Civil Society, Violence and Public Safety
New issues, old dilemmas[1]

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Introduction: The literature and its inflections

In recent years, due to the decline in homicide rates in São Paulo, experts and public opinion have debated the causes of the reduction of violent deaths. Of all the possible factors – the improvement of planning and control mechanisms by the police; the role of municipalities in the implementation of prevention policies; changes in demography and urban conditions; the increased number of imprisoned people and the actual change in the structure of organized crime that has affected the prisons and the dynamics of criminality (Lima, 2009) – the participation of civil society is an additional noteworthy element. Despite current programs in São Paulo designed to prevent delinquency and reduce violence in the poorest areas, and implemented through partnerships between the state and civil society, little is known about the actual results of these initiatives, with rare exceptions.

If, on one hand, it is difficult to measure the real impact of the actions of civil society in preventing violence, on the other hand, it is possible to assess the topics discussed by society today. Based on research in two neighborhoods - Sapopemba and Campo Belo – that are socially distinct yet internally heterogeneous in their social groups, this article presents the hypothesis that the content of the narratives of residents can be better understood if we consider political, urban and criminal transformations of recent decades.

Brazil has witnessed an increase in public debate and of actions by civil society and the state in the issue of violence and public safety. If in the 1980s

the debate was incipient, the current situation is more complex. The discussion that marked the 1960s and 1970s was dominated by the *paradigm of control* that was dominant in the years of military dictatorship and which was qualified by binary approaches. The former - backed by right-wing politicians and the police, with support from parts of society that saw human rights as "privileges for thugs" – was concerned with the increase of police control mechanisms on behalf of the "good citizen". The latter – supported by left-wing sectors, such as political parties, social movements and the Catholic Church affiliated with Liberation Theology - was more focused on preventing violence and on generic macropolitics that would decrease violence. While the first approach was considered a mistake by much of the academic literature due to its authoritarian ideology (Pinheiro, 1991ª), the second was criticized for giving excessive attention to structural socioeconomic and urban changes, and preventing a practical debate on specific public safety policies (Muniz and Zacchi, 2005; Zaluar 1999a and 1999b).

In the 1980s, studies were carried out about popular organizations, social movements and their collective actions (Sader and Paoli, 1986; Kowarick, 1988, Durham, 2004 [1986]). Studies on the violence of the period, which was not uncommon, often examined violence perpetrated by people as a consequence of previous violence by the state (Kowarick and Ant, 1981, Paoli, 1982; Pinheiro, 1984; Olivien, 1981). It was not long, however, before research indicated how residents themselves had supported authoritarian practices, such as exterminations (Adorno and Cardia, 1997) and lynchings (Benevides, 1981; Sinhoreto, 1998, among others).

With the end of the military dictatorship and the reduction in the political power of social movements, new types of associations emerged in the field of violence prevention and the literature began to draw attention to the need to question models of social control, starting where they were originally conceived by classical social science: society and culture. With this, the complex problem of social control was seen as being not only limited to the exclusive domain of the repressive apparatus of the State but also of society and the new associative patterns (Adorno, 1998; Kant de Lima, Misse and Miranda, 2000; Zaluar, 2004). The 1990s saw a proliferation of NGOs, many of which were directly linked to the issue of violence (Tavares dos Santos, 2004) and they had diverse affiliations: ranging from those based on social movements and popular organizations, such as the Centers for the Defense

of Human Rights (CEDECAs - (*Centros de Defesa da Criança e do Adolescente*) (Feltran, 2008a; Galdeano, 2009), to those that were more closely linked to middle class and intellectual groups involved in campaigns around the so-called "culture of peace," such as *Viva Rio*, in Rio de Janeiro, and the *Instituto Sou da Paz*, in São Paulo. These organizations began to take concrete actions with state funding in fields such as childhood and adolescence, disarmament and the police.

It was before this, in the mid-1980s, that the first democratically elected government in the state of São Paulo began implementing experiences with Community Public Safety Councils. In order to build a "New Police," then governor Franco Montoro implemented a set of actions to end torture and corruption, and promote a "change in mentality" among the police force. He also established representative committees to act in diverse fields that were already being discussed by civil society (gender, race, age, disability and violence), which spurred the creation of a series of councils, including the Community Councils for Public Safety. These councils were conceived in the midst of democratic reforms that aimed to expand the participation of civil society in the conduct of public affairs. However, their implementation was the responsibility of the Secretariat for Public Safety (*Secretaria de Segurança Pública*) and the local police chiefs - many of whom opposed Montoro's proposed changes. The police chiefs began to mobilize society to participate in the councils, and strongly influenced the profile of the participating police officers and civil society representatives from the beginning. With autonomy to organize these local councils known as Consegs, police chiefs met with sectors of society with whom they already had relationships, often members of Trade Associations. The police chiefs also began to preside over the meetings that were held in police stations, which intimidated a considerable proportion of the population. The dating of these historical events suggests that this configuration favored the participation of people (ordinary citizens and police officers) who tended to think that human rights were "privileges for thugs." In some councils, the police maintained control over the meetings for a long period. I discussed the political history of the Community Public Safety Councils elsewhere (Galdeano, 2009), but this brief background is sufficient to indicate how their structure encouraged personal and institutional control. This scenario obstructed dialog among institutions and made it more difficult to maximize efforts that, in principle, should be collective.

Moreover, the various studies that were dedicated to analyzing public safety policies in São Paulo – whether based on studies that were concerned with the civil police[2] (Mingardi, 1992), policies towards young offenders and street children (Gregori, 2000), the narratives of violence and its connections with urban segregation (Caldeira, 2000) or with the internal politics of the various public safety departments in São Paulo (Storino, 2008 and Galdeano, 2009) - drew attention to the political disputes and discourses that distinguished policies in this field.

The literature also analyzes the conflict between the *paradigm of prevention* that appears to be in opposition to the *paradigm of control*. Under this new paradigm, various national public safety plans have combined a guarantee of human rights (through social protections, especially for youth and their families) with the right to safety (through increased attention to the problem as well as police training and action). The government of President Fernando Henrique Cardoso (FHC) created the First National Public Safety Program and the Plan for Integration and Monitoring of Social Programs and Violence Prevention (PIAPS) (Brazil, 2001). During the first government of President Luis Inácio Lula da Silva another National Public Safety Plan was developed (Brazil, 2003); in 2007, in Lula's second term, the National Program for Safety and Citizenship (PRONASCI) was drawn up and is currently being implemented. The FHC and Lula governments diagnosed similar problems to be addressed: they questioned the military approach to public safety and adopted prevention and the guarantee of human rights as essential to the population. They emphasized an urgent need to reorganize police forces and judicial bodies and incorporated social participation into the public agendas (Brazil, 2001 and Brazil, 2003). Nevertheless, criticism of the Fernando Henrique Cardoso (Adorno, 1999 and 2003) and Lula (Soares, 2007) programs pointed out the limited results of these plans, which were hampered by political disputes and comprehensive programs that were far from systemic.[3]

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2   In the city of São Paulo the police forces are organized at the state level and municipal level. At the state level, the civil police (*Polícia Civil*) are in charge of the judicial police (which record criminal processes, investigate crimes etc), and the military police (*Polícia Militar*) undertake street patrol and response. The Metropolitan Civil Guard (*Guarda Civil Metropolitana*) is a municipal police force that is responsible for patrolling public properties, such as parks, squares etc.

