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ICPC ISSUES

Of Prevention and Security. Reflections on Sustainable Governance of Community Security.

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**International Centre for the
Prevention of Crime**

December 2004

Many countries worldwide now have government policies and strategies for crime prevention. From Australia to Vietnam, South Africa to Argentina, Canada to the Philippines, England to Hungary, they number in the dozens. Naturally, these strategies differ in how they are administered: many are under the auspices of ministries of the Interior and Public Security, some directly under the police department. They also differ in orientation: many focus on crime reduction, others on social development and others still on integrated urban approaches. And they differ in the means available to them: some have mechanisms for funding, research and training, while others resort to public awareness and information campaigns. Results are sometimes mixed and strategies remain vulnerable to shifts in the political landscape. But we should not lose sight of the fact that barely 20 years ago, only a handful of governments had developed crime prevention and urban security strategies.

An even greater number of cities now have their own strategies for prevention and security or for keeping the peace. France, of course, started off initially with its first municipal councils (*Conseils communaux*) and today has local security and crime prevention councils. In England, legislation adopted in 1998 compelled local authorities to create local crime-reduction councils, in partnership with the police and other government agencies. But such examples also abound in New Zealand, Belgium, Chile, the Ivory Coast, Tanzania, etc. In about 15 cities in developing countries, the "Safer Cities" program created by UN-Habitat has established integrated local security and prevention strategies. International development agencies in various countries also support integrated urban measures or prevention programs for at-risk populations. And in 2002, the UN Economic and Social Council adopted guidelines for crime prevention.

Of course, one might bemoan the fact that emphasis is often placed on public safety measures that involve the use of closed-circuit television cameras or increased police presence rather than more substantive action that addresses the behavioural risk factors for crime. It is worth noting that funding for prevention still gets but a meager share of the sums allocated for fighting crime. It should also be pointed out that government policies targeting urban crime too often exclude corporate crimes such as environmental pollution, which is at least as big a threat to the quality of life. Above all, one cannot ignore the fact that, despite declining crime rates in most developed Western countries, the use of incarceration has not declined proportionally. Nevertheless, we must recall that barely 20 years ago, France was viewed as a

pioneer when it developed a contract-based mechanism for supporting local community measures. Even in England, local strategies were something found only in pilot projects in a few towns and cities.

This does illustrate how far we have come since such policies first appeared on the horizon barely two decades ago, or since the ICPC was created in 1994. This is why we chose the theme of sustainable governance of urban prevention and security policy for this year's ICPC anniversary symposium. The very notion of sustainable governance is evidence that crime-prevention policies are here to stay. It is also a way of facing down the detractors of these policies and interventions and other naysayers – and they are still legion – and affirming not only the ongoing nature of these approaches, but also their necessity.

The outlook is bleak. Citizen security, defined as being open to plurality and diversity and focused on developing more balanced and effective approaches to urban crime, anti-social behaviour and insecurity, is simply out of favour. From a geopolitical standpoint, the instability caused by various forms of terrorism, as well as unilateralist approaches, combines with more repressive policies and methods of intervention that curtail civil liberties instead of emphasizing prevention and fostering integration. At the national level, in the wake of successive elections, various countries have succumbed to short-term – not to say short-sighted – policies, the kinds of populist measures that favour expediency over an integrated security policy.

To some extent, it can be said that prevention policies themselves have not targeted their actions accurately, have failed to measure their impact with any degree of rigor, have neglected to disseminate best practices, and have not made good use of the international body of knowledge that has developed gradually over the past 20 years. Prevention policies also tended to be based on buzzwords which became virtual incantations – partnership, concerted effort, local audits, and more recently, integration and cross-sectional approach – without defining and circumscribing these concepts and especially without providing them with concrete quantifiable indicators. Security and prevention policies also tended to preach the virtues of a certain set models, without paying sufficient attention to the diversity of various places and environments, and without really taking into account the very paradoxes of security and public peace. That will be our first point of discussion.

But despite their weak points, crime prevention policies have, slowly but surely, contributed to instituting a genuinely new form of crime prevention. Through these fits and starts, we have witnessed the shift from governing internal security to the governance of collective security. Clearly, beyond the call for restoring the rule of law and normative standards of behaviour, there has been a proliferation and fragmentation of ways and means to define normative behaviour. These are no longer purely legislative. As part of this process, sources of social control and compliance with conformity have also fragmented. That will bring us to our second point.

