertainty about the future of this social experiment but also raises difficulties in terms of assessing the impact of UPPs in occupied territories and other regions of the city. Indeed, while UPPs represent a change in terms of security policy and action in poor neighbourhoods and have a strong impact on the lives of youths, it remains limited in terms of its geographical scope and sustainability. In order to guarantee the implementation of all UPP units expected by 2012, the state of Rio de Janeiro needs over 12,000 military police officers, i.e. one third of the current contingent⁵⁶. It is also crucial to transform UPPs into a state policy instead of a policy specific to the current state government and thus guarantee their continuation after the upcoming state elections.

In Brazil, and especially in Rio de Janeiro, NGOs, associations and grassroots organisations have been accumulating experience and knowledge in dealing with the issue of youth violence over a long period, promoting initiatives and programmes mostly aimed at the prevention of youth violence, based on skills training, sports, culture, empowerment and, to lesser extent, professional training and labour market integration.

However, with regard to training programmes, Programme H and Programme M, (the H stands for *Homens* and *Hombres*, the words for men in Portuguese and Spanish, and M for *Mulheres* and *Mujeres*, women), created by the NGO Promundo, are some of the most innovative. The programme seeks to engage young men and women and their communities in critical reflections about rigid norms related to manhood. Programme H consists of a set of group education sessions and strategies for community campaigns to encourage young and adult men to respect their partners and their wellbeing, and to participate more equally in caregiving and domestic work. Programme M promotes women's empowerment and citizenship through work with women on gender identity, employment, caregiving, and civic engagement. These programmes combine group education activities with community-led campaigns and an innovative evaluation model (the Gender Equitable Men scale). The proposed action adapts Programmes H and M for multi-sectoral use in households, labour unions and businesses. After participating in Programme H and M activities, young men and women have reported a number of positive changes, from higher rates of condom use to improved relationships with friends and sexual partners.

The *Atletas da Paz [Peace Athletes]* project, of the NGO Fight for Peace, implemented in the Maré favelas on the outskirts of Rio de Janeiro, stands out as a positive example of bringing young people closer through sports, training and sensitising them as citizens with rights and duties, and seeking to integrate them into the school system. The project provides boxing, *capoeira* and wrestling classes alongside citizenship and IT training sessions. The rationale behind the project is to provide youths with the means to channel aggressiveness in a rule-based environment, to access adrenaline and power in a healthy way and thus use sports as a differentiated

54 L. A. M. Silva (2010). 'Afinal qual é a das UPP? [So, what is the objective of UPP?]', accessed on 18th June 2011. Available at www.observatoriodasmetropoles.ufrj.br

55 R. Willadino, J. Sento-Sé, C. Dias and F. Gomes (Eds.) (2011). *Op. Cit.*, p.140.

56 *Ibid.*

process of youth training. Young people participate actively in the management of the project, attending staff meetings and representing the project elsewhere. In some cases, athletes have become project teachers or workshop moderators and some have even sought to become professionals in their fields of expertise, for example in state and national competitions. The project has reached 2000 youths in the community thus far.

Many cultural initiatives seek to promote youth participation in productions of *capoeira*, dance, theatre, circus, audiovisual productions, hip-hop, among others. Two examples of civil society involvement in youth violence prevention are: the audiovisual school *Cinema Nosso*, which offers free courses and workshops on cinema, animation and motion design to youths from all backgrounds in the metropolitan area of Rio, especially those from poorer communities; the social circus *Crescer e Viver*, which aims to encourage children and youths to be agents of socio-cultural mobilisation and to non-violently transform their lives through the learning process of the circus.

Empowerment initiatives entail the direct participation of youth in the formulation and implementation of projects themselves, and promote collective organisation and action in communities. The *Papo de Resposta* [*Responsibility talk*] project, a partnership between the Rio de Janeiro Civil Police and the NGO AfroReggae, is one of the most innovative. It was conceived by two Civil Police officers who were worried about the tense relationship between the police and the population, especially youths in poor neighbourhoods. The project is being implemented in schools and other environments by establishing a “talk” between youths, police officers and ex-criminals, where ideas and stereotypes about violence, criminality and drug use are discussed. The police officers who moderate the talk seek to draw attention to youth issues, concerns and establish links of trust and respect, demystifying the negative image of police officers and other entrenched prejudices.