3   Meanwhile, a recent study that evaluated "the effects of strengthening the network of participants involved with the issue of public safety" by analyzing social networks (Pavez, 2010) has revealed that PRONASCI had made advances in the process of institutionalization of the public safety field. One aspect

Political transformations should be included in the analytical inflections of those who study urban issues. In 1970, studies that researched the poor and the peripheries from a perspective of class determination, characterized by an "absence of consciousness" and domination, gave way to more "positive" approaches (Durham, 1978) and to anthropological research dedicated to understanding the ways of life and representations of the popular classes (Zaluar, 1985, Sarti, 1985 and 1996; Durham 1984, among others). Some authors who studied the poor contributed with significant discussions that are still relevant, about relationships between workers and criminals, youth and crime, as well as local codes of honor (Zaluar, 1985; Sarti, 1996; Caldeira, 2000).

The most recent urban studies have paid attention to the complexity and transformation of demographic factors in recent decades when the center-periphery explanatory model became more complex. The failure of the radial concentric model to explain the metropolis of São Paulo was tackled by a research team at the Center for Metropolitan Studies (CEM). Using statistical data, they demonstrated that there was a heterogeneity among social groups in the peripheries, which questions the idea of a homogeneous concentration of poor people in the periphery and of rich people in the more central regions - in spite of the continuity of spatial segregation and of the inequality of access to public goods that the poorest residents are subject to (Marques and Torres, 2005; Torres and Marques, 2004 and Torres, Marques, Ferreira and Bitar, 2003). Indeed, one of the important points in the following ethnographic data is that the neighborhoods that are the focus of analysis, commonly qualified as peripheral (Sapopemba) or upper-middle class (Campo Belo and region), have heterogeneous social compositions. If there are residents in Sapopemba who rose socially and distinguished themselves (symbolically and materially) from their favela neighbors, the neighborhood of Campo Belo, considered "upper middle class," experienced a process of "proletarianization" when favelas and tenements became mixed with more expensive homes. This heterogeneity is also expressed in the multiplicity of organizations and people that began to attend the Local Public Safety Council

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of the study that draws attention is the fact that the public conferences organized by PRONASCI brought together participants who are traditionally placed on opposite sides of the security field: "entities of managers, workers and civil society, such as: the fire department, federal police, federal highway police, military and civilian police, public defenders, security councils, universities, colleges, women's movements, prisons, social movements, the judiciary, state organizing committees"(idem, p. 32).

meetings including: ordinary people, neighborhood association leaders, human rights activists, Evangelicals, Catholics and Spiritualists, private security guards, merchants, lawyers etc. Over the past forty years, this trend has inspired important analytical inflections to consider how, within neighborhoods known as "peripheral" or "central," participants from different professional, political and religious affiliations began to speak in the name of public safety, while revealing multifaceted representations of violence.

The connection between new urban patterns of segregation and discourses of violence was studied by Caldeira (2000) in her work on "fortified enclaves" in São Paulo, which are the combined result of a perception of violence and actions by the real estate sector. The "talk of crime," which reproduces stereotypes and prejudices, emphasized the instability of public space, and encouraged the construction of gated luxury condominiums and the building of fences and gates around homes in the periphery. The "talk of crime", characterized narratives that reinforce this process and proliferated among residents of all social classes. At this point – from representations of violence that use a social class marker - the literature is scattered and inconclusive. Zaluar (1994) analyzed data from the opinion poll "Rio Against Crime," and noted that "differences in age and gender turned out to be more important than class in understanding support for the death penalty and the conceptions of work related to citizenship"(Zaluar, 1999a: 50). Paixão and Beato (1997: 246) hypothesized that "arbitrariness and violence may be the response of the police force to demands from the population, especially from the poor." Adorno (1999: 135) addressed the issue of representation using what he called "a complex and multifaceted myriad of values that makes it virtually impossible to identify a consensus in the midst of profound disagreement." For the author one of the major obstacles to the success of public safety policies is the difficulty of defining a minimum consensus about how "law and order" should be established. Zaluar and Adorno drew attention to the lack of solidarity among social classes, which aggravated social conflicts. For Adorno (idem), certain groups in society, especially the middle class, tend to pressure public authorities for security, emphasizing the issue of order over human rights, while the author also warns that "this certainly is not a general framework, because there are other experiences that are completely opposite," in which various social groups seek common spaces "aimed at the pacification of society" (Adorno, 1999: 135-136). Taken together, these

considerations highlight that "social class" is not a determining variable in representations of violence, and these authors urge readers to examine the nuances of representations found among different social groups.

Although it is not my intention to conduct a comprehensive review of the literature on the subject, some considerations on the experiences of residents with police and crime in the territories will be made. Zaluar (1985, 1994, 1999a and 1999b) was the first to delve into the mire of ambiguous relationships among workers and criminals, and the latter with the corrupt police; a theme that Misse (1995 and 2007) and Alvito (1998) also studied, in the case of Rio de Janeiro. In São Paulo, the theme of young offenders has been addressed considering their insertion in the judiciary system (Adorno, Lima and Bordini, 1999), the circulation of street children in the city (Gregory, 2000), the experiences and subjectivities of young murderers who are residents of "peripheral" and "central" neighborhoods (Spagnol, 2008), as well as the complex social networks that currently appear in peripheral areas in which one notes "the expansion of the criminal world" (Feltran, 2008b and 2010) or even in the approach of the dilemmas and possibilities imposed on the "moral conversion" of those who are considered "victims" or "perpetrators" of violence (Galdeano, 2009). In recent years, in São Paulo, ethnographies have also emerged that are dedicated to understanding the phenomenon of the most important organized criminal group in the prisons and communities - the First Command of the Capital (PCC) (Biondi, 2009 and Marques, 2010) - which altered the organization of prisons and the dynamics of drug dealing and, it seems, deaths in the territories. The role of the PCC is also noticeable among the participants of Consegs.