Beyond buzzwords

Local security policies constitute the backbone of most national and regional crime prevention and security policies. Gilbert BONNEMAISON correctly summarized the need for such local measures as early as 1982, when he convincingly argued that local authorities were closer to the problems of residents and were in the best position to address them¹. This was essentially because local authorities have legitimacy rather than leverage and the right tools at their disposal. It is precisely because they don't have much leverage that they rely on implementing partnerships that bring together the police and the justice system, school and health-care administrators, and civil society organizations.

Since the partnerships didn't have all the tools required, they had to develop a rigorous methodology, which became more clearly defined over the years. They had to produce a *local security audit*, develop a common *plan of action*, ensure its *shared implementation*, and conduct a *rigorous evaluation*. And of course, they had to do all this in such a way as to *(co)produce security*.

Partnerships. Everything is done as if various local partners disposed of identical resources, including a certain amount of power. When bringing together representatives from the national government, the police, the justice system (more rarely), associations, researchers, and even neighbourhood residents, quite obviously, not all stakeholders enjoy the same powers or

¹ Mayors' Commission on Security (1982)...

resources. Furthermore, associations and residents are often merely “consulted”; but even consultation is not a given, because citizenship involvement in ensuring security is still not part of the culture. Moreover, the issue of “representativeness” can make local residents reluctant to get involved.

Thus, public participation remains problematic, since the people concerned don’t have social clout, and problem neighbourhoods lack the collective efficiency required for genuine and effective participation.²

Local audits. While undoubtedly valuable, audits are still based primarily on police data alone. It is not our intention here to delve into the tired old debate about the validity of police data, but rather to underscore that in any examination of social problems, root causes or anti-social behaviour - all of which are vague concepts of variable magnitude - police data alone is not sufficient. Knowing who has performed the audit, for whom, and how is of considerable interest and importance, as is knowing whether the purpose of the audit is to “reduce” the problem to easily quantifiable factors or to “deconstruct” it in order to reveal its complexity. Most neighbourhood-level problems cannot be measured by a single standard and can rarely be taken at face value. For instance, public nuisance and anti-social behaviour, two phenomena that are often cited in any discussion of insecurity, refer to a broad range of behaviours that can vary greatly depending on the neighbourhood and even the individual. These phenomena may also relate to a number of other issues, from housing to public transit. Although measurements based solely on complaints statistics compiled by police can undoubtedly serve as a starting point for an audit, they are not sufficient in and of themselves, especially since the range of behaviours and situations encapsulated in the notion of anti-social behaviour varies according to time and place.

A common plan of action. Here, it is not so much the adjective “common” that presents a problem but rather the noun “action”. What action does this refer to? On the one hand, local communities are not in a position to affect many of the structural root causes of crime and anti-social behaviour: they do not control criminal law, which defines a given behaviour as a criminal offence, nor many of the programs promoting access to employment or the integration of immigrants. In fact, globalization further complicates the issue, since

² Hope and Karstedt, 2003; Crawford, 1997 and n.d.

problems no longer occur only at a national level. In fact, according to some, this is less and less the case. Short-term initiatives to increase safety in public places in order to reassure citizens (e.g.: closed-circuit television cameras) and medium- and longer-term programs (such as reducing recidivism rates and early intervention for at-risk children and youth) are not inherently contradictory. An integrated approach does not just mean seeking the participation of several government agencies and of civil society; it's also a matter of coming up with a series of measures that are integrated with one another. Yet interventions tend to take place in a disconnected, piecemeal fashion, and attempts to rationalize various measures take a back seat to finding expedient solutions to meet the most urgent needs.

Shared implementation. How can we move beyond bureaucratic and institutional ways of doing things? Various bodies, particularly national government agencies, must operate in an increasingly results-oriented environment where achievement is measured according to performance criteria. In addition, an increasing share of traditional duties of the public sector is being carried out by the private sector, or through public-private partnerships. As public administrations are increasingly influenced by the actuarial model of risk management, they operate on the assumption that there is a rational basis for all human activity. But because crime and insecurity have a profoundly emotional component, and because human behaviour cannot be reduced to rational motives, this perspective conflicts with that of the other implementation partners. Moreover, the means available to various stakeholders, both material and symbolic, are generally not comparable.