Overall, most civil society initiatives aimed at addressing youth violence are projects of prevention. These are mainly based on primary (aimed at youth vulnerable to violence) and occasionally on secondary prevention strategies (aimed at specific risk groups among youth, such as young black males from low social classes). Given the scale of youth violence, the negligence of tertiary prevention, i.e. action aimed at youth already involved in violence as victims, perpetrators or both, is worrying. In addition, initiatives aimed at the family and friends of young victims and perpetrators of violence are also scarce. The pilot “Support programme for relatives of victims of massacres in Rio de Janeiro” project, implemented by the Centre for Studies on Security and Citizenship (CESeC) and Centre for Social Studies between 2007-2010 in Rio de Janeiro, appears to be the exception. It provided a psychological and legal support network for relatives of victims of police violence in Rio de Janeiro and organised a training course for Legal Educators, aimed at relatives of victims of armed violence to provide them with basic information and knowledge on legal affairs and human rights, thus broadening their access to justice.⁵⁷

57 B. Soares, T. Moura and C. Afonso (Eds.) (2009). *Auto de Resistência: Relatos de familiares de vítimas da violência armada* [*Self Resistance: Reports from relatives of victims of armed violence*]. Rio de Janeiro: 7 Letras.

4. CONCLUSION

The public policies targeting youth violence examined in the three case studies shed significant light on the repercussions of so-called “heavy on crime” approaches to youth violence. While this repressive and criminalisation-based approach was designed to disrupt and stop gang activity, gather information and detain violent offenders, its impact has been very different in practice from that which had been anticipated.

It is true that there has been a significant increase in the number of arrests and prisons made regarding gang-related crimes, particularly in Rio de Janeiro and San Salvador where the prison population has increased since the 1990s. However, this has not translated into a significant reduction in homicide rates and collective violent incidents perpetrated by youths. Moreover, this approach has raised serious concerns about the human and civil rights of young people, putting unnecessary strain on frail or malfunctioning judicial systems, and increasing the arbitrary authority of police.

Indeed, despite the differences between the three cases, all three countries have favoured an enforcement-based approach, focusing primarily on youth delinquency, risky behaviour and drug use, and employing repressive, law-enforcement mechanisms (police action, specific legislation on youth violence, and the prosecution, prison and socio-educational systems), instead of pursuing interventions aimed at the causes of violent behaviour. Nevertheless, recent changes in the federal government’s approach to public security in Brazil and state level changes in Rio de Janeiro suggest the emergence of a discourse shift in youth violence since the late 1990s, with a new emphasis on violence prevention, full access to social and human rights, and the participation of both state and non-state actors to prevent violence.

In light of this, and in order to tackle the issue of youth violence more effectively, the governments in the three countries must strive to create a better balance between prevention efforts – namely in the fields of education, health, employment, urbanisation – and repression and law enforcement.

In all three countries, civil society plays a significant role in designing and implementing youth violence prevention, intervention, and rehabilitation programmes. In Brazil, especially in Rio de Janeiro, NGOs, associations and grassroots organisations have a fairly long track record when dealing with the issue of youth violence. They have promoted initiatives and programmes mostly aimed at youth violence prevention, especially at the primary (youth vulnerable to violence) level, based on skills training, sports, culture, empowerment and, to a lesser extent, professional training and labour market integration. In San Salvador and Praia, however, the situation is different. In El Salvador, similar to any other violence-afflicted country in Central America, violence prevention and especially intervention programmes, principally those aimed at the perpetrators of violence, face disadvantages, such as less funding and support from the region’s crime-weary population. In Praia, the involvement of civil society in violence prevention has been slow and has been generally characterised by the delegation of many functions to the government. However, in recent years experiences of civil society organisations, sometimes in partnership with public institutions, have been singled out as good examples and as having had some direct impact on the youth involved in violence in the Cidade da Praia.