Finally, another burning issue in the discussion about the participation of society in matters relating to public safety is the old debate about police service: seen as authoritarian and violent towards the poor, and tolerant and flexible in relation to the wealthy (Pinheiro, 1991b; Adorno, 1995; Paixão and Beato, 1997; Adorno and Cárdia, 1997; Misse, 1995; Zaluar, 1994, among others). These characteristics hinder the implementation of more participatory policy proposals that combine police-community and state-civil society (Muniz, Larvie and Musumeci, 1997). The issue of police violence is a hot topic in Brazilian social science (Kant de Lima, 1995; Oliveira, 1994; Pinheiro, 1984, 1991ª and 1991b, among others) and a frequent theme of discussion by human rights activists who see in this fact one of the major impediments to

the successful implementation of prevention policies.

Research findings indicate the heterogeneity and diversity of social groups within a social space, the political changes underway and the relationships between police, community and crime. Therefore, it is important to consider the multiplicity of groups in society within each area studied here: in Sapopemba, in the East Zone of São Paulo and in Campo Belo, in the city's South Zone. The ethnography that follows attempts to understand who these social groups are, what they want, and what they do. In the past, these groups were commonly grouped together in broad and generic categories, but they actually contain multiple nuances of representations of violence. In a comparative perspective, the research looked for dissent within social groups, and among residents of the same social space, considering their experience of sociability in the territories.

Such analysis considers that positions on the issue of violence are intimately related to the professional trajectory and life history of the actors positioned in these groups whose different truths lead to a confrontation of values concerning proposals for resolving public safety issues. The article points to a scenario of personal and institutional schemes that become obstacles to establishing dialog among institutions and create difficulties in maximizing efforts that, in principle, should be collective. Furthermore, the ethnographic data point to a myriad of questions that are raised when distinct civil society organizations are involved in the debate about violence and public safety in São Paulo. These issues include a definition of the publics considered "agents of insecurity," the structure of organized crime in the communities, the relationship of these communities with the police, as well as the inequalities that underlie the debate – stereotypes of class, gender and age. The article also draws attention to the dilemmas inherent to the accountability of civil society in matters relating to public safety.

The Councils: Origin, composition and function

The Community Public Safety Councils (Conseg) were instituted in 1985, during the government of Franco Montoro (1983-1987) within the context of a "return to a state of law" that included the control of the police and the participation of civil society in issues related to public safety. Active, now, for more than twenty years, the follow-up and supervision of the councils came under

the responsibility of the State Conseg Affairs Coordinator, an agency associated to the São Paulo State Secretariat for Public Safety. The Coordinator is responsible for assisting the civil and military police and the population to implement Councils.

Conseg members are classified basically as innate members and effective members. Police inspectors, captains of the military police, responsible for the region and representatives of the municipal agencies in the region circumscribed by the Conseg must participate, in accord with the decree that governs the councils. The Metropolitan Civil Guard is also required to participate. These are the innate members. Effective members are all those who are not innate members – frequent participants or visitors. To be an effective member, it is necessary to be at least 18 years old; have no criminal record; reside or work in the area circumscribed by the Conseg or a neighboring area that does not have one; be the representative of organizations active in the area –government entities; private clubs; service clubs, the media, and religious or educational institutions.

The Conseg board of directors consists of all the innate members, and of members elected by vote: the president and the vice-president. The other members of the board, two secretaries, the Social Director and the Director for Community Affairs and an additional three members of the Commission for Ethics and Discipline are appointed by the president.

It is the responsibility of the chief of the local civil police district and of the commander of the military police to organize the community and government agencies to correct factors that affect public safety" (SSP, 2004: 53). It is the president's responsibility to conduct the meetings; set a yearly meeting calendar (with date, hour, and place); present complaints from the community to the authorities; represent the Conseg at official meetings and meetings with the community; insure that all members at the meeting have a chance to speak; care for the order and civility of the members by granting them the floor or otherwise, assuring that persons disturbing the proceedings be controlled, among others (cf. SSP, 2004: 56). It is the responsibility of the First Secretary to prepare the minutes, have it signed by participants, and forwarded to the Conseg Affairs Coordinator.

The scope of each Conseg varies a great deal and is related to the area circumscribed by the local police districts. In São Paulo, there is more than one Conseg for each administrative political region in the city. The Campo

Belo Conseg includes three neighborhoods (Campo Belo, Jardim Aeroporto and Planalto Paulista), two administrative political regions (the Santo Amaro sub-district office and the Vila Mariana sub-district office)[4] and one Police District. The Sapopemba Conseg encompasses only the Sapopemba neighborhood, of the three that are part of a single political-administrative region (that of the Vila Prudente/Sapopemba sub-district office),[5] which has two Police districts.

The board and the audience: the setting for the meetings. At 7:30 pm the authorities arrive at the meeting site, greet the residents and, gradually, make their way to the front table. In Sapopemba, groups that work with the human rights of young people and women are often invited to sit at the front table – which does not occur in upper middle class districts. In contrast, the participation of representatives from the Traffic Engineering Company (CET – *Companhia de Engenharia de Tráfego*) is common in the Campo Belo Conseg. The composition of the front table, when it includes authorities who are not part of the police force, is determined by the problems and claims dealt with in each social class. In both districts, the representatives of the local municipal authorities are also invited to sit at the front table. The front table is raised and the audience sits on a lower level facing the authorities.

Different proceedings mark the opening of the meeting, as determined by the board chairman. In the upper middle class district, the secretary hands out a leaflet where the audience members must write their complaint, name and the entity to which they belong. The chairman sorts the complaints and these will be the issues addressed that night. He then submits the minutes of the last meeting for approval – it is not necessary to read the minutes because it is understood that all are familiar with the text, which is sent by e-mail to all the council members before the meeting. It is common for there to be no comments from the audience and the minutes are immediately approved. The minutes written up in the Campo Belo Conseg are absolutely complete.

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4   The Santo Amaro sub-district office (*Subprefeitura de Santo Amaro*) is responsible for three neighborhoods: Campo Belo, Campo Grande and Santo Amaro but only Campo Belo and the sub-neighborhood of Jardim Aeroporto (a neighborhood within Campo Belo) are within the scope of the Campo Belo Conseg. The Vila Mariana sub-district office is in charge of the Planalto Paulista neighborhood, which is within the scope of the Campo Belo Conseg and other neighborhoods, such as Moema, Saúde and part of Vila Mariana, which are not part of this Conseg.

5   The Vila Prudente sub-district office (*Subprefeitura de Vila Prudente*) is in charge of three neighborhoods: Sapopemba, Vila Prudente and Parque São Lucas.

These procedures are of fundamental importance to the meetings because the chairman expects the police authorities, representatives of the local municipal agencies and the CET to answer all of the issues that were raised in the previous meeting. In Sapopemba, however, a working class neighborhood, since this procedure is not carried out, the audience is expected to repeat the demands previously addressed to the authorities.

