Panel 42 Conference Proceedings: Urban securitisation and the need for humanising alternatives

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Convenors: Dr Valeria Guarneros-Meza, Dr Anna Barker and Dr Melanie Lombard

The panel aimed to explore humanising alternatives or approaches to urban securitisation, in support of the articulation of urban security approaches which allow citizens to exercise their rights and participate in the construction of more liveable cities. Some authors have thought on methodological frameworks to deliver this approach, such as Pearce and Abello-Colak (2009:12), through their concept of 'humanising security from below' which aims to make 'security people centred [and] publicly delivered…in ways that promote non-violent forms of human interaction'.

Ideas on 'conviviality' are also another way of thinking about humanising approaches. Conviviality may be understood as the 'autonomous and creative intercourse among persons, and the intercourse of persons with their environment' (Illich 1973, 11). Both humanizing security from below and conviviality tap into American and European understandings of social cohesion where attempts to bring people from different backgrounds to get on well together has been a priority in social and urban policy. But the challenges raised by social exclusion and poverty have hampered the opportunities that proponents of social cohesion envisage (cf. Casey, 2016). For Berman (2017 [1986]:81), it is the fear of the poor (regardless of their ethnicity or religion) which 'pushes the urban middle class to flee from spaces' of conviviality, or in his words, 'open-minded public spaces'. These spaces provide the 'capacity to interact with people radically different from ourselves, learn from them, to assimilate what they have to give, maybe even to change our lives, to grow, without ceasing to be our selves' (84).

All these terms, conviviality or humanizing security, suggest the need to shape spaces of encounter, including public space such as streets or parks; as well as spaces of education, employment, housing and social care, which contribute to the development of people's daily lives. However, these spaces are not conflict free as challenges such as war, climate change, immigration and poverty/inequality hamper or threat the delivery of humanising practices.[1]

The panel had eight distinct and interesting papers, most of them focusing on the global south, except one on Australia. It is debatable in which box to locate the latter, but it has commonly been associated with the global north given the country's socio-economic, administrative and historical context. The humanising approaches posed by the speakers vary in world regions (from Australia, to India, Kenya and several

countries in Latin America) and modalities or mechanisms studied (from policy-making, to neighbourhood safety and homelessness); but they all emphasise the importance of meanings, processes and/or practice of everyday living and the impact they have in producing security. Following Loader's (2000) argument, all presentations also recognised the multiplicity of actors, beyond the state, in the production of security.

These reflective notes do not aim to summarise the arguments of each of the speakers; instead some analysis is presented based on their arguments to give initial answers to three guiding questions posed by the convenors: what are the features of humanising security? Its aims? And how does it relate to different contexts?

Table 1: List of speakers and their presentations

Speaker	Presentation title
Ms. Caroline Delgado	Threat formation, identity and context in post-conflict Colombia
Dr. Susan Hoppert-Flämig	Contesting Non-coercive Security Provision: The Impact of Salvadoran Elites on Police Reforms
Dr Jaideep Gupte (1)	'These streets are ours': Mumbai's urban form and security in the vernacular
Ms Carolina Frossard	Assembling for Security in Recife, Northeastern Brazil: Different and Differentiated Experiences of Citizenship
Ms María de la Paz Rozados	Unevenly unsafe: Resources and strategies for self-protection towards crime and social inequality in a working-class neighborhood in Buenos Aires City
Dr Andrew Clarke and Dr Cameron Parsell	Can urban surveillance support social justice objectives? A case study of the coupling of public place surveillance with homelessness outreach services
Dr Peris Jones	Security beyond the men: women and everyday security provision in Mathare, Nairobi
Prof. Jenny Pearce and Dr Alexandra Abello-Colak	Humanising Security in Contexts of Chronic Violence: Learning from Latin America
Note: (1) Jaideep could not attend the conference	

What are the features of humanising security?

