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LAW, HISTORY AND POLITICS

Thematic Issue on  
Violence and Public Security

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João Pessoa – State of Paraíba (Brasil)

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## **EDITORIAL**

### **Violence and Public Security**

Dear Readers,

This present issue focuses on questions and problems surrounding the complex topic of *Violence and Public Security*. It consists of not less than thirteen contributions made by national and international specialists in this particular field of research. For the first time in the history of our journal, authors from France, Italy, Mexico and Switzerland expose their ideas and perceptions side by side with Brazilian scholars.

Plentiful are the reasons for such a high level of internationality. One is, for sure, the universal relevance of the topic of the present issue: violence poses challenges to the public security of almost every state in the world. However, there many differences in terms of the quality of the phenomenon experienced by each society, its historic origins, their cultural and socio-economic aspects, as well as their academic analysis. This is even true with regard to the Brazil being the world's 5<sup>th</sup> largest State and struggling with severe internal inequalities between its regions. It is therefore worth mentioning that our Brazilian authors are professionals from Minas Gerais, Rio de Janeiro, Paraíba and Paraná, thus guaranteeing a fair amount of diversity within the national perspective.

The present issue starts with a set of case studies. The first of them is about **Armed Forces and Militarization of the Public Security in Brazil: the Case of the Morro da Providência**, in which Armando Albuquerque concludes that the Brazilian legal order contributes to the preservation of the military model of enforcing public security that was adopted during the dictatorship. From quite another perspective analyses Alfonso Valenzuela-Aguilera, professor of Urban

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Planning at the State University of Morelos, México, **Surveillance, Territory and the Rule of Law in Mexico City**. He argues “that the lack of respect for legal order by the authorities has produced citizen disrespect for civic codes” in Mexico’s capital. Medellín, Colombia, has been an early example of a metropolis seemingly lost in a scenario of urban violence caused by drug fractions and other armed groups. Tiphaine Duriez helps us to understand an important aspect of the cities’ current situation by focusing on **Law and Order, Private Militias and Military Bases in Urban Zones: the Case of Medellín in Colombia**. The fact that not all groups that call themselves “militias” actually qualify as such groups in the meaning of the academic concept, is then illuminated by Sven Peterke, law professor at the Universidade Federal da Paraíba. In his article on **Legality and Legitimacy of the Brazilian “Militias”**, he makes the point that it is probably more appropriate to classify those armed groups which use the militia label as a specific form of organized crime.

Carlos Aguiar Serra, Director of the Graduate Program on Political Science at the UFF, in Niterói, Rio de Janeiro, then deals with **Violence and the Punitive State in Contemporary Brazil: Chronicles of Announced Deaths**, discussing the power of State punishment in Brazil and its origins in authoritarian practices and institutions. He puts in debate theories of states of exception outlined by Agamben and Foucault. Equally inspired by Foucault is Emilio Santoro’s article on **The regulation of immigration as a social question: from inclusive citizenship to neo-slavery**. Focusing on the relations between state and power in Italy, our colleague from the Università Degli Studi di Firenze, Italy, explains “the context of Italian immigration policies that (...) create a mechanism based on their longer or shorter irregular presence and that in any event make their status utterly uncertain, forcing them to live haunted by the possibility of coming back to irregularity”.

Studies on homicides have always given important insights into the problem of violence and the maintenance of public security. It is therefore with great pleasure that Prim@ Facie is presenting two of such analysis. On the one hand, José Maria Nóbrega Júnior, professor at the Universidade Federal de Campina

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Grande, holds in his article on **The Public Security as Control of the Deadly Violence** that “almost all modern political philosophers, in particular, Hobbes and Locke, stress security as one, if not the principle justification for the conclusion of the social contract which forms the State’s political and social fundament”. On the other hand, Sandra Cristiana Kleinschmitt, Yonissa Marmitt Wadi and Jefferson Andrônio Ramundo Staduto, all authors from Paraná, contribute to this section by examining **Violent Crime and Structural Indicators: Evaluations Made by Homicide Studies**.

Moreover, from Bari’s Università degli Studi di Bari Aldo Moro, our Italian colleague Maria Antonella Pasculli sent us a special study relative to **Organized Crime in Italy: the Puglia Mafia**. It traces “the different criminal dynamics present in this territory” and discusses “the multiple typologies and structures of organized mafia-type associations”. And from Lausanne, Switzerland, Julien Niklaus, comes an article on **Dangerous Public Spaces, Public Spaces in Danger: a Contribution to Community Policing**.

Two contributions of Brazilian authors close the present thematic issue: The first one, from Paulo Roberto Ceccareli, eminent professor at the Pontifícia Universidade Católica de Minas Gerais, is about **Contributions of Fundamental Psychopathology to Criminology**. It examines the intersections of these two disciplines. In his opinion, “talking about criminality and violence has become an extreme banality of our everyday life”. In the second contribution, entitled **Public Security and Human Rights: What Can Education Achieve in Prison?**, Mazukyevicz Ramon Silva and Rômulo Rhemo Palitot Braga, professor of law at the Universidade Federal da Paraíba, stress the meaning of such initiatives as humanizing factor in the penitentiary system, arguing that education is an underestimated key element in the process of rehabilitation.

Last but not least, an article outside of the issue’s general topic is offered by Thiago Arruda Queiroz Lima. He deals with **Freedom as Non-coercion and the Problem of Private Property - Politics and Economy in Capitalism**.

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At November 29, when we were finishing this issue, we have known that Guillermo O'Donnell has died. We dedicate this number to him *in memoriam*.

We hope that you will enjoy reading Prim@ Facie.

João Pessoa, Paraíba State, December 05, 2011.

**Ernesto Pimentel Filho**

**Armando Albuquerque**

Organizers for the present issue and heads of the network on “Institutions of Democracy, Rule of Law and Citizenship in Brazil and Latin America”, CNPq/UFPB

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