The participation of the authorities, however, varies in the two Consegs, the most problematic being those concerning the civil police and the regional Municipal Authorities. The effectiveness of these institutions seems to be related to the degree of individual commitment of each employee (senior police officers and deputy-mayors) and to the legitimacy attributed to the government authorities to which these employees are subordinate: the municipal and state governments.

The civil police proved to have less proximity and a more strained relationship with the communities in both Consegs studied. In the working class district, superior police officers often did not attend the meetings and sent a substitute or lower ranking officer instead. At other times, meetings had little participation from the civil police. This alternation in representatives impeded continuity in discussing the complaints from the population about civil police action in the region. In the upper middle class district, the police officer would commonly leave before the end of the meeting, in the following manner: he would receive a call on his cell phone and say goodnight without attracting much attention under the pretext of "excessive work." For these reasons, the most frequent criticism from Conseg members in relation to attitudes of the police inspectors were "the civil police are elitist, they are authorities" (in Campo Belo region) or "he does not identify with the community" (in Sapopemba). However, the fact that the participative study was held over a reasonably long period (from late 2005-2007) allowed us to follow the changes in senior officers in these two districts, that took place with the transition in state government (from the mandate of Cláudio Lembo to that of José Serra). In the upper middle class Conseg, political factors contributed to the participation of a police officer who was more committed to the meetings, which altered the previous situation. The new police representative attended all the meetings and showed an interest in solving the community problems. In the working class neighborhood, however, Conseg members affirmed that the new police representative showed less willingness to work

with the community and was less sensitive, for instance, to dialog with human rights organizations active in the district. In this sense, individual and political factors are very important for the participation of the civil police, which cannot be regarded as homogeneous.

The participation of the local municipal authorities also oscillated a good deal and was related, once again, to the priority that the São Paulo municipal governments attribute to the Consegs, and to the personal commitment of each regional deputy-mayor. In Sapopemba, before the municipal government transition in the city of São Paulo from the Administration of José Serra to that of Gilberto Kassab, I never witnessed the participation of the regional deputy mayor, and I rarely even saw a municipal representative. Soon after the political transition, advisors to the regional deputy-mayor began to participate regularly in the meetings, and emphasized the importance that the new mandate attributed to the Conseg. Not rarely, also during a transition in administration, advisors of politicians or candidates would go to the Consegs to make political statements. In the upper middle class Conseg, the fact that there are two district offices (Vila Mariana and Santo Amaro) is seen as a factor that complicates the Conseg operations. In the opinion of Vera, a member of the Conseg Board of Directors, Vila Mariana district office has a deputy mayor who is more committed, who held "meetings with Conseg presidents" about their political-administrative area and alternately sends two representatives who dialog with each other to resolve problems. In contrast, in Santo Amaro, the local deputy mayor displays a low level of commitment to the Conseg. In general, the representatives from Santo Amaro are not close to the community and do not make the demands of the district a priority. This is of particular concern because this district office covers poorer neighborhoods where the solution of problems often has urgent importance.

To members of the Board of the two Consegs, the problem with the regional municipal district office, despite the personal commitment of each deputy-mayor, is that they are subordinate to City Hall and depend on the institutional relationship with several secretariats: housing, culture, education, etc. to resolve problems, which makes processes slow and bureaucratic. Moreover, the minutes that are written up are forwarded only to the Secretariat of Public Safety that holds meetings with the presidents of all the Consegs in the state, but, according to all indications, does not establish channels of communication with the various municipal secretariats to exert

pressure for concrete action. It must be remembered that the institutional operating design for the Consegs assumes a relationship between state government and City Hall which, however, is subject to political and ideological disputes of every kind.

The Districts: Hierarchies and stratification in social classes

Bearing in mind that there is no correspondence between the areas circumscribed by the police districts defined by the Secretariat of Public Safety and the political-administrative areas outlined by the City Hall, it is extremely difficult to precisely compare socio-economic statistics and criminal data. We emphasize that the Conseg for Campo Belo is encompasses three neighborhoods and the Sapopemba Conseg encompasses only one. In any case, it is possible to contextualize these regions considering some variables.

In the three neighborhoods chosen, which are within the Vila Mariana (Moema e Vila Mariana) and Santo Amaro (Campo Belo) sub-district offices nearly half, 46.84%, of the heads of household have a monthly income of more than twenty minimum wages or just over US$5,000, while only 0.99% of the Sapopemba families have the same income, which indicates the substantial difference in that the purchasing power between families in each region. Half, 49.81%, of the households in Sapopemba do not earn more than three minimum wages (approximately US$800) per month whereas in the Campo Belo Conseg only 11.50%[6] of the households have income this low. The portion of the population with over 15 years of schooling in Campo Belo region is 52.56%, while in Sapopemba it is only 1.3%. In a recent study, Cárdia, Adorno and Poleto (2003) showed that "the growth of violence in urban areas cannot be adequately understood – and therefore prevented – if the abyss that characterizes access to economic and social rights (…) is not taken into account". Nevertheless, the authors point to socio-economic data and homicide rates that do not indicate a causal and mechanical relation between poverty and criminality.[7]

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6   Data from IBGE referring to the year 2000 in Cárdia, Adorno and Poleto (2003).

7   "(…) the greater the concentration of heads of family with a high degree of schooling and income over twenty minimum salaries, the lower the percentage of heads of family with a low degree of schooling, the greater the percentage of hospital beds and the lower the infant mortality – **the same is true of homicide** rates (…). It is not poverty per se that explains the high rates of homicide but the

We analyzed the data concerning murders from 2000 to 2004, as well as other crimes such as car theft, other robberies, rape, obscene acts and extortion by kidnapping. In Sapopemba, there are more homicides, stolen cars and more rapes: 326 murders compared to 81 in the Campo Belo region; 8,824 and 4,546, stolen cars respectively, and 29 rapes compared with 21 in the latter. In Campo Belo region records show more thefts of other types (such as breaking and entering of houses and shops and bank robberies) kidnapping, petty theft and obscene acts: 12,323 thefts (not including stolen cars) compared to 8,110 such reported incidents in Sapopemba, 15 extortions through kidnapping in Campo Belo, compared to 11; 7,448 thefts in the former, and 2,726 in the latter and 24 obscene acts as compared with 7 in the latter (SEADE, 2004).[8]

The population participating in the Campo Belo Conseg, generally affirms that the breaking and entering of houses and thefts were being perpetrated by inhabitants of the favelas, people who live on the streets and transvestites. Both prostitutes and transvestites were blamed for increases in obscene acts. These criminal problems and the identification of the perpetrators are converted into demands that call for measures in the political and legal realms, by the civil police, military police, metropolitan civil guard, municipal sub-district offices and the courts. In Sapopemba, homicides and automobile theft are presumed to be perpetrated by youth, and in response the communities request measures of social protection and police intervention, with action from the district office and the civil and military police and the metropolitan civil guard. In the latter neighborhood, the police are also accused of illegal activities.

