Police Reform and Public Security on the Municipal Level[1]

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Invisibly, a poor boy walks down a street in one of Brazil's large cities. This boy, who is almost invariably black, is imperceptible as he treads the dirty sidewalk, a sidewalk that is often the place where he lives, having been driven away from home by domestic violence, forgotten by the authorities, ignored by the community, deprived of his citizenship. Bereft of prospects or hope, with no emotional or symbolic links with the social order, nothing to make him identify with the ruling culture, the boy remains invisible as he wanders around the streets. His invisibility may be the product of public indifference to his presence — which is never purely physical, but also social — or of the social stigmata projected on him, which erode whatever personal traits may single him out as a human being. The stigmata brand the body of the victim of discrimination with the mark of prejudice, a projection of those who share the prejudice, and in this way obliterate the individuality of the person observed.

As he walks down the streets, the boy bears on his shoulders the usual problems of adolescence, plus the sufferings of poverty in the context of the tremendous inequality of Brazilian society. We all know that adolescence is a relatively recent historical and cultural creation, but we also know how challenging it can be, from the psychological perspective, with all the ambiguities, demands, promises and frustrations it implies. When a poor teenager lives behind the dark veil of social invisibility, his physical body carries a crushed spirit, from which all conditions that might contribute to self-esteem have been subtracted.

When a drug dealer gives him a gun, this invisible boy is given much more than a tool that will allow him to obtain material advantages, economic gains and access to the world of consumer goods: he is given a passport to social existence, because with the gun he will be able to elicit from each one of us, at any street corner, a particular feeling: fear, which may be negative but is a feeling all the

same. By arousing a feeling in another person, the boy achieves presence, visibility and social existence. In this way the gun gives the invisible boy the minimal conditions for the construction of self-esteem, of acknowledgment, of identity. We human beings can only exist through the mediation of the generous eye of the other, which recognizes us as such, giving us back our own image invested with humanity — that is, aggrandized and dignified. Thanks to the gun, this wandering boy can set in motion an interaction that is a prerequisite for his subjective reconstruction, which makes possible the project of self-invention, an aesthetic project. This is a perverse dialectic, in which the boy asserts his protagonism and structures himself as a subject by accepting a tragic commitment to a chain of relationships and practices that most likely will doom him to a cruel and early death, before the age of twenty-five. In addition, because fear is a negative feeling, his self-assertion will necessarily contain the full weight of the guilt brought about by the magnitude of the resentment and negative critical judgments aroused by the violent act for which he becomes responsible. This is a sort of Faustian pact, in which the boy gives up his soul, his future, his fate, in exchange for a moment of glory, an ephemeral experience of the hypertrophy of protagonism in which the everyday relations of indifference are inverted: the haughty condescension of the other is transformed into humiliating inferiority, fear and obedience to the boy's armed authority.

In this way, a gun in the hands of our young character is much more than a tool used in strategies of economic survival. There is another kind of hunger, prior to physical hunger, deeper, more radical and more demanding than physical hunger: the hunger for existence, the driving need to be acknowledged, valued, accepted. That is why, in the scene of violence, the symbolic, emotional, psychological and intersubjective gains are at least as important as the economic gains.

When a boy has access to a gun in Brazil, very often he also has access to the company of groups of small-scale dealers in drugs and guns that operate in favelas and lower-class suburbs. This has an additional value to young people: the gratification of belongingness, which is all the more intense when group cohesion

runs high. On the other hand, cohesion is directly proportional to the degree of antagonism experienced by the group in its relations with other groups on the collective plane. This is the segmental logic that we anthropologists are familiar with, particularly on the basis of works by Evans-Pritchard and Lévi-Strauss, and that had been previously identified by sociologists since Simmel. That is why it is so important for boys and girls to experiment the comforting feelings of belongingness by joining segmental groups, in which the experience of belonging is the more intense the more violent is the confrontation between rival groups. Drug gangs play out, with tragic results, the unconscious rules of social life, in the absence of constructive alternatives that might sublimate violence by symbolizing and transferring it to other languages, such as that of sports, for instance.