Rigorous evaluation. Everyone agrees on the need for evaluation. Many are those who claim that their role is to evaluate. Nevertheless, when it comes to crime prevention, we are always faced with the inescapable problem of how to evaluate something that did not occur because it was prevented (i.e.: a non-event). Some have apparently found an iron-clad response to the problem: by adopting strategies focused on certain risk factors, preferably targeting individuals rather than communities, it is possible to use quasi-experimental evaluation approaches which enable us to answer this question through statistics. However, results on this front are not promising. What few evaluations we have of so-called community prevention measures (*community* in the Anglo-Saxon sense of a sub-group of the local community, such as a neighbourhood or even a rental housing complex) have generally shown that

such measurements are inconclusive.³ Worse yet, according to Sherman (1997: 3-1), the gap between community prevention programs and the causes of crime is wider than that of any other type of prevention. Sampson and Lauritsen (1993; quoted in Sherman, 1997: 3-2), even suggest that urban renewal and public housing programs may have contributed to increasing crime rather than preventing it. In Sherman's opinion, asking disadvantaged people (the poor, ethnic minorities, under-educated youth, etc.) concentrated in problem neighbourhoods to take charge of their quality of life, and more specifically of their own security, is equivalent to "throwing people into the sea and telling them to make their own life jacket".⁴ Evaluations of interventions with street gangs, mentoring programs and extra-curricular activities for at-risk youth are considered promising at best (Welsh, 2003: 18). Community-wide integrated initiatives have not been evaluated in terms of their impact on crime rates.⁵

All this is done in order to *(co)produce security*. Leaving aside the multitude of meanings that can be attributed to this term, coproducing security strikes at the heart of the shift from crime prevention to security policy (Hope, 2003; Hope, at press). There are those who decry this and who see it as a net loss and in particular as a dereliction of duty by the State (for example, Lagrange 2002; Heberrecht and Duprez, 2001). If this is indeed a loss, it is not a total loss, because the social sector did win something in this game, namely a voice, or rather an exponential increase in the number of voices who can legitimately identify problems and implement solutions. Indeed, the fact that security policy is now adapted to local needs enables us not only to define relations between the central government and local communities, but also to help open up new areas of dialogue, or even new ways of fighting social control (Coleman et al, 2002).

On the one hand, this shift from prevention to security spurns the traditional functions of the social sector, particularly specialized prevention measures (Gorgeon et al 2000), through the field of social work was already being challenged in other areas of the social sector. On the other hand, we are seeing the concomitant emergence of new occupations and professions - social mediators, security assistants, local coordinators - who don't always have clear status or broadly-acknowledged legitimacy, but who act as relays between various institutions and between those institutions and civil society (Hughes,

³ For example, Sherman (1997), and more recently, Welsh (2003).

⁴ See also, in a somewhat similar vein, Hope (1995) and Crawford (1998).

⁵ See also work by the ICPC on this issue, notably Barchechat and Sansfaçon, 2003.

2000: 56). Stenson (2002), for example, clearly demonstrates how the duties of these new professionals are defined at the local level and cannot be adequately covered by a single definition.

In addition, the shift from prevention to local security can often lead to a vicious circle: the lower tolerance levels promoted by interventions that focus on infra-penal rather than penal standards, especially on anti-social behaviour, are matched by a corresponding reduction in natural social-control mechanisms. This in turn means a lower threshold at which the criminal justice system becomes involved (Hope et Karstedt, 2003). But on the other hand, discussing security has the dual benefit of defining the underlying notion of common good more clearly than the discussion of prevention policy ever did, as the latter put more emphasis on tools and procedures. Similarly, as security is focused on reducing harm and seeking social justice, it serves as a reminder of the political nature, in the best sense of the term, of the stakes involved in controlling crime.⁶

And so, this leads us from governing internal security to the governance of collective security.

Governing internal security and the governance of collective security

If there is one important conclusion to be drawn from the various ethnographic studies conducted in the field, in cities and in local communities, it is that meta-narratives must be avoided (Edwards, 2002). For example, analyses conducted in England of security policies implemented by local communities demonstrated that, regardless of the substantive objectives set out in legislation and funding mechanisms, local responses were equally shaped by the political views of the players involved, the administrative rules that operate between government agencies, and the funding systems in place (Stenson, 2002). In France, work by Roché's team on municipal police forces indicates similar outcomes (Roché, on the press).

At the same time, those who, like us, conduct comparative analyses know how tempting it is to look for similarities, or common denominators, that

⁶ On this, refer to Hughes (2002).

enable us to identify patterns and thereby develop explanatory frameworks. By and large, this is what we find in documents as diverse as certain works by the ICPC⁷, and analyses by researchers such as Crawford (1998) in England or Donzelot (2003) in France. Trying to capture the basic structure reveals the underlying analytical framework. In addition to revealing what might exist, a sort of “truth” about the world as we experience it, attempts to account for major trends allow us to gain a better understanding of a speaker. In that sense, our views on the governance of collective security provide a key – albeit one of many – to understanding the ICPC and its vision of future prevention policy.