Campo Belo and Region

The neighborhoods in the Conseg of Campo Belo and Region have among the highest rates of income, schooling and employment in the city of São Paulo. The neighborhood of Campo Belo includes 6 favelas which account for 0.62% of the neighborhood's population. The Santo Amaro sub-district office has

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combination of factors which also suggests that these needs are not temporal (conjunctural) but that they extend in time." (Cárdia, Adorno, and Poleto, 2003:54)

8   Data Base 2000, 2001, 2003 and 2004.

43 regions considered to be favelas, encompassing 3.20% of the population living in the Santo Amaro district. However, precisely because Campo Belo is only one neighborhood in a much larger political-administrative region, only a few of the favelas in the Santo Amaro district are in the area of this Conseg.

In general, favela residents do not often attend Conseg meetings. Only at one meeting did I witness the participation of a community leader from a favela and of a human rights organization (CEDECA – Santo Amaro). That meeting in July 2007 was truly atypical. When I took my seat, I noticed two men who were very different from the usual public. There was one young black man, about 25, wearing a cap and a green and yellow jacket with the word "Brasil". The white man, approximately 40 years old, was accompanied by a child. Almost all of the public that attends the Conseg are white residents, with the exception of the military police captain. During a discussion about recently homeless residents from a favela that burned down who mounted a shack on a street in a neighborhood of middle class houses, a young black woman responded to the complaints of the residents in a whisper: "It's not quite like that! " Finally, she got up and asked to speak:

Community Leader: "We have rights as well (…). Unfortunately we don't pay taxes, but we want to be citizens. We are not favela residents, we are citizens".

Another resident retorted: "It's easy to play the victim."

President of Conseg: "We don't want to fight, but discuss. Identify yourself, come unarmed, you will be respected and seen by the competent agencies. It's no good coming here with a crowd of people. Try and bring their claims."

The community leader did not show up at the next meetings and the Conseg members began to discuss strategies to alternate time tables and dates for meetings to demobilize the "confusion" caused by "them" ("the favela people").

Within this scenario, the poorer residents do not find a suitable space for their participation. When they are mentioned in the discourse of upper middle class residents, it is to point to drug dealing, "a Primeiro Comando da Capital [an organized crime faction] flag on view," exploitation of youngsters and the elderly as drug runners who are known as "planes" ("*avião*"), with the suggested solution being the removal of the shacks. Occupation of public land is against the law, an invasion of public property and a threat to private property, which requires legal action by the courts and police to remove

families and reallocate the populations to the outskirts of town. This was precisely the suggestion of a lawyer representing the local bar association:

> "(…) our workers who pay taxes don't get the respect that a youngster from a favela does. Why don't they go to the outskirts of town which is where our workers are? Because it favors the clandestine! If we want to help, we must not feel sorry, we must act according to the law, otherwise we will have a situation like there is in Rio de Janeiro" (lawyer, member of the Campo Belo Conseg).

If the poor are not represented, I cannot affirm, on the other hand that only "the very rich", participate in the Campo Belo Region Conseg. There are internal heterogeneities among the participants, which represents internal differences within the district itself. This cleavage is visible both in and out of the meetings and reveals a differentiated status among members of the audience.

First example. To get to a meeting, I met with a driver in front of her house, a semi-detached house located on a street reminiscent of a working class area in Planalto Paulista. We made our way to the house of the president of the neighborhood residents association. When we arrived, the driver said this was the president's mansion – a house located in the same neighborhood but farther away from the main avenue and in a more modern architectural style. When the president got into the car, the driver again commented this was a mansion. The president replied: "You don't know what a mansion is!" During the Conseg meeting, the president herself, "the owner of the mansion", indicated that the problems of her neighborhood and those of her friends on "this side of the bridge" were greater than in other neighborhood (Campo Belo, Moema, and Brooklyn).

Second example. During the same meeting, another resident and also a leader of the Jardim Aeroporto association, insinuated that the Conseg president treated her differently than the other participants because her questions were only read at the end of the meeting: "Some get up (and move ahead in the order established for the speeches), and others are silenced. I was not heard." To which the president explained ironically: "I separated the issues by region. Do you insist on being first? Very well, at the next meeting you shall be first." This president of another resident's association addressed the captain of the military police by name, and another woman, apparently the same age, said the (informal) way in which "that woman addresses "an authority"

was "disrespectful." In addition to abstaining from formality, "the woman" was wearing a white T-shirt and a blue track suit, she wore no make-up, no earrings or other adornments, with the exception of a wedding ring on her left hand. Her hair was held up by clips – an appearance different than the other women who had their hair brushed and had discrete make-up. Seated at the back of the audience, I also heard comments from other residents in Campo Belo concerning the woman from Jardim Aeroporto who spoke rapidly and did not use legal language to express her problems: "Heavens, she seems out of control"!

A comparative analysis of these passages reveal factors that indicate a cleavage in social stratification, which confers a differentiated status among participants, including feelings of inferiority of some in relation to others. I do not wish to say that each participant's treatment within the Campo Belo and Region Conseg depends on income, in part because participants do not share such information specifically - but that, at least, more subjective conditions such as manners, clothing, type of language (formal or popular), serve as parameters for differentiation.

Reflecting this internal cleavage in the district and the Conseg, participants do not disregard the problems brought up by the others (it is a different matter although they may look down on). The Campo Belo and Region Conseg residents do have problems. Some of the larger abandoned houses have been invaded and the owners who live close to these large houses complain that they suffer from sanitary problems such as debris, garbage, and rats, that accumulate with the recyclable materials collected by the homeless and gathered at these abandoned sites.

Reports are common about a lack of privacy and the right to lead a healthy life. They cannot accept the fact that they are obliged to live on poor streets that smell bad, despite the taxes they pay, and put up with the illegal occupation of abandoned houses by various families or by the mounting of shacks on empty lots. The reports of those who live in these situations are dramatic. One resident said the occupants of the shacks "cook in the street," "use the pavement as a lavatory," and that her house is frequently broken into for petty thefts. During the meetings, many agree that this is a social problem, but since it is not adequately resolved by City Hall, requires legal and police action. Outside the meetings, however, over a cup of coffee, there are often opinions that express disdain for civil rights and the residents of the

shacks. One woman said: "You want to know? You have to hire six bandits. I'd like to see if the owner of the shack doesn't move out."