Delgado in her study of two towns in Colombia, Cucutá and Barrancabermeja, argues on the importance of distinguishing different understandings of actors encountering violence in order to make a first step to humanising security. Her argument is based on her research findings which underline that victims of

paramilitary violence and 'state absence' provide an environment that accentuates the levels of insecurity of their residents. This level of insecurity and violence is exacerbated ironically by the state programme Victim and Land Restitution Law (VLRL) which in principle should provide reparation, compensation and protection to victims affected by the protracted violence that the country has lived for nearly 60 years. However, the state's administrative deficiencies (i.e. no psychological support, break-down of anonymity) and its lack of understanding of the environment in which the victims live (i.e. close family interrelationships between paramilitaries and community members, unforeseen effects of the state's militarised protection) have been counterproductive to residents.

Given the scenario that Delgado presents, one way of identifying features of humanising security could be the need for state bureaucrats to be more conscientious of the consequences that the VLRL and its associated programme are having on the daily lives of residents. However, the argument that the state's mistakes and lack of capacities work like justifications to avoid its responsibilities hampers the potential opportunities that may exist to achieve humanising security.

Hoppert-Flämig's research problem centres on the challenges that the successful citizen security programme in the Salvadoran city of Santa Tecla encountered when government attempted to up-scale it at a national level. The implementation of the local policy achieved positive outcomes because it minimised the state's militarised practices of security and promoted instead the recuperation of public space, generation and monitoring of crime data through the consultation and participation of citizens. However, national party politics and rivalries, which include practices of nepotism and co-optation jeopardised the successful implementation of the policy on a national scale. The latter was also accompanied by the temporary character of policy decision that in principle should have followed a long-term strategy. Hoppert-Flämig's argument is significant to answering the question on features of humanising security as it underlines the importance of corruption, clientelism and unprofessionalism of government officers and politicians as factors that halt any attempts to roll-out more human approaches to security, such as citizen security programmes.

Gupte, in his research on the 1992-1993 Mumbai riots, argues that the physical nature of urban spaces (i.e. narrow neighbourhood streets) contributes to the experience of violence as well as the supply and demand for security provided by Muslim vigilante groups. His research is not suggestive of humanising security features; however, it raises two questions on this regard: to what extent vernacular modalities of security (provided by vigilate groups) challenge or hamper opportunities of conviviality or open-minded public spaces? Although religious-ethnic identities legitimize the security provided by the vigilante groups to the Muslim community living in inner-city neighbourhoods, in the longer term is worth asking: what have been the consequences for achieving broader conviviality, in spatial but also relational ways between Muslims and non-Muslims in the city? These questions highlight potential challenges to the spatiality of humanizing security as it may be more likely that its implementation is achieved partially (in a particular neighbourhood) as opposed to city-widely.

Frossard's research focuses on the links among citizenship, (in)security and income inequality across different neighbourhoods in Recife. Her findings are based on three types of activities in which citizens interact with the police. Their participation in public safety measures (i.e. neighbourhood association meetings, using What'sApp to report crime to police and fellow residents, and interior alterations in building flats through raising gates and walls) is viewed by some residents as a way of developing (good) citizenship. Frossard's research is interesting because, on the one hand, it shows that these practices promote solidarity among residents to reduce levels of crime in their neighbourhoods; but on the other hand, these practices are not helping in developing conviviality in a spatial sense as the opportunities for interaction, intercourse and learning with the 'other' and the broader environment of the neighbourhood or city are hindered by the fragmentation of space (through gates and walls).

Rozados' research focuses on the reaction of a working-class neighbourhood in Buenos Aires towards (in)security and violence. She situates her research within the retrenchment of state provision of public safety that resulted from neoliberal policies in the country, which have promoted self-protection through increased individual responsibility. Her findings are centred on the strategies of coping with insecurity by residents in the neighbourhood, such as the dressing code that helps people to walk unnoticed (camouflage) and walking styles (using the body "in a certain way", in "certain areas", and with "certain people") in order to avoid being mugged or attacked. She argues that these tactics restore levels of solidarity lost in the dismantling of social ties which characterise industrial, neoliberal societies. Following Rozados' argument, humanising security may imply the consolidation in public policy of the social ties that coping tactics of insecurity prompt people to carry out. The challenge is for policy makers to find ways to incorporate in their policy design the positive aspects that this 'pardoxical' solidarity creates.