Since Brazilian city governments have no police forces but only Civil Guards, usually limited to protecting public property, the only way they can cope with criminal violence is by adopting preventive policies not involving police power, though always in association with the state police forces (military and civilian). But with a bit of creativity this limitation can be turned into a virtue. It will be necessary to create alternative attractions for young people, activities that can compete with the illegal trade and that offer at least the same advantages. In other words, in order to compete with the seductive power of crime, to win the hearts and minds of every boy and every girl, the city government must provide such material benefits as jobs and income, and such symbolical and emotional benefits as self-worth, acceptance and belongingness, giving young people visibility and self-respect, which in turn requires a sort of customization of public policies, focusing its target population as individual members of a specific group and not as an amorphous mass. To promote the self-worth of each young person, it is necessary to implement public policies that create opportunities for the exercise of their virtues, their creative and expressive potential. But this is not enough. It is also necessary to create the conditions for these expressed virtues to be identified and acknowledged, and this requires dialogic intra- and intergroup structures.

The major challenge is how to generate jobs and income and at the same time capture the imagination of young people, speaking their specific cultural

languages. Youths from lower-class peripheral urban areas and favelas do not want to join the labor market as menial workers. They do not want to shine our shoes, fix our cars or paint the walls in our houses. They do not want to be failures like their parents. They do not want to repeat the failures of the previous generation. Poor young people want the same things our own children want: access to the Internet, high-tech products, art, music, movies, theater, television, the media, culture, sports. They want to express their own critical and creative potential; they want opportunities for personal self-assertion; they want a chance to attain recognition and self-worth, escaping the deadening pall of discriminatory social invisibility. To a certain degree, narcissism is a healthy, constructive feeling, a precondition for the self-construction of the subject as a cooperative social being willing to play the peaceful game of sociability. For this reason, new public policies with the purpose of attracting young people and pulling them away from illegal traffic must be attuned to the desires and fantasies that are expressed in the cultural languages of youth, and must combine job and income policies, educational and training strategies, with the lure of topics and practices from the sphere of art, music, culture and the media.

On the municipal plane there is much that can be done, even outside the sphere of police action. The sort of intervention that can effectively prevent violence and crime must aim to change the conditions that directly encourage the practices that are to be eliminated, rather than target structural changes that can have an impact on criminal dynamics only in a distant future. Not that such structural changes should not be effected, of course. They are necessary and urgent, on a large scale, for their intrinsic qualities, because they will transform the conditions that breed violence and in this way will make Brazil a better country. But long-run action is not sufficient, and cannot replace topic interventions, in the form of inductive social policies focused on the immediate causes of violence. Here's an example: often there are specific territories where criminal practices are concentrated, where they tend to be repeated according to patterns that make it possible to anticipate and to prevent crime. This is a widely recognized phenomenon, accepted by criminologists around the world. So even before

socioeconomic structures are reformed, highly focused, topical initiatives, acting efficiently upon circumstances immediately associated with crime, may yield excellent results. We must block the dynamics that are the immediate causes of criminal phenomena, and this requires diagnoses that are sensitive to the complexity of social contexts and that must be complemented by qualified planning and systematic evaluation, so that the entire process of public intervention is permanently monitored, even when it operates in partnership with initiatives from civil society.

I believe I have shown how city governments can help reduce criminal violence even without the use of police forces. Let us now examine the problem of crime in Brazil in general terms, pinpointing the issues that directly involve state institutions, particularly the police.