As a whole, responding effectively to youth violence, particularly collective youth violence, requires a comprehensive approach which takes the intra-social forms of violence committed by and against youth into account. Equally important are the structural conditions which determine the marginalisation of youth and should

include prevention programmes to help young people in vulnerable situations, intervention programmes which offer alternatives for those attracted to violence, rehabilitation prospects for those who wish to abandon criminal groups and those leaving the prison and socio-educational systems. Capable and accountable law enforcement forces, protection and support mechanisms for victims of violence, adequate arms control policies, up-to-date data collection and analysis systems on youth and violence, and whole-of-government and multidisciplinary approaches to violence are also key.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS AND GOOD PRACTICES

CHANGE POLITICAL POSITION

- Shift the currently dominant paradigm of combating urban violence characterised by confrontation, militarisation and securitisation. This enforcement-based approach, inspired by the international “war on drugs”, is being contested at several levels of thought and action. It is thus of utmost importance to take into consideration the disadvantages of the current narcotics prohibition regime and current measures for resolving the situation. In order to tackle the wide-ranging challenges that the narcotics trade poses in production and route countries, the prohibitionist paradigm should be debated and reconsidered. A public health approach centred on prevention policies and damage control should replace the purely anti-criminal approach currently in place.
- Mobilise public security agents, human rights organisations and social movements which have historically remained in separate fields of analysis and action (youth, political violence, urban violence, gender violence and social exclusion) towards an approach which goes beyond the perspectives which frame youth as a problem or youth as victims when considering those who are poor and marginalised.
- Define holistic security public policies in articulation with economic, cultural, social, gender and urban dimensions.

PRODUCE AND SYSTEMATISE DATA ON VIOLENCE AND ON YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN VIOLENT ACTIVITIES

- Invest in national data collection and analysis mechanisms on homicide, suicide and other external causes of violence, particularly using the health and criminal systems. Data should be disaggregated by sex and age and made available to the public on a regular and transparent basis.
- Support national data collection and analysis systems on youth involvement in armed violence (both boys and girls) through police protocols, juvenile centres and prison censuses.
- Support youth violence and urban violence studies, analyses and policy assessments undertaken by universities and think tanks.

TACKLE FAMILY AND GENDER VIOLENCE

We know that the decision to join criminal gangs or other groups is often fuelled by reactions against violence⁵⁸, such as social exclusion, family violence⁵⁹ and violence experienced while in prison. Without addressing and combating these types of violence, it will be difficult to curb youth violence or gang-related violence.

- Countries need to design and guarantee conditions to implement integrated national strategies and plans encompassing education, health, victim support, justice against gender and family violence, remaining sensitive to the issue of youth violence.
- Promote the joint work of organisations working on gender and youth violence.
- Support programmes and projects which aim to promote and support non-violent models of masculinities/ femininities and healthy relations between men and women. Positive approaches can be identified in the work of the Quetzalcoatl Foundation with young inmates in San Salvador and in the work of Instituto Promundo through Programmes H and M in Rio de Janeiro.

TACKLE POLICE MISCONDUCT AND OFFER JUDICIAL AND VICTIM SUPPORT

Police misconduct, brutality and widespread impunity facilitate violence, injustice and the re-victimisation of victims. Access to justice – entailing criminal policies, police action, judicial inquiries and proceedings, assessing and handing out sentences – has to be guaranteed without bias and discrimination, providing adequate conditions for reintegration.