Clarke and Parsell's paper focuses on the articulation of caring and coercive practices in the governance of homelessness in the city of Cairns. This articulation is carried out through surveillance and other securitisation practices. The authors argue how the city council uses both tactics simultaneously to develop social order in the city. Surveillance is used to push homeless people away from public spaces, but also to identify them and provide the health and housing needs they require. In following their argument, humanising security features in the decisions that local government officers have to design and implement in order to find a balance between the supportive and coercive tactics used towards homeless people. In achieving this balance, municipal government may be creating room for conviviality. However, threats towards open-minded spaces prevail if the municipal governments' strategies do not allow learning and assimilation of what homeless have to say with regard to broader issues such as unemployment or social housing shortages.

Focusing on Mathare district, Nairobi, Jones argues for the relevant role of women in the provision of daily security which are commonly ignored by academics and policymakers. Practices such as information sharing in informal women gatherings and the promotion by women of dialogue and good behaviour to young people contribute to promoting non-violent security. However, challenges that ordinary

residents and social workers encounter hinder any opportunities to minimise violence. For example, the social workers' own vulnerability when being a woman and defending women's rights. But above all, Jones argues, it is land regulatory failures which represent the most structural issues underpinning insecurity in Mathare. Jones' argument is a good example to highlight how humanising security in many cities goes beyond security itself, and hence needs to incorporate other policy areas, such as land ownership and quality of housing, to understand the levels of insecurity that certain group populations encounter.

Finally, the paper by Pearce and Abello-Colak builds upon their seminal work (2009), and it aimed to explain the methodology of 'human security from below' (HSfB) and the limitations of its implementation. It was interesting to notice that many of the features of HSfB (2009) were touched by the previous speakers in the panel. For instance, one of the characteristics of HSfB is to increase people's awareness and capacities to think about their security in order to articulate demands for better security provision by the state, whilst following participatory democratic principles. To some extent the argument by Jones on the importance of including women's views into policy recognises this point. The need to understand the daily experiences of victims of violence as well as that of frontline bureaucrats who share the interface with residents is another characteristic of HSfB and which Jones, Delgado, Rozados and Clark and Parsell addressed. Finally, the importance of increasing accountability of the state to ordinary residents in the provision of security, another characteristic of HSfB, is approached from an inter-governmental perspective of 'ad hoc' public policy by Hoppert-Flämig.

In particular, the papers by Gupte, Frossard and Hoppert-Flämig underline the importance of spatiality, which is a point that the HSfB does not recognise. Given the definition of conviviality by Illich (1964), it is important to consider this dimension into our understanding of humanising security in order to think on the extent that humanising security is to respond to issues of spatiality and scale.

What are the aims of humanising security?

In practice, humanising security can have various aims; this will depend on the problems, resources and capacities that specific governments or other actors have in designing and implementing the provision of security. However, our purpose is more to prompt discussion on ideas that could help to minimise levels of violence, and consequently increase conviviality or open-minded public spaces than on the normative parameters that drive practice.

An initial list of aims which humanising security can refer to is provided in the following paragraphs. Seven aims were addressed by the papers in the panel:

To tackle poverty: Pearce and Abello-Colak's security from below provides a practical social process which taps into poverty related issues. Their approach stems from development studies debates, in particular, on the 'capabilities to act' set, which 'captures how while fear and violence blight lives, so do a range of deficits in housing, jobs', and other basic services (Sen, 1999). The emphasis on capabilities

has been particularly relevant to study violence and crime in Latin American as it has been argued how different types of violence are interlinked in people's daily living, especially, through the deficiencies experienced by the poor (Moser and McIlwaine, 2004).