The most dramatic problem in Brazil in the area of public security is the veritable genocide to which young people are being submitted, particularly poor males, particularly black ones. In 1999, in Rio de Janeiro City, for instance, in every group of 100,000 inhabitants 239 young black males aged 15 to 29 were the victims of murder. In 2000, in Rio de Janeiro State, 2,816 teenagers were murdered (107.6 per 100,000 teenagers, while the Brazilian average in 2000 was 52.1; the figure for 1980 was 30). In only one Brazilian state, Pernambuco, is this rate higher than in Rio de Janeiro. As to Rio de Janeiro City, only three other state capitals have even higher rates of teenage murder: Recife, Vitória and São Paulo. In 1991, murders of youths in Rio de Janeiro State affected 76.2 per 100,000 young people. While in Brazil in general murder is the cause of only 4 percent of all deaths, among young people it is responsible for 39 percent of deaths.

What is most amazing and paradoxical about this genocide is its autophagic nature: it is mostly poor youths (aged 18 to 24 or 29, depending on the criteria used) who kill poor youths. They appear on both sides of this fratricidal process, as victims and as perpetrators. The magnitude of the problem is such that its consequences are already noticeable in the country's demographic structure: there is a deficit of young males in the Brazilian population that is comparable only to that found in countries at war.

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The dynamics that brings about so many early and violent deaths can be grasped only if a number of factors are taken into account: (a) deficient sheltering by the family, the community and the school; (b) lack of prospects of full social integration; (c) omission of state institutions in impoverished urban regions; (d) the establishment of an illicit trade in guns and drugs in lower-class peripheral areas and favelas, which recruits youths for its illegal activities; (e) the rise of an ample variety of criminal practices in consequence of the availability of guns brought about by this illicit trade. Together, these factors affect entire segments of lower-class youth, so that certain groups — no more than a minority, to be sure — are attracted by the siren song of crime and join the gang. All too often this association leads a significant number of young people into a life of crime and a violent early death.

As we have seen, the material and symbolic-emotional advantages offered by the drug trade make up, to a certain extent and with perverse consequences, for the lack of self-esteem, the social invisibility (brought about by stigmata or indifference), the lack of strong links of identification with the community, the school or the family, the lack of any gratification provided by leisure or sports, and the dim prospects of full participation in the market, in a society that seems to value only status as asserted through conspicuous consumption.

Poor young people recruited by local units of the gun and drug trade, working as retail dealers: this is the core of one of the major Brazilian national tragedies, the core of the autophagic and genocidal process. The crimes brought about by this trade are not simply the murders resulting from rivalries between different groups involved in the illegal retail trade. Armed robbery, robbery resulting in death, kidnapping of all kinds, robbery in homes, banks and buses, the stealing of cars and of cargo — all of these practices are encouraged and often made possible by the availability of guns, bought and sold by and for drug dealers. The drug trade co-opts an entire reserve army for the industry of crime, and brings about an intensified level of criminal activity so as to use up the idle capacity of the weaponry. In this illegal market, just as in the formal economy, the perverse productivity of crime tends to grow until it reaches full use of the installed

productive capacity — that is, the existing arms — and of the available workforce — mostly young people recruited into the retail branch of the drug trade.

The rationality of the criminal market, when it is structured on the basis of the traffic in guns, induces the growth of the intensity and the variety of criminal activities, and this means not only that the number of crimes grows but also that crimes tend to grow more violent, because more guns are in use. Of course, this logic operates only under a specific set of determining circumstances. It depends on the rate of impunity, or the risk rates under which the traffic in guns and drugs takes place and the various forms of crime are perpetrated, just as it is a function of the existing repertoire of legal and illegal alternatives — that is, the relative advantages and drawbacks of the various strategies of survival, personal assertion, economic accumulation, exercise of power and access to consumer goods. The promiscuous relations between the police forces and criminal organizations make up another variable that plays a decisive role. It should be observed that the large numbers of guns in circulation do more than just induce crime; it is also one reason why minor conflicts end up tragically: barroom quarrels, fueled by drink, may be settled by lethal crimes simply because a gun is available.