To discuss governance is to open a Pandora’s Box. For many authors, the very word *governance* has fallen out of favour. It alludes to the devolution of activities once the exclusive purview of the State to the private sector or to civil society, and to the trend toward individual accountability that ignores structural causes.

In the first instance, governance specifically refers to replacing universal welfare-state programs with ad hoc measures to deal with “problems”, or, in the case of interest here, “problem populations”. This would include categories such as youth, migrants, ethnic minorities, as well as neighbourhoods that are troubled or precarious, where intervention should be a priority in order to ensure rehabilitation. Interventions would not address the structural causes that influence social exclusion, such as cracks in the system of social justice (equitable distribution of wealth) and legitimate authority (challenging the validity of collective order)⁸. Instead, they would target the risks that these groups or neighbourhoods present for society as a whole. This would hark back to Beck’s notion (1992) of replacing a society that distributes wealth with a society that distributes risk. The only difference is that, according to Beck, the distribution of risk is more egalitarian (for example, atmospheric pollution affects rich and poor equally) than wealth distribution ever was. In the field of security, this view is consistent with that of analysts who say that we have switched from a social contract to a security contract (Hope and Karstedt, 2003), and that this change is accompanied by the criminalization of poverty (Crawford, n.d.) which is reflected in our increasing rates of incarceration.

⁷ For example, the *Synthesis-Directory II* (1999) which sought to identify the commonalities of policies and actions in seven different countries.

⁸ Two examples cited by Lagrange (2002), page 6.

In the second instance, governance would refer to various ways of demanding accountability from individuals and “communities”. In restoring the value of personal responsibility, the State would in effect be putting each individual in sole charge of his or her own life. Failure would be ascribed to the individual and not to society. Among other things, this brings to mind measures designed to hold parents financially and otherwise accountable for offences committed by their teenage children.

While it is true that for some organizations, such as the International Monetary Fund, “sound governance” means offloading or intensive belt-tightening measures by the State, that is not our definition here. Nor do we think governance means social Darwinism focused on individual responsibility.

Our notion of governance can be defined as the displacement of modes of social regulation. Instead of being primarily authoritarian (top-down) and applying equally to all, governance decentralizes and diversifies the ways in which standards are established and managed. It calls upon new stakeholders and thus introduces greater complexity and fluidity in normative behaviour and its enforcement.⁹

In the field of crime prevention and security policy that concerns us here, the partnerships established by local communities and the orders they receive to produce security - by reweaving the social fabric or utilizing various forms of technical and human surveillance - are evidence of the fragmentation of the ways standards are set and of the dispersal of the mechanisms of control.

The arguments for the development of prevention policies were clear and widely accepted: intervention by the police and the justice system was no longer sufficient. In addition to the social and economic costs of such interventions, their relative ineffectiveness in reducing crime and insecurity and lack of accountability to citizens pointed to the need to do things differently. This didn’t mean, or at least shouldn’t have meant, that it was possible to act without these top-down institutions. While it is true to some extent that the police and justice systems will never disappear completely, they were, for a time, ignored. For example, in France, they were rarely part of municipal crime prevention councils. Perhaps because the pendulum has now swung the other way, tighter judicial controls and increased police presence

⁹ On this topic, see the remarkable work of Arnaud (2003).

serve as a reminder that their contribution, while sometimes misunderstood and often inept, is nevertheless required for the co-production of collective security.

It was this realization that led to the development of local policies, primarily on prevention but sometimes on security, crime reduction or community safety. Thus, we could review each of the precepts listed earlier and rethink them in the light of the governance model.

While there is no doubt that partnerships have sometimes been so in name only, they are evidence of the opening up of a formerly closed environment, the fragmentation of the ways security is ensured and the re-politicization of crime. The introduction of new players, the requirement to take the demands of residents into account, and the mandate given to local authorities who were previously considered unqualified to deal with such matters, have compelled us to address the issue of roles and responsibilities. This has also led to a certain degree of repositioning, especially for police forces. The creation of public security commissions in Québec, to whom police forces are accountable and before which they must decide on their priorities, is an example of this type of transparency.