The downside in emphasising poverty, which aims to protect people from different multi-dimensional risks is, according to some political theorists (Loader and Walker, 2000), its over-stretch of the security concept given its tendency to '[colonise]…social policies – such as housing, health, education and employment/workfare (so evident in the realms of tackling anti-social behaviour)' (Crawford, 2014). The over-stretching of the concept, consequently, moves its understanding from human well-being to increasingly broader concerns such as environmental and food scarcity issues. The latter criticism in turn rises questions whether to draw or not conceptual or theoretical limits to complex realities that cannot be tackled by a single perspective or discipline.

To include marginalised groups: Among the different features of HSfB, Pearce and Abello-Colak argue in favour of increasing the accountability of the state not to inform elites, foreign investors or the international community (multi-lateral organisations), but to inform ordinary residents. They argue that ordinary residents, in particular, the poor tend to be excluded from exercises that define collective values and norms that inform state provision of security. Another approach to inclusion is Jones' argument on the importance of security policies recognising the visible/invisible work of women in the creation of daily life security.

To promote citizenship: Frossard's examples of citizen involvement in security underlines participation, which can be interpreted as a way of promoting citizenship. However, her examples warn us that participation is not necessarily pointing towards convivial citizenship, but instead seems to promote social and spatial fragmentation through citizen participation. These examples, alongside Pearce's (2017) concept of 'authoritarian citizen', raise warnings on the problems of inheriting state-led interpretations of unequal citizenship and security provision (see Holston, 2008 for the Brazilian case). These inherited, top-down practices may mirror legacies of violence, authoritarianism and income inequality, and as a result perpetuate their existence through people's daily living (Arias, 2006).

To rescue democratic principles: Pearce and Abello-Colak's (2009) call to increase people's capacity to think about their security and articulate their demands to improve security provision, touches on democratic principles regarding citizen participation, deliberation and accountability. This call overlaps with the more theoretical analysis by Loader and Walker (2000); in particular, with their argument on 'civilising security', which underlines the importance of deliberation, regulation, checks and balances of the state and the recognition of pluralism of security. The argument by Hoppert-Flaming fits quite nicely under this category.

As a right to the city: The paper by Gupte brings to the fore debates related to the right to the city as a spatial aim of humanising security. The work by Henri Lefebvre (1996) has been primordial in these debates. Academics, with interest in the global south and building on Lefebvre's work, have mainly centred on issues of rights that

marginalised residents are entitled to with regard to provision of material, basic services (i.e. water, housing).[2] The vehicle for achieving these services has been through social mobilisations or organic/grassroots forms of self-provision, including public safety.

The problem arises when in contexts of state neglect or absence, the provision is provided by non-state armed actors. As Barker (2016) contends, the downside of this interpretation of the right to the city may be its tendency to overlook the 'minimum harm rules' that are necessary to guarantee universal levels of safety. Therefore, the danger lies on the potential justification of certain levels of violence that threat or harm the body of the 'other' in the name of 'the right to the city'.

Under this aim, the spatial and scalar impact of the right to the city would need to be more clearly specified. For example: would the right to the city imply the right to certain neighbourhoods of the city (Muslims' rights to have Muslim neighbourhoods in Mumbai) or their right to all different areas or neighbourhoods throughout the whole city?

To de-militarise security policy: Both the papers by Delgado and Pearce and Abello-Colak (2009) suggest that state's security policies should be guided by alternatives that increase positive daily experiences of victims. In specific contexts where complex violence is experienced, this may imply the de-militarisation of security or de-securitisation of public safety. Another approach to de-militarisation of security policy, is that provided by Clarke and Parsell. In their analysis on how surveillance technology can be used for supporting homelessness, they show how specific tools can be used for different rationalities or logics of governmentality. But their case also underlines that these logics can co-exist; hence implying that the threat of militarised care (which includes surveillance tactics) may never be eradicated.