For the entrepreneurs of the crime market, it is then desirable that there should be increasingly large numbers of young people who have no hopes of attaining full citizenship, because these young people are for them a disposable workforce, willing to perform illegal acts; the more numerous these youths are, the cheaper their price, and as the cost of criminal acts decreases, prospective profits increase.

The most obvious and dramatic settings of crime are the urban spaces that have been abandoned by the authorities, where the retail market of illegal traffic takes place, as well as the conflicts between rival groups. But it is not in these spaces that the script of this drama is written; the real protagonists of crime, the ultimate culprits, are to be found elsewhere. The wholesale dealers in guns and drugs live in fashionable neighborhoods, speak foreign languages, have access to privileged information, and rely on sophisticated means of communication, management and money laundering. They are white-collar criminals, who are not

victims of poverty but rather feed on it, like vultures. Gunshots and blood spilling attract all the attention of the public and mobilize the police, but the early chapters of the story, where the decisive moves take place, are invisible and are rarely observed by the police. In this sphere, the promiscuous relations between criminal organizations and police institutions have even graver consequences than local agreements between policepersons and retail traffickers, which are extremely dangerous and degrading by themselves.

The situation seems bad enough as I have described it so far: young people dying in a criminal dynamics that recruits them, submits them to constant warfare and uses them in a wide variety of criminal activities, while the big bosses of the wholesale operations go unpunished. But the phenomenon is even more complex and more serious; it oversteps the boundaries of crime and reaches into the sphere of politics, with major social implications. What is happening today in Brazil, in many urban areas marked by poverty and neglected by public authorities, is an outrage against democracy, a testimony to the incompleteness of the democratic transition that gave us the 1988 Constitution. Some local communities are submitted to a double tyranny, exercised by armed traffickers and corrupt policemen (who amount to a minority, but a significant one, of the police forces). These shadowy rulers alienate communities from the sphere of the rule of law. Under such a double despotism, the elementary freedoms are suppressed — the right to come and go, freedom of expression, participation and organization. Today there are entire communities, in some large Brazilian cities, living under a regime of terror and helplessness, imposed by the arrogant codes of traffickers and corrupt policemen (often working in tandem), while society as a whole seems to tolerate the existence of such horrors and even begins to take it for granted. The banalization of violence is the preamble to barbarity.

On the basis of an interpretation of this state of affairs, it seems clear that, in addition to public policies aiming to intercept the dynamics that are the immediate causes of the problems, in addition to policies for integrating poor young people, and even in addition to medium- and long-run structural reforms, there is an urgent need to reform our police forces. Let us examine the present situation of the

Brazilian police and see what could be done right now, under the existing laws — that is, without constitutional amendment. However, before I do this and state my position, endorsing the National Public Security Plan put forth by the Instituto Cidadania, of which I was one of the coordinators and whose proposals are incorporated in the present text, I would like to present the constitutional amendments that we believe are desirable: (1) to add a clause requiring all police forces to be responsible for the full sequence of police work: prevention, enforcement, investigation and repression; (2) to remove the clause that specifies the number of state police forces, so that each state could decide whether it would be more convenient to unify the civilian and military police forces, to preserve this dual structure (both forces observing the new full-sequence constitutional amendment) or to multiply the number of police forces, creating regional or even municipal institutions. Brazil is such a diversified and complex country, with different situations in each region, that any uniform solution will necessarily amount to an irrational straitjacket.

I - REQUIREMENTS FOR A PUBLIC-SECURITY POLICY, AS REGARDS THE POLICE FORCES

Why is it so difficult to formulate a public-security policy as regards the police forces for any Brazilian state? First, so that the answer can even be understood, we must separate the wheat from the chaff: more often than not, what goes under the name of "security policy" is no more than a set of police interventions, of a reactive and fragmentary nature, triggered by the tragedies of everyday city life, according to the priorities dictated by public visibility and local pressures. Why is it so difficult to change the dramatic situation of public security in Brazil? First of all, because there is no real policy — that is, there is no planning without a diagnosis, and there can be no diagnosis without qualified and consistent information. There is no information in the field of public security, and for this reason it is impossible to describe criminal dynamics with any precision; this, in turn, makes it impossible to devise a global policy that will allow efficient preventive

