

**POLICIES AND PRACTICES TO CONTROL POLICE USE OF FORCE IN THE
'GLOBAL SOUTH'
Ignacio Cano¹**

The purpose of this paper is to present existing evidence related to policies and practices in the “Global South” attempting to regulate and control police use of force. General recommendations for such interventions will follow.

Police use of force can be understood as a broad continuum that ranges from the sheer police presence and verbal commands to the use of physical force to restrain or arrest someone. At the extreme end of this continuum we find lethal force, basically understood as the use of firearms within police organisations. Lethal force is that which is likely or intended to cause death or serious bodily harm.

Implied in the notion of regulation and control is the idea that these policies should attempt to minimise use of police force and resulting injuries and fatalities, considering that international guidelines require that use of force by law-enforcement agents be exceptional, and both necessary and proportional to its legitimate objectives². By policies, we mean programmes that were designed with this purpose in mind or that have resulted in an improved control of police use of force. By practices, we designate customs or initiatives that have had an impact of this issue, despite not having been designed as a planned intervention.

Without attempting to precisely define the concept of ‘*Global South*’, it is clear that it includes countries which, beyond sharing a low per capita income, encompass a wide variety of geographical, political and cultural realities. Hence, it is implausible that any experience or recommendation would apply to all of them in a similar manner.

Several disclaimers are in order prior to this exercise. First, it would be impossible to pretend that all relevant policies and practices have been reviewed and analysed here. Given the wide heterogeneity of countries and languages, and considering that studies in the ‘Global South’, when they exist, find it harder to make it into the international academic literature, the evidence presented here is but a limited sample of experiences. As a result of the personal experience of the author and also considering that it is probably the country where a more diverse set of practices to control use of force has been implemented, Brazil will be privileged in this endeavour. African countries will also be mentioned, and references will occasionally be added to other parts of the world.

The usual mindset when one thinks of policies to control police use of force is that there is an accepted consensus that includes police officers, decision makers and the general public in the sense that force, particularly lethal force, should be minimised.

¹ Laboratory for the Analysis of Violence. State University of Rio de Janeiro. (LAV-UERJ). Brazil.

² Code of Conduct for Law Enforcement Officials. Adopted by United Nations General Assembly resolution 34/169 of 17 December 1979. (United Nations General Assembly, 1980).

A comparison has been made that excessive use of force by law enforcement personnel could be approached, for instance, like the attempt to reduce fatalities in air travel (Sherman, 2018). Nevertheless, significant sectors of the population in many countries support, if not demand, that lethal force be used against criminals regardless of its legal justification. Although this is by no means exclusive of countries in the South, it is certainly not uncommon in them, and the most extreme cases are also found there. In Brazil, the Brazilian Forum for Public Security (*Fórum Brasileiro de Segurança Pública*, 2015) carried out surveys that found that 50% of inhabitants of Brazilian cities with over 100.000 inhabitants agreed with the statement “a good criminal is a dead criminal”. Surprisingly, Lemgruber, Cano and Musumeci (2017) found that support for this view in the city of Rio de Janeiro did not depend on the race of the respondent or on whether he or she lived in a slum, despite black favela residents being the main target of police lethal operations. Indeed, Rio de Janeiro is the rare example where policies have been implemented to *increase* police use of lethal force. Thus, officers involved in shootouts were promoted and received financial rewards in the 1990s, with the predictable impact of raising the lethality of police interventions (Cano, 1998).

Furthermore, Brazil and the Philippines now share the fact of having a president of the Republic that built his political career by advocating killing of alleged criminals. This obviously influences police performance in the use of force (see Kreuzer, 2019 for the Philippines). Indeed, it has been argued that in some countries police killings are used as a form of ‘social control’ (Chevigny, 1990) and therefore follow government orientations (see Neme, 2007 for the case of Sao Paulo, Brazil). Unfortunately, the powerful political and cultural factors that lie behind police abuse of force are not easily amenable to short-term interventions.

Unsurprisingly, this perception is also shared by many officers inside police forces who believe that use of force should not be bounded and/or that criminals should be killed. Belur (2009) found in her qualitative interviews with police officers in Mumbai, India, that they felt public opinion, politicians and, to a lesser degree, the criminal justice system were all behind them in cases of deaths of suspects, the so-called ‘encounters’, regardless of their legal basis. Beek and Göpfert (2013), after ethnographic work in Ghana and Niger, conclude that “both police officers and civilians understand violence as one of the ordinary tools of everyday police work” (p. 483).

The *first main conclusion* of a general review of the evidence is that, despite excessive force being a recurrent problem in many countries, there do **not seem to be many interventions in the ‘Global South’ specifically devised to control or restrict the use of force by the police.**

The *second conclusion* is that when such policies exist or when other related policies may have a relevant impact, **scientific evidence of impact is scarce since evaluations are generally absent.** In particular, the application of rigorous methodologies, such as randomised control groups or quasi-experimental designs, is

seldom found. This should not come as a surprise given that, in many parts of the world, the use of research to plan police activities is extremely rare. Alemika (2009) makes this point for African countries and offers several explanations for this scenario: lack of expertise, lack of funds, limited access to the literature and poor information systems. He also argues that, when it exists, donor-funded research conducted on policing in Africa has tended to encourage transplantation of Western models rather than local innovation.