Among other issues dealt with within this context is the connection between prostitution and drug traffic. Residents, affirm that prostitution by women and transvestites is linked to drug dealing and child sexual exploitation, and that there is police involvement with prostitution. Claudia is the resident who complains most about the problem the meetings. The corner of the street where she lives has been a site for prostitution for some years. Visitors in cars, at night, any day of the week, show that not only her street but the entire block and other streets in the neighborhood are used to attract clients. The prostitutes are the best behaved. They merely wait at the corners for a contact with a client. The transvestites call attention by displaying their breasts and panties. I never saw scenes of masturbation, but residents say they are frequent. Claudia defines the prostitutes: "Many people refer to them as the girls but to me they are just prostitutes because they are marginalized, scandalous, vagabonds." She said she worked with prostitutes and transvestites at her Spiritualist Center. She completed a preparatory course and a course to become a spokesperson, which are required to teach the spiritualist doctrine. She worked as a special assistant in a project in Cracolândia in the Luz neighborhood in downtown São Paulo. She affirmed that drug addiction and emotional problems lead people to commit obscene acts and theft. She attributed emotional problems to "rape in childhood, use of drugs and immorality."She believes that prostitutes need psychological help to bring about a change in values but such answers to the problem are not brought up at Conseg. She refuses to use the expression "sex professional" because in her opinion the word prostitution does not define a profession but, on its own, "an act of violence" (independent of the consent between parties). As to who the clients are, she concluded: "the clients are perverse, they are addicted. It's like a drug. Only this explains the fact that people who have a luxury car pick up filthy transvestites and dirty prostitutes. They are dirty. They defecate on the ground."

One resident, a public prosecutor, explained that the history of prostitution in the neighborhood began in the 1970s with only women. At this time, although one resident had been killed to revenge a physical attack on a prostitute, the neighborhood was still quiet. In the early 1980s, the transvestites (which the prosecutor referred to as "he") – who are "more violent,

scandalous and armed," migrated to the neighborhood which contributed to the feeling of insecurity and consequently to the verticality of the real estate. Still in the early 1980s, the first mobilization by civil society to end trouble with the neighbors occurred: a group of predominantly Spanish and Portuguese descendents got together in a church and decided to make banners with the phrase "You are being filmed." The intention was to reach clients, keep watch, note license plate numbers of the cars and thus discourage the sex trade, by calling the families and reporting them. He explained to me how the strategy was successful, shaking the honor of fathers with families. "The clients who looked for the transvestites were not active, they were passive; so we called the families to reach the consumer. They didn't come back."

For the residents, who included housewives, lawyers and professionals, the feeling that the police are ineffective, in dealing with prostitution and that sex workers are criminals legitimate violence against them. "I hope she dies!" said one Conseg participant. Some saw taking justice into their own hands as the only possible way to solve the problem… "I only didn't hit her because…" "Now it's going to be my way," or "Soon we will have to form a Private Militia!" In face of the ineffectiveness of municipal authorities and the police to contain the circulation of sex workers, there has been a more recent suggestion to search for new alternatives to solve the problem through the courts. The previously mentioned lawyer, who was often applauded by the audience, favored addressing the problem of prostitution in other public venues to discuss changes in zoning laws to impede the use of real estate for brothels.

Sapopemba

Sapopemba is composed of both "villas" and favelas. The villas consist of simple houses, with fences that in general grow vertically as the families also grow. Many of the people I talked to said their families came from the north and northeastern regions of Brazil. The neighborhood is said to have grown with the struggle for popular housing, with support from the Catholic Church, led by adherents to Liberation Theology. With urbanization, the shacks in many of the favelas were removed, which promoted the growth of other favelas on the border of São Paulo with other cities in Greater São Paulo. Investments in infrastructure and leisure were not

enough to ensure safe urban living to the population of the favelas. The streets of the villas are often connected by long poorly lit "stairways" that are sites of rape and homicide.

The district is also socially stratified. Not to live in a favela is the first attribute that a resident "can have" to be part of Conseg meetings. Since the favela dwellers are afraid of the police, the residents of the villas are the only ones who attend regularly. In any case, the latter express the problems experienced by the poorest. Some of these representatives point out that they do not comment about their participation in the Conseg to other residents because the image of the police in the community is extremely negative, which might place them at risk. That is, they might be thought to be reporting on criminal gangs, which would threaten their position as community leaders.

I went most often to one of the fifty favelas in the region[9] where the poorest among the poor live. According to data for the district, 11.38% of the population lives in favelas. The houses at the top of the favela have fences, some of which are more than one story tall: slabs of concrete are used as a backyard. A wall with graffiti at the top of the favela warns those who are not welcome. "Fuck the Police." In the lower portion of the favela wooden shacks are preponderant. This lower section is known as "the Pit," and is poorer and the houses even more precarious.

I circulated around the Pit when I went to interview some youngsters and their families, and I found dank houses, with no windows, where children are crammed into beds and bunks. The sanitary conditions of the houses I visited were poor. In one of the houses, a rat scampered over the sofa during the interview. In another, a pot of beans sat spoiling on the stove while we held our interview in a room without a window. The head of the family in the first house was in a state of deep depression because two of his children were in prison; in the second house, a mother did her best to care for 6 children and her mother who had had a stroke. One of the demands brought by a representative of the human rights activists is that the local Health Center (PSF – *Posto de Saúde da Família*) did not have specialized doctors and psychologists. The two political-administrative districts to which the Campo Belo and Region Conseg belongs have 31 of the 98 hospitals in the city of São Paulo, whereas

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9   Source: Secretariat of Housing and Urban Development/ PMSP and data Company of the Municipality of São Paulo (PRODAM) Digital Cartographic Base of the Shantytowns in the Municipality of São Paulo, 2000.

the political-administrative region to which Sapopemba belongs has only 3 hospitals.[10] The issues of health and basic sanitation are also of concern to common residents that rarely attend the Conseg. One resident requested measures from the district office to resolve the problem of "a property with rats, dengue, cockroaches and people using the space to have sex." Isabel, a representative of a human rights organization commented on the absence of public policies in the region, and called attention to the fact that "drug dealers are on every corner and, in the area of health, there is no specialized center," indicating that variables pertaining to public health also contribute to high crime rates.