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action. What is even more serious is that without a policy — that is, without planning — there can be no clear goals, and so no kind of rigorous evaluation is possible. How is one to know just where and when things went wrong if there is no careful follow-up of the methods adopted and of the interventions planned? On the other hand, no such a critical follow-up can even be attempted if there is no planning. There can be no public policy worthy of the name in such conditions. It is imperative to create mechanisms that transform mistakes into instruments for the self-correction and monitoring of the process. Only in this way can the present chaos of public security be replaced by an integrated, intelligent system, endowed with its own memory and history, and able to learn from its own mistakes and correct itself constantly.

On the subject of lack of information, we have some impressive data. According to the 1998 National Household Survey by Sampling (PNAD) effected by the Brazilian Institute for Geography and Statistics (IBGE), in Brazil as a whole, in average, about 80 percent of crimes against property — not including stolen vehicles, for obvious reasons — are never reported to the police, and in this way are never computed. Two reasons are given for this: (1) the belief that the police is unable to recover lost property and arrest the culprits; and (2) fear of going to a police station. So the data on robbery and theft available in the Civilian Police refers to no more than a small percentage of the relevant facts. International experience shows that an increase in the efficiency of police services makes the public trust the police more and reduces underreporting, which in turn increases knowledge about the dynamics of crime, thus generating a virtuous circle in which improved knowledge results in better investigations and more popular trust. The paradox in this is that when police services improve there is a rise in the number of reported crimes, which may be misread as a symptom of an increase in crime. Another example of a rise in the number of reported incidents which does not imply the growth of criminal activity, but rather an improvement in public security, occurs when policies are implemented with the purpose of protecting specific social groups, such as women, ethnic or sexual minorities.

But it is not only crimes against property that are underreported, making it difficult to collect the primary data that are indispensable to preventive and investigative police action: violent and lethal crimes against persons are also underreported. Here is an impressive example, impressive because of the seriousness of the situation and also because it refers to a major Brazilian city. A study[2] of murders in Rio de Janeiro City in 1992, concluded in 1994, shows that only 7.8 percent of these crimes were actually taken up by prosecutors and duly processed by the judicial system in an average period of two years. Of these, 64 percent were crimes of passion, precisely those that are easier to investigate, because they do not involve criminal careers or criminal organizations. Such crimes are estimated to account for no more than 16 percent of all murders committed in the city in 1992. This vicious circle points to an obvious — and sorry — conclusion: we need more investigations, more public trust, more information. Any political action attempting to change this situation of impunity, efficiency and discredit must attack all three aspects of the problem: public trust (which depends on results and visible efforts to reform the institution), data collection and processing (which requires technology and the modernization of the police apparatus), and more effective investigations (which requires new administrative methods).

Here a question seems relevant: What about the police officers? Don't they know the world of crime, of criminal practices? If they do, how can one say that information is lacking? Indeed, police officers know much, particularly the more experienced ones, both the investigators of the Civilian Police and the enforcers of the Military Police. But what they do know remains locked in the individual consciousness and memory of each officer. This huge repository of knowledge remains dispersed and inaccessible to public-security authorities on all levels, except for very special situations in which fortuitous circumstances have the effect of making all the separate pieces of the same jigsaw puzzle come together into a

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[2] SOARES, L. E. et al . "Mapeamento da criminalidade letal." In SOARES, L. E. et al. *Violência e Política no Rio de Janeiro*. Rio de Janeiro: Iser and Relume Dumará, 1996, pp. 217-242.

single intelligible picture. Real information is information that is readily available whenever necessary.