- Rethink and re-identify the target territories of violence-containment policies to better understand the structural dynamics of violence, and conceive more adjusted and adequate actions and interventions. It is key that government authorities differentiate their action against organised crime and not completely criminalise youth groups. The government should provide rehabilitation and reintegration opportunities for youth as well as lighter sentences for those who commit minor offences. In El Salvador, for example, only 10 percent of detainees are repeat offenders⁶⁰.
- Support community policing initiatives, such as the one conducted currently in Rio de Janeiro (UPP) and in Praia, and provide special training on violence with a focus on youth violence, family violence and human rights within all police departments. Promote closer relations between the police and other public offices to move away from repression and embrace social measures.
- Promote alternative punishments to incarceration for certain types of first-time offenders or perpetrators of less violent crimes to facilitate reintegration. Measures such as the supervised amnesty of young people involved in drug-trafficking factions or gangs, especially those with no previous criminal convictions, should be taken into consideration since they appear a more efficient social-integration measure than imprisonment in terms of social responsibility and giving youngsters a future.
- Support the systematisation of knowledge on victim/survivor support worldwide through funding research and adapt it to victims of armed violence who are frequently seen as indirect and often forgotten (for example, relatives of victims of gun violence).
- Promote and assist the creation of spaces where victims/survivors can ask for help, for example public services, organisations or networks of people who can shelter and support them. This support should be extended to the families and friends of victims, gang members and drug-trafficking factions, as well as relatives of the ‘disappeared’⁶¹. In San Salvador, like in Rio de Janeiro, the relatives and friends of *pandilleros* and members of drug-trafficking factions are likely to endure police harassment, undignified searches in prison and the loss of family members. The work of FESPAD in El Salvador and the “Support programme for relatives of victims of massacres in Rio de Janeiro”, implemented by the Centre for Studies on Security and Citizenship (CESeC) and Centre for Social Studies between 2007-2010 in Rio de Janeiro, provide positive examples.
- To support the improvement of mechanisms of attention and support aimed at the authors of violence.

58 Many studies have analysed the motivations behind the violent mobilisation of youth in El Salvador. See M. Smutt and J. Miranda (1998). *El fenómeno de las pandillas en El Salvador [The phenomenon of gangs in El Salvador]*. San Salvador: UNICEF, FLACSO; M. Santacruz Giralt, A. Concha Eastman and Homies Unidos (2001). *Barrio adentro: La solidaridad violenta de las pandillas [Within the neighbourhood: violent solidarity in gangs]*. San Salvador: IUDOP; M. Carranza (2005). *Op. Cit.*

59 80.5 percent of *pandilleros* were abused as children and nearly 50 percent witnessed assaults on women and children in the home. See M. Liebel (2002). ‘Pandillas y maras: señas de identidad [Gangs: signs of identity]’, *Revista Envío*, 244. Available at <http://www.envio.org.ni/articulo/1161>.

60 S. Chávez. ‘Informe Centros Penales: Ellos matan y roban, ellas extorsionan y meten droga [Report on Prison Facilities: The men kill and rob and the women extort and carry drugs]’, *La Prensa Grafica*, 8th August 2011. Available at <http://www.laprensagrafica.com/el-salvador/judicial/209837-informe-de-centros-penales.html>.

61 ‘Los nuevos desaparecidos en El Salvador [The new disappeared in El Salvador]’, *elfaro.net*, 26th September 2011. Available at <http://www.elfaro.net/es/201109/fotos/5942/>

IMPROVE PRISONS AND REINTEGRATE YOUTH INTO SOCIO-EDUCATIONAL SYSTEMS

- Improve prison conditions and socio-educational systems through adequate staffing (expand technical teams, especially psychologists and social workers) and rehabilitation and reintegration policies and monitoring. Professional and vocational training programmes in these systems should also be expanded and designed according to needs-based assessments.
- Support policies and programmes aimed at preventing and/or reducing armed violence with a gender lens locally and nationally, and reintegration. Gender responsive protection measures in laws on children and adolescent and educational systems, programmes for girls and women as well as boys and men who are involved with/associated to armed violence as well as children and adolescents at risk, and programmes for the protection of children and adolescents threatened with death should be considered.
- Promote sensitisation sessions on the human rights of inmates.
- Encourage and facilitate community approaches to reintegration through supporting work with communities to prevent stigmatisation of youths who wish to reconnect themselves to the community in a non-violent way.

CONTROL ARMS

Arms control policies are an important tool to prevent and combat gun violence. Brazil and El Salvador are among the leading countries in gun-related homicide but have significantly different arms control regimes. With an estimated 14.8-17.6 million privately-owned guns, Brazil is ranked eighth in a comparison of the size of civilian arsenals in 178 countries⁶², in El Salvador estimates indicate 400,000 privately-owned guns⁶³. While El Salvador remains one of the countries with weaker gun laws in the region, Brazil's regulation on ownership and use of guns is one of the most complete in the world. Cape Verde is ranked 172nd⁶⁴, despite growing media and political attention and has no updated legislation on the use and ownership of firearms and ammunition⁶⁵.