To improve policy-making procedures: Delgado's paper provides a series of examples of bureaucratic inefficiencies that have resulted from an excessive militarisation tactics that have been counterproductive to victims of violence encountering paramilitaries and organised crime. Jones's example of the social worker facing violence, while protecting women's rights in Mathare, is another case in point. Several studies have underlined the role of frontline bureaucrats as agents perpetuating violence in service provision (especially police), but less attention has been paid on what frontline bureaucrats can do to minimise violence when focusing on other services beyond policing that are related to experiences of violence that citizens face (i.e. social services, housing, urban planning - Guarneros-Meza, 2015; Pearce and Abello-Colak, 2009). From a different perspective, the paper by Hoppert-Fläming also points to the importance of the relationships between policy-makers and party politics as a factor that contributes to policy improvement during the design and implementation stages.

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[2] But revisions to Lefebvre's work have underlined that it is not only access to basic services the element behind the right to the city, but also the right to participate in the making of the city and shape urban life. (Verso, 2017).

How does humanising security relate to different contexts?

Pearce and Abello-Colak (2009) recognise the frictions that may exist between universalism and particularities in the management of conflict. The fact that most of the papers in the panel were analysed in contexts of the global south may provide some limitations in finding this balance. However, a wide variety of contexts were presented in the papers to give important insights on how humanising security relates to different historical, administrative and cultural contexts in both global north and south.

The first factor that some of the paper draw upon is corruption and the extent to which it is related to the provision of security in many localities of the world. Corruption tends to be associated with the administrative traditions of the global south, but it is clearly not absent in contexts of the global north (Runciman, 2011). Corruption is associated with cases of clientelism and nepotism in administrative forms of organisation, alongside lack of transparency and accountability to all citizen groups. In the papers, problems associated with corruption were mentioned in El Salvador, Nairobi and Mumbai.

A second factor, closely interwoven with corruption, is the state administrative capacity to govern. On the one hand, as Delgado points out, the capacity to reduce the levels of protracted violence faced by victims can be hampered if the Colombian state does not have the capacity to monitor local levels of violence that peace projects are supposed to achieve. On the other hand, Clarke and Parsell, assume Cairns City Council has enough capacity to monitor the homeless people's whereabouts to either support or criminalise them. Depending on the context, questions are left when capacity is inexistent or informal practices emerge which may end up in dodgy arrangements that are more effective that 'liberal' state-led systems.

A third factor is the importance that diversity (in ethnic, religious or gender terms) has for certain contexts and that cut across the global south-north divide. Important for Europe and North America have been ethnic minorities and people's religious beliefs (Muslims vs. Christians); a similar situation can be found in south Asian and African countries. Jones's paper is interesting as it shows gender can equally be of relevance in thinking security in contexts that tend to be male dominated and materialised through use of weapons, turf politics, and rape.

A fourth factor is the increased militarised policing that many countries, in both north and south, are experiencing. This is observed from an increased desire to have more police presence and surveillance, to more sophisticated mechanisms and technology (Graham, 2010) -which help to prevent insecurity levels produced by terrorism, urban disorder and crime, to the normalisation of vigilante groups -as a result of not only the state's absence or neglect, but also its complicity with violent groups. As Body Gendrot (2012) argues, the causes for promoting security (and its increased policing) are varied (i.e. terrorism, crime or disorder), but the reaction to the latter follow similar trends across the south and north.

A final factor is related to the discourse of neoliberalism as a global political project, in which it is observed that the state reconfigures its role from welfare to workfare, whilst increasing its penal apparatus (Wacquant, 2010) and indirectly promotes territorial stigmatisation (Wacquant et al., 2014) – the paper by Rozados and Frossard allude to this point in their acknowledgement of class. Wacquant's argument has been centred on American, British and French experiences, but increasingly other scholars have begun to test its validity across other countries and world regions through mechanisms of policy transfer promoted by multi-lateral organisations (Wacquant et al., 2014; Mueller, 2012; Vitale, 2017).

Note:

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Quote any of the authors' names and papers directly.

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