In other words, without an organized system of automated information we are bound to fail in our struggle against crime and in our attempts to end the situation of impunity that has characterized our country for too long. No condition contributes more to a crime-favoring environment than impunity. But if the information system is to operate efficiently, so that police officers and other security agents can anticipate and prevent crime, it must be articulated with a process of diagnosis, planning and monitoring, which in turn requires the adoption of a modern and rational system of administering police institutions.

Only if all these different ingredients are combined will it be possible to combat this chaotic situation and begin to build a really efficient public-security system that can serve as a basis and an operational instrument for a consistent policy: qualified professionals; adequate equipment; modern technology; an organizational structure that fits the nature of its functions; a rational administrative system that includes planning, monitoring and performance evaluation.

But even if all of these conditions were to be met, they would not be enough without community participation and fund-raising ability. Even the most elementary information on criminal behavior relies on the reporting of crimes, and this can occur only when the population feels that resorting to the police is worth the trouble; this, in turn, will not happen until public trust is restored, until the legitimate authority of the police is reaffirmed.

II - Problems Faced by Police Forces

In Brazil today, reducing the rates of crime and violence is in the interest of all social segments committed to the democratic rule of law. This is true for two simple reasons: everyone has felt the effects of crime and violence, and everyone is beginning to realize that there can be no security for part of the population unless there is security for all. That is why the issue of security cuts across all ideological or party loyalties, because it affects everyone; what is in question is the

larger dilemma: civilization or barbarity. But there cannot be security for all unless the state and society are actively engaged in reducing the causes of violence and crime, and state action makes the police forces more efficient. In a democracy, an efficient police force is one that acts in the service of citizenship, strictly following legal procedures and enforcing the law. The law, in turn, in a democracy, must aim at the preservation of the rights of all, just like the police force that enforces it. If, in a democratic context, the law ensures individual freedom, the only limit to which is the universal character of this benefit — that is, the right that every other person has to enjoy this very same freedom — then law enforcement, which is the task of the police, should be no more than the defense of freedom every time it is threatened by the illicit use of individual freedom, with the consequence of reducing and disrespecting the freedom of others. This is why police repression, as long as it is adequately employed, resorting to force only to the extent that it is legal and thus compatible with human rights, cannot be seen from a purely negative perspective, as a degrading thing that by rights should not exist in society, and that we'd rather not have anything to do with. The repression of tyrannical attitudes, of despotic actions, of genocidal initiatives, of racist, misogynous or homophobic aggressions, of attacks against children and helpless victims — the repression of crime — is the defense of life and civil rights.

II.1 - Synthesis of Diagnosis

These are some of the most evident deficiencies common to the two police forces, civilian and military:
- precarious collection, recording, production, distribution and processing of information, leading to inconsistent and unreliable data for diagnosis, prospective analyses and definition of strategic guidelines;
- lack of planning, systematic evaluation and corrective practices;
- low-quality services, products and public relations; precarious recruiting and training;

- shoddy preparatory work for police investigation; nonobservance of technical police procedures by personnel not directly involved with specialized branches of the police;

- practically no internal-affairs control, due to bureaucratic inertia, normative restrictions, administrative inoperativeness and, in some cases, policepersons' tendency to protect their own;

- insufficient external oversight, due to obstacles to investigative intervention of ombudspersons and to the assertion of internal direction;

- the conflictive dissociation from the other police institution and other agents of the criminal justice system (including the Secretariat of Security), given the isolating autonomy of units (particularly police stations);

- irrational delimitation of jurisdictional territories (which are also dissociated from circumscriptions of the other police institution);

- unpreparedness to deal with such specific issues as violence against women, children, sexual minorities or blacks, which leads to incompetence in the operation of Special Police Stations for Women, for instance;

- unpreparedness to enforce the Children and Adolescents' Bill of Rights;

- emphasis on repression rather than on prevention, in all public-security institutions;

- the generalized practice of moonlighting by policepersons as a consequence of low pay.