Several times the participants in the Sapopemba Conseg called attention to the absence of public policies for youth to respond to their recruitment by drug dealers. "We are losing our youngsters to the dealers," said the representative of one neighborhood association. There is a striking amount of youth on the streets of the favela. Young people complain that leisure options are almost non-existent. The total population of the political-administrative region to which Sapopemba belongs is 523,676 inhabitants. Of this total, 55,446 are youth between 15 and 19 and 49,418 between 20 and 24, a total of 20% of the total population.[11]

I met different types of young people during the research. Tico, 20, had been assigned to Febem (*Fundação Estadual do Bem Estar do Menor*, an institution for the supposed re-socialization of young delinquents) and later completed a socio-educational period of supervised liberty at CEDECA (*Centro de Direitos da Criança e do Adolescente*) for weapons possession and gang involvement. After this period, he went to work with the handicapped for an entity in the region. Sultão, age 18, also passed through the criminal justice system for drug dealing and extortion by kidnapping, and was on supervised liberty when I met him. Months after our interview he was arrested again and sent to prison. Caxapa, 17, said he used to rob people as they left the bank and was a carrier or "plane" for drug dealers but was never caught by the police: his participation in the world of crime fluctuated. These youths described a common fascination for the adventures found in the world of crime, and pride for

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10   Data from the Municipal Secretariat of Health Municipal Prefecture of São Paulo (2004).

11   IBGE data, census 2000. According to the same census, the region possesses 22,953 men and 22,563 women from 10 to 14 years; in the age bracket between 20 and 24 years, there are 24,261 men and 25,157 women.

being known as brave and courageous. Although when asked what led them to commit crimes, they stated that the poverty of their families was a central factor. I met other children who although they lived in conditions of need, never committed assaults or kidnappings even when very close relatives did. As emphasized by Alba Zaluar (1994), the great majority of poor youngsters do not enter the world of crime. I also met young university students who live in villas in Sapopemba and who promote community activities.

Among the problems raised in the Conseg are complaints about police who "race through the street in police cars" and who "beat up the young people." At the same time, there are those who complain about the lack of moral values, such as a school principal who described her difficulties dealing with knife and gun fights. Both social and police responses are sought for these problems by the Conseg members. The representatives of human rights organizations tend mainly to ask for public policies for the youth, exerting pressure on the regional municipal office since the "social problem ends up in the hands of the police." Others who impute the problem to "a lack of moral values" tend to ask for police responses. Others who see the young people as both victims and aggressors, ask for public policies and police action. Issues that involve the courts, contrary to the Campo Belo and Region Conseg, are not cited in Sapopemba. There are participants such as José who believe that the problem does not concern the police, or the district municipal office, although they may contribute somewhat but not definitively. In an interview, José was cautious and seemed to try not to criticize police authorities. He maintained that criminality is part of "human nature" and has existed since Cain and Abel.

José has a small business and works as a private security guard. After a difficult adolescence and a period of great instability in adult life, he found himself married and out of work, and converted to the Evangelical church. He said that to be an effective member is to be at the side of "good people," on the side of the police, and against the drug dealers and gangs. The "bad people" are those who have children involved with drugs, and who are thus in compliance when they receive money and objects obtained through crime – a perception that differs from those of human rights groups and mothers of youth associated with crime. José believes that some of the police are also "bad". He said that his work as a security guard is a threat to them because it removed a source of income for the police. He said he suffered three threats

from policemen: intimidating phone calls and death threats; and that he was once accosted by an armed policeman. As for the phone calls, he said this is "normal." In reference to the armed policeman who accosted him, he said the intention was to scare him so that he would get a gun and might thus commit a crime and be charged so that he could not participate in the Conseg. But he said that he had the support of the local police chief and a police captain who were superiors to the officer that accosted him. This not only kept him from prison, but also called attention to complaints about the bad cops. When telling this story, José asked me to turn off the tape recorder and said it was not a good idea to "talk a great deal about the subject." Because of his negative experience with some corrupt policemen, he is very careful when it comes to recording his opinions of the police. He is clearly scared.

The diversity of problems dealt with by civil society organizations in these Consegs, which involve differing perspectives of the offenders and the need for social and police measures take on new contours – and stir new disputes – when they are converted into demands upon government authorities.

Solutions to the Problems: Tensions between society and the civil police.

This topic concerns the relation between the perspectives and demands of civil society actors, and the actions planned by government institutions. I emphasize the institutional limitations of government services as well as the different understandings of reality. Considering the limited scope of this article, I will merely present some statements that reflect disputes between civil society and the civil police in the Consegs of Campo Belo and Region and Sapopemba.

To the civil police, the unmerited complaints by the population and the lack of government investment are factors that hamper investigations and the solution of community problems.

In Sapopemba, a lack of government spending prevents hiring personnel for the position of clerk and investigator, impeding the agile flow of police work and an accumulation of inquiries. Police officers complained about a high number of crank calls to the emergency police number and that the population often comes to the police for "nonsense" such as fights between neighbors, and between husbands and wives. These claims are made

to respond to complaints from the population about impunity in relation to criminals and lack of safety for victims. At times these differences resulted in confrontations between civil police officers and representatives of community groups that work with children and women.

One enlightening moment was the response by a police officer who was an alternate member of the Conseg to a request from Isabel, a representative of a human rights organization who said that the civil police should be more sensitive in dealing with women who are victims of domestic and sexual violence. According to Isabel, inadequate service was discouraging women from resolving their conflicts. The police inspector, in reply, characterized the complaints that involve women as issues of "less complexity" such as the case of a woman, a sex professional, who complained that the police had "offended her morals". The inspector suggested that the fact the woman was a sex professional disqualified her from making such a complaint. "When he started to explain what had happened, the police clerk asked "What is your profession? 'Prostitute' So…" Citizens classified as having an inferior social status, such as prostitutes and drug dealers, are often deprived of their civil rights by the Sapopemba police. The representative of the human rights organization expressed surprise at the police officer's response. He stood with eyes open wide towards the audience, clearly upset by the policeman's answer. However, his position was not a consensus among the Conseg members.

While in the Sapopemba Conseg the top police officers do not go to the meetings, but send representatives, in the Campo Belo and Region Conseg the police chiefs attend in person, which indicates a greater degree of concern for their relationship with the community. This situation continued after a change in the local police chief in October 2006 after the elections for state governor. The police chiefs that attend the Conseg meetings in the upper middle class neighborhoods are far stricter about presenting information about criminal statistics and the number of cases in process.

However, a lack of infrastructure and the computer system at the police station , were also presented as factors that limit good police work. A relatively new law has also increased the volume of accumulated investigations because Law 9.099/1995 allows a citizen to request that an investigation not be removed from the active police file after six months. Nevertheless, paradoxically, the police chief encouraged the population to come to the police

station for any type of illegal act, which seems not to have convinced a resident who complained she had been received rudely when she "brought charges against the janitor in her building." She said the police clerk was sarcastic about her complaint he described as "bickering between women."

Unlike a similar situation in the lower class neighborhood, the police chief preferred not to comment on whether or not this case was "a subject of less complexity." He merely indicated how many hours he works, and asked to be advised in a case of poor service so that measures might be taken.