- Support and encourage the small arms control and disarmament communities to complement each other's technical and quantitative approaches to armed violence, focusing on small arms supply, qualitative analysis of small arms demand and impact, and closer collaboration with survivors and affected communities, the development sector, and the public health community.
- Support national and international arms control mechanisms, as well as regular campaigns for gun registry and civilian disarmament. It is important to trace when legal arms markets transform into illegal ones, which often results from arms thefts, muggings and "diversion" from legal civilian and state-controlled stocks. In Brazil, the 2004 voluntary disarmament campaign resulted in the collection of over 500,000 guns in less than a year. In 2011 the federal government launched a permanent civilian disarmament campaign, aimed at raising awareness of the dangers and problems of gun violence among youth and other key populations.
- Invest in police intelligence and investigation to stop gun trafficking and misuse.

62 GunPolicy.org (2011). 'Small Arms in Brazil: Facts, Figures and Firearms Law', accessed on 10th December 2011. Available at <http://www.gunpolicy.org/firearms/region/brazil>

63 GunPolicy.org (2011). 'Small Arms in El Salvador: Facts, Figures and Firearms Law', accessed on 10th December 2011. Available at <http://www.gunpolicy.org/firearms/region/el-salvador>

64 A. Karp (2007). 'Completing the Count: Civilian firearms' in Small Arms Survey (2007). *Guns and the City*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

65 A. Leão (2011). 'Proliferação de armas de fogo na Guiné-Bissau e em Cabo Verde. Uma abordagem regional e nacional [Proliferation of firearms in Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde. A regional and national approach]', *OG/VA Papers, No. 1*. Available at <http://www.ces.uc.pt/ogiva/pages/pt/publicacoes.php?lang=EN>.

PROMOTE SOCIO-EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

- Promote an equitable and high quality school system for all with good geographical coverage, one that does not give up on problematic students and that does not reproduce violence and authoritarianism. It should not simply establish basic professional training curricula for poor youths but instead provide opportunities such as continuing on to university education.
- Promote teacher training sessions and curricula which broadly include human rights education (such as gender equality) and debate the sources of violence and responses to it.
- Increase family support for education and the number of school scholarships.
- Promote youth employment programmes in communities.
- Ensure that existing programmes aimed at reducing violence take into account the relations between public/state institutions, civil society and the general population with regard to urban security. These programmes should establish indicators which facilitate monitoring and evaluation processes.
- Promote spaces for youth participation at the community, local and national level through the support of youth groups and associations.
- Include a youth perspective in public policies in key areas such as employment, restoration and improvement of infrastructure in marginalised neighbourhoods and housing, and cultural initiatives. Additionally, financially support institutions and organisations working with youth and build capacity. Programmes should not only target youths in a top-down fashion but engage youths in programme planning, which would allow them to consider themselves active citizens capable of implementing change.
- Use cultural initiatives led by youths from peripheral neighbourhoods (particularly those connected to *hip-hop*, circus boxing and audiovisual activities) in programmes to destigmatise them and explore their non-violent potential. The initiatives of the NGOs *Luta pela Paz* and *Affroreggae* in Rio de Janeiro provide successful examples.

IMPLEMENT INTRA-GOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION AND COOPERATION, AND A MULTIDISCIPLINARY APPROACH TO VIOLENCE

- Encourage greater cooperation between the justice, public security and gender equality ministries.
- Include gender and gun violence variables in the data on violent criminality.
- Offer incentives for the complete and correct filling-in of criminal paperwork and registers, specifically recording instruments used in crimes.
- Support the inclusion of this topic in human rights, violence prevention and gender equality organisations' agendas.

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c/o International Alert
205 Rue Belliard, B-1040 Brussels Tel: +32 (0) 2 234 5792 Fax: +32 (0) 2 234 5799
ifp-ew@international-alert.org www.ifp-ew.eu



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