The Civilian Police in most Brazilian states presents the following specific characteristics:

- isolation of operational units, segmentation of administrative agencies, fragmentation of units responsible for complementary functions: district stations are like feudal domains, each dominated by its own "baron";

- absence of universal standards of investigation, common organizational methods, work schedules and rational scales;

- absence of mechanisms of information and supervision connecting the different stations to the central command and submitting them to the authority of the proper officials;

- presence of lockups in many police stations, though such jails are illegal and lead to irregular operations and shady practices;

- technical police and investigation departments lacking modern equipment, specialized training and qualification, and having no links with the scientific community and its institutions;

- irrational bureaucratic practices at both the operational and the administrative ends, with too many policepersons doing useless or counterproductive clerical or pseudoadministrative tasks;

- privatization and pulverization of information;

- bureaucratization of investigations as a paradoxical way to collect evidence and solve crimes;

- inobservance of disciplinary regulations in actual practice;

- inadequate use of lethal force.

As to the Military Police, in most states it faces the following problems:
- outdated disciplinary regulations that are more concerned with policepersons' behavior inside premises than out in the streets;

- excessive number of hierarchical ranks, which creates difficulties in the relations between operational officers and police command;

- existence of ombudsmanships and military courts on the state level which act as privileged forums for policepersons;

- too many police officers in bureaucratic and administrative positions, although in a smaller proportion and in a less irrational context than is the case in the Civilian Police;

- a suicide rate much higher than in society at large.

The consequences of this situation are well-known: *impossibility of implementing rational public-security policies*; *low efficiency* (very low rates of

crimes solved); *public discredit* (which leads to the underreporting of crimes, which in turn lowers the efficiency of investigations); *violent practices* (which makes the population fear the police); *chronic corruption* (which increases popular mistrust and contributes to generalized inefficiency); *close complicity with crime*.

In order to change this situation within the constraints of existing laws, a number of simultaneous steps must be taken on various levels. Each of these steps is dictated by one particular problem. This is not the place to present a detailed description of the proposals I have formulated or endorsed; they are all summarized in the document titled "Public Security Plan," drawn up by the Instituto Cidadania. Here I can only sketch out the general framework of the plan, and emphasize that ideally the changes should begin with constitutional amendment, as I have argued before. Prior to any other considerations, a radical administrative reform must be undertaken; without it, no measure can be implemented, for the minimal prerequisites are lacking. Like any large modern organization, police forces must be structured in accordance with rational parameters, based on the availability of quality data, adequate analytical treatment of these data through consistent diagnoses, planning, systematic evaluation and monitoring. In addition to promoting administrative reform, it is imperative to reassert legality as the principle of police action — the law must be respected even as it is enforced; this implies accepting that police efficiency and respect for human rights are not mutually contradictory, but rather mutually reinforcing. Finally, it must be acknowledged that in Brazil today modernization of the police forces must be accompanied by a process of moralization, and that both must rely on transparency, external control and the participation of society at large. These are the most important requirements for a transformation of our public-security institutions.

To sum up, then, this is what must be done if we are to have any chance of succeeding in our attempt to reduce criminal violence in Brazil: (1) the social construction of peace must be seen as a matter of state rather than a matter of government, which requires an ample political coalition, a new social contract, and the mobilization of society as a whole, cutting across party lines and rising above

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clashes of interests or ideological differences; (2) the state must be reformed so that government action can be coordinated and rationally oriented toward topical intervention for the purpose of blocking those dynamics that generate violent crime; (3) it is necessary to implement public policies that consider the subjective dimension — that is, policies oriented by the need to promote the individual worth of young people, which requires fine-tuning so as to take into account the languages and the social imaginary of Brazilian youth; (4) the police forces must be reformed via constitutional amendment and the implementation of changes that are compatible with existing laws; (5) of these immediate changes, the most urgent ones are administrative reform and rationalization of the system, to make it possible to implement policies that encourage police efficiency — by reducing impunity — and that are compatible with the democratic values of respect for human and civil rights.