One of the reasons for the dearth of scientific evidence on the impact of police programmes is the **lack of reliable records of police use of force** in general. In many countries, the debate on police racial profiling, for example, can seldom be settled due to the lack of data on police approaches, searches and incidents of use of force. As far as lethal force with a fatal outcome, records are far more frequent and reliable, given that a death has to be reported and that international standards require states to document such cases³. Thus, most of the evidence regarding relevant policies, limited though it is, originates from the topic of lethal force. But even then, many countries are unable or unwilling to provide regular data on the number of people killed or wounded by police firearms. This has led many organisations to seek alternative sources of information on police fatal shootings through the media (see for example: Lethal Force Monitor, 2020), parallel to what happened in the US through the Guardian and the Washington Post databases (Zimring 2017).

It would be ideal to assess evidence about overall use of force along the whole continuum from physical presence to lethal force. Nevertheless, most of the scarce evidence corresponds to the latter so unfortunately this **paper will be based mostly on policies to restrict lethal force**.

Policies and measures to regulate and control police use of force can be classified into one of the following **six categories**:

1. The **normative approach**. The most basic limit on police force is the application of the law by the courts against police officers who act illegally. However, this has not been enough to stem cases of abuse in many countries. Indeed, where clearance rates are low and criminal justice systems weak, it would be perhaps too optimistic to expect the courts to sentence abusive officers, considering also that witnesses tend to be fearful of testifying against police and forensic evidence is scarce. As a result, several countries have considered the introduction of new laws or guidelines in order to alter police behaviour or to make police officers more accountable for their use of force. Peru, for instance, issued a legislative decree in 2015 to regulate the use of force by the National Police which contains and develops relevant international principles⁴. Likewise, the Brazilian Government published inter-

³ Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials (United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders, 1990).

⁴ República del Perú, 2015.

ministerial guidelines in 2019 to the same effect⁵, though only binding for federal police forces.

In South Africa, the Marikana Panel Report, elaborated by an official commission after the infamous Marikana massacre by police officers that happened in 2012, recommended that the State consider the '*Model Bill for Use of Force by Police and other Law Enforcement Agencies in South Africa*', proposed by civil society organisations as a suitable starting point for new legislation (Panel of Experts on Policing and Crowd Management, 2018, p. 132). This new legislation, which is under consideration, should supersede Section 49(2) of the 1977 South African Criminal Procedure Act, which contemplates the use of lethal force to effect the arrest of a dangerous criminal if there are no other means to arrest him or her.

In fact, there are no evaluations of the actual implementation of such new regulations, i.e., whether they were in fact taught in police academies and followed in practice, let alone of their impact on fatal and non-fatal outcomes.

Much beyond its use in the actual criminal justice system, the penal model has inspired many other initiatives to control use of force. This notion is based on the existence of two versions of an event, the accusation and the defence, that compete for the verdict of a judge that can only convict if there is evidence of crime beyond reasonable doubt. Even though obviously essential to uphold the rule-of-law, penal control has many limitations to regulate use of force. First, it tends to be very slow, thus creating the problem of what to do with officers accused of serious abuse until the final trial without hurting their legitimate right to presumed innocence. Also, as already mentioned, it is often hard to obtain credible witnesses willing to testify against the police. Under this penal framework, it is easy to forget that many deaths resulting from police interventions may be preventable, yet not necessarily criminal. The exclusive reliance on penal control may convey the impression that all appears to be well if the courts do not convict an officer. In the same vein, if the officer is finally found guilty, institutions tend to blame the individual, even when they might have defended him or her initially, thus shying away from organisational responsibilities. Ultimately, abuse of force by police officers should be treated more as a professional hazard, given that they are authorised and even expected to use force in the course of their work, rather than as a crime that may be committed only by rogue members of the institution, though the latter is certainly possible.

In some cases, court decisions have indeed managed to strongly reduce police use of lethal force. The Supreme Court of Brazil determined in June 2020 that the police of the state of Rio abstain from carrying out police operations during the Covid-19 pandemic, unless in "absolutely exceptional" circumstances. This resulted in a sudden reduction of the number of civilians

⁵ Brasil. Ministério da Justiça. Secretaria de Direitos Humanos da Presidência da República, 2010.

killed by police, at least for a few months. In 2020 official records show that 1,087 individuals were killed as a result of police interventions in the Metropolitan Area of Rio de Janeiro, compared to 1,643 in the previous year. The number of police operations recorded through the media in those years also fell from 785 to 320 (Hirata, D., Grillo. C., Dirk, R., Lyra, D. & Sampaio, J., 2021). No significant increase of crime rates was registered along this period. Although Covid-19 conflates causal interpretations, this result undermines the argument that such high levels of use of lethal force are needed to keep delinquency under control.