Too often, audits remain centered on police data alone and technical tools such as cartography, but they have also provided access to other data and information. This is how factors like women's security or the place of youth in public spaces, data from social funders or the perceptions of businesspeople have come to constitute an increasingly large part of the information collected for audit purposes. Moreover, in some cases, audit practices have given a voice to researchers, and in turn has raised their awareness of realities in the field. In all instances, the audit exercise provides an opportunity – which is sometimes seized by the stakeholders – to confront different viewpoints on various phenomena and “problems”.

The responsibility devolved to local authorities can mean a loss of sovereignty by the central government and a tendency toward communitarianism instead of the traditional top-down approach to equal justice. But it also constitutes a new means for the State to ensure its presence in local communities. At the very least, it allows the public to question the State. In this regard, the involvement of residents, sometimes denounced as populism or as an exercise in self-legitimization, helps shift the emphasis from

crime per se to such issues as quality of life, sharing public spaces, and the need to “strengthen society”. Therefore, the point is not so much the offloading by the State but rather the decentering of the ways standards are set, which was formerly done exclusively from the top down.

Lastly, the preoccupation with evaluation and research can certainly be interpreted as “managerialism” and a tendency to focus on quantifiable and especially short-term results. But it also allows researchers to become involved in local councils, and thus leads to the democratization of knowledge. Moreover, it helps create an accountability mechanism.

All of this means neither increased repression nor a loss of State sovereignty. In some ways, it is a series of paradoxes that local communities each resolve in their own ways, among themselves and at different times. These are also tools that enable us to regain insight into the myriad ways society constructs normative behaviour and the means to control it. For a time, the criminal justice system had led us to believe that it had simple answers to these complex issues.

Conclusion

The very fact that we chose sustainable governance as the theme of this symposium is a clear indication that we think that prevention and security policies create new ways of responding to the challenge of maintaining public order and rebuilding social ties.

If local prevention and security partnerships have cleared the way for genuine political debate on the issue of normative behaviour, a debate which was cloaked in the supposed neutrality of the criminal justice system in the first two centuries of modernity; if these partnerships have also opened the door to other stakeholders - an openness that is never fully achieved and constantly challenged - and to the inclusion of “others” who “present a problem” when we seek solutions; if all of this is not just purely abstract, then it is appropriate to support this movement. We believe that three things in particular must be accomplished.

First, we must work to develop the governance capital of local partnerships, particularly of civil society organizations, by supporting the legitimacy of such stakeholders, by increasing their access to resources, including funding and knowledge. Too often, these organizations end up in minor supporting roles, or constitute a pool of practical know-how for things that governments do not know, or no longer know, how to do. Because it is dispersed, the association sector is weak and its participation in forums and other joint actions does not measure up to that of the public sector. Above all, the funding available to associations is extremely precarious, a problem that is foreign to government stakeholders. Efforts to prevent or reduce crime must address ways to increase the social capital and collective effectiveness of so-called problem people and neighbourhoods, precisely to increase their governance capital. Similarly, the involvement of researchers in local security audits and in the evaluation of preventative measures, as well as the dissemination of information on practices and on research generally, must be encouraged and supported.

Second, we must develop the *normative capital* of communities, particularly by learning to make full use of audit and consultation tools that were created to better identify social problems and to debate priorities and appropriate methods of intervention. Having observed the inadequacy of traditional legal tools to resolve social conflicts, and having tried to take early action on risk factors through prevention policies, we must go a step further and remember that although we live in essentially peaceful societies, normative behaviour is not automatic. The need for security on the one hand and inclusiveness on the other, issues surrounding the place of youth in public spaces and the role of the police in keeping the peace, underscore how we can never take openness to others and living together as a society for granted. Developing this normative capital means, among other things, encouraging genuine citizen participation and public debate on security matters.

Third, we must *reinforce the role of local government* in matters of security. Local authorities have increasing responsibilities for providing local services, as well as increasing financial and other resources to deliver those services. In our field, it is incumbent upon them to ensure that security is fairly distributed among all citizens. And it is incumbent upon us to remind them constantly that this responsibility must not be synonymous with ghettoization and “*club good*”.

ICPC ISSUES

In the plenary sessions, we asked participants to think about the actual issues that arise at the three levels of governance: local, national and international. We are well aware that this distinction may be artificial in some respects, as the three levels overlap and interweave more and more tightly. Participants were asked to answer some questions, but above all they were told not to hesitate to talk about their problems and challenges as well as their successes. The objective of our conclusions is not to close the debate. We hope that they will serve to advance it.

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[Translator's note: Not all works referred to herein are necessarily available in English.]

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