The treatment dispensed by police officers in relation to residents differs in neighborhoods of distinct social classes as do the services that the community provides in turn to the civil police. In the Campo Belo and Moema Region, the neighborhood associations helped finance restoration of the police station, which indicates another level of relationship between the upper middle class and the civil police: a financial relationship. The neighborhood associations in lower class neighborhoods have scant resources. At no time did I witness discussions about financial aid from the poorer population for physical maintenance of the police station. This procedure is permitted by the Conseg regulation; however, only the richer neighborhoods manage to fill the gaps left by public investment in safety.

However, the financial assistance has not erased tension between members of the Campo Belo and Region Conseg and the civil police, above all concerning police effectiveness. The recurrent problem of prostitutes and transvestites in the residential neighborhoods is especially critical. Claudia, a single woman, who was stalked by a transvestite and filed a police report, was outraged at the fact that the clerk described the accused as a sex worker, while she considered the transvestite to be a "criminal." The Police officer intervened and said the military police and the civil police were working together to reinforce operations to maintain decency and take citizens to the police station to "give them their due". Claudia was not satisfied with the response from the police representative. She maintained that the civil police turn a blind eye on prostitution. One police officer who recently opened a restaurant on the same street as her house and who did not complain about the movement of clients and prostitution gave her some advice: "Have you tried a good neighbor policy?" Claudia was enraged: "What have we come to? I should make friends to delegate the security of the neighborhood to a prostitute?" To Claudia, the law should be changed making the clients and the

sex professionals responsible for the criminal act. The police officer did not discuss a need for a legal change, but blamed the residents and the customers for prostitution. He said the problem is that the population does not go to the police to "file formal complaints" in cases of obscene acts and argued that customers are stopped in vehicle inspections as a way to discourage demand for prostitution service.

Conclusion

The way Consegs work has, since their inception, coincided both with important changes in the conception of public safety as a right and with contradictions in the fields of practices and sensibilities (Galdeano, 2009). The concept of public safety has been gradually distanced from a focus by police and the courts on the imprisonment of "criminals" and the internment of delinquent youths in so-called juvenile socialization institutions. In various Latin American countries, public administration specialists, NGOs, scholars, policemen, etc. have increasingly joined discussions on "citizen safety" as a strategy that focuses, in an integrated way, on prevention and mediation of conflicts, on the participation of civil society in the discussions and on social protection for human rights, as well as on repressive measures. Nevertheless, groups within government and civil society still call for "iron-fist policies" to control crime.

Other important changes and contradictions have occurred in civil society. After Caldeira's (1991) research, based on data collected in the 1980s, which indicates the common popular perception of human rights as a "privilege for bandits," a study by Cardia (1999) offered important developments. In the late 1990s, Cardia studied attitudes, cultural norms and values related to violence in 10 Brazilian state capitals. Her study suggests that there have been changes in the social imaginary in relation to human rights, attenuating the opinion that human rights are "privileges for bandits." Cardia concludes that in Brazil there is "a normalization or acceptance of interpersonal violence (...) for certain "types of people," or to resolve certain types of disputes (for instance, over drug dealing)" (Cardia, 1999: 01). In a recent article, Caldeira (2006) verifies similar changes, and points to new ambiguities – such as those found among rappers who complain about class and ethnic prejudices, while reinforcing dichotomies and gender bias, which, according

to the author, reveals that although different groups "have become acquainted with the language and procedures of democracy. (...) the meanings associated with notions such as rights and justice have remained unstable and contestable and are also associated with quite contradictory social practices" (Caldeira, 2006: 102).

In fact, it is very likely that political discourses in the field of public safety have been based on human rights (albeit in an ambiguous way), which can be verified by the narratives of residents from all social strata. For instance, in cases of charges of police abuse and in the defense of poor youths and their families; in charges against the sexual exploitation of children; in claims for the right to a healthy life, to a clean city, to less chaotic traffic and in claims for health services, education, leisure and security. The common threads in narratives that I have collected reveal that the limits of what has been recognized as rights emerge when one wants to discuss "certain types of persons": favela dwellers, sex workers, and young offenders. It is relevant here to draw our attention to the fact that stereotypes related to class, gender and age are pervasive in discussions about public safety.

Research at Community Public Safety Councils also allows the conclusion that old issues and new dilemmas arise when it comes to relations between police and communities. In general, the police tend to be more tolerant with middle class residents and less willing to dialogue with working class residents. However, different treatment is also issued to residents from the same neighborhood. In this sense, the relationship between police and community is influenced by the marker "social class," but is also influenced by the social practice of the residents. Taking into account intra-neighborhood interactions, the police tend to give different treatment to, for example, a human rights activist and a private security guard, young people living in favelas and young university students who live in the villas. The social practices of the groups involved in the discussion of violence are diverse, and residents commonly characterized as "working class" and "upper middle class" have different trajectories and political and professional involvements, which significantly influence their relationship with the police. Thus, this research has led to the hypothesis that social practices - in addition to the markers "age," "gender" and "social class" – are fertile ground for the analysis of representations of violence and the interaction of residents with "authority figures" such as the police and criminal elements. It is noteworthy that the

First Capital Command (PCC) is cited by participants on the councils as an organization that is present in the communities.

Finally, the data collected here also reveal the difficulty involved in giving civil society shared responsibility for issues related to public safety. Under a critical view of the "panacea of civil society" (Comaroff & Comaroff, 2006), the participation of community in "risk management" (Rose, 1999) or the need to establish "law and order" under a new social contract inspired by "radical liberalism" (Adorno, 1998), some studies have questioned the ability of the "Preventive State" to re-establish security. Nikolas Rose (1999) has worked more precisely on experiences of crime prevention in areas of high exclusion that frequently involve techniques for the identification and control of groups seen as dangerous – which he calls *new penology*. In this new diagram of control, the communities demand sanctions against offenders, which frequently amount to schemes to "name, shame and blame" offenders (Rose, 1999: 239). Inspired by Michel Foucault, the *new penology* explains the new diagram of control where "risk groups" are probabilistically calculated, in order to anticipate the possible locus of danger, involving the community and neighborhood in the process. This creates a complex scenario: on the one hand, there is a need to assure the right to security; on the other hand, the risk that participative experiences might criminalize even more subjects who are already devoid of rights and stigmatized by their conditions of class, gender, race and age. After all, the purpose of participative experiences is neither the exclusion or elimination of "dangerous elements" through a focus on "suspicion," nor the "technical administration of difference" (Rose, op. cit.: 235). It is important to differentiate policies that aim at including those who are excluded from rights, activating a circuit of civility and citizenry, based on strategies that seek to govern the population and supposed "anti-citizens" through probabilistic calculations to "neutralize the danger" to the social body. It is precisely in this dilemma that the challenge of participative experiences in the field of public safety can be posed.

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