When the justice system cannot redress or repair cases of abuse, victims and organisations can often resort to international courts. The Interamerican Court of Human Rights condemned Brazil in 2017 for the case of Nova Brasilia (Inter-American Court of Human Rights, 2017), a police massacre in a neighbourhood in Rio de Janeiro. This sentenced determined that: a) Brazil had to publish annual reports on deaths in police operations and on the resulting investigations; b) the State of Rio de Janeiro had to introduce policies and goals to reduce police killings. In June 2021, the same Court determined that the State of Venezuela must also publish similar annual reports, as part of the sentence of the case Guerrero, Molina and relatives versus Venezuela (Inter-American Court of Human Rights, 2021).

2. The creation or strengthening of **internal control mechanisms**. Most if not all police forces of a certain size all over the world have internal affairs units that deal with accusations against police officers⁶. Nevertheless, this does not tend to be the best way to deal with allegations of abuse of force. Unlike in cases of corruption, when internal controls may be harsher, internal units tend to side with officers in cases of use of force, as long as they were pursuing, in principle, an institutional objective. Indeed, the Interamerican Human Rights Court has jurisprudence requiring that serious accusations against police be investigated by institutions or, at least, by units other than those whose members are being accused⁷.

Aside from disciplinary mechanisms that mirror criminal proceedings to a higher or lesser extent, internal controls may be of a different nature, with the purpose of extracting lessons for the organisation (in terms of doctrine, recruitment, training, supervision, etc.) without using the evidence against individual police officers. This tends to elicit more cooperation from those involved in the incident and from fellow officers (in order to overcome what has been termed the “blue code of silence”) but it also involves a delicate balance since disciplinary and penal investigations also need to take place, albeit independently.

The State of Sao Paulo created within the Military Police a Commission entitled “Study of High-Risk Events”⁸ in 2010, in which experienced officers

⁶ For a review of internal control systems in West African police forces, see Alemika & Chukwuma, 2011.

⁷ The sentence against Brazil in the case of Nova Brasilia, already mentioned, also includes that point.

⁸ Military Police of the State of São Paulo. Comando de Policiamento da Capital, 2010.

evaluated every police incident resulting in the death of a civilian both through reading the reports and through interviewing involved officers. The focus was on operational procedures. If the Commission detected procedural failures, it sent the officer for a period of training of up to 2 months. Beyond this, members of the commission realized that abuse of lethal force was not an uncommon occurrence, even though this went almost always unpunished (Pinc, 2016). There was not evaluation of the impact of that commission.

3. As a reaction towards the lack of independence, or perceived lack of independence of internal control, some countries have created **external oversight bodies** that monitor or even investigate allegations of abuse against police officers.

The state of São Paulo started a Police Ombudsman Office (*Ouvidoria da Polícia*) in 1995, which received confidential complaints against the police from the general public and addressed them to relevant bodies: the Internal Affairs Unit (*Corregedoria*) or the Prosecutor's Office. The Ombudsman had no investigative powers. Many other Brazilian states followed suit during the late 1990's and the early 2000, with an open encouragement by the Federal Government to do so.

In 2011 South Africa created an Independent Police Investigative Directory (IPID), which is mandated to investigate serious cases of police misconduct and all civilian deaths in which officers were involved⁹. If the allegations are found to be substantiated, the case is transferred to the National Prosecuting Authority, if it is of a criminal nature, or to the police with disciplinary recommendations.

Also in 2011, Kenya created the Independent Policing Oversight Authority (IPOA), which is also charged with investigating deaths and serious injuries caused by police actions (Gandhi, Heyns, Maslen, O'rao, Oyakhromie, Probert, Adang, De Paepe, Easton, Dymond, Rappert & Skinner, 2021). It can refer criminal cases, its main focus, to the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions (ODPP). IPOA is also mandated with monitoring the investigations of the Internal Affairs Unit (IAU) and can take them over if they believe the IAU is being delayed or unreasonable. In other words, it has the additional mandate of overseeing internal controls. However, they depend on the cooperation from the police. Although the police are legally bound to inform IPOA about deaths in police actions, many cases are not reported in practice, which seriously compromises their oversight capability (Gandhi et al., 2021).

In 2010, after an infamous case of multiple killings by police and the army in the Tivoli Gardens neighbourhood in Kingston, Jamaica instituted the Independent Commission of Investigations (INDECOM)¹⁰, tasked to independently investigate serious allegations against police, police shootings

9 Republic of South Africa. Government Gazette, 2011.

10 <https://www.indecom.gov.jm/about-us/achievements>

and deaths in custody. INDECOM has in principle full control over these investigations.

Though there are no proper impact evaluations of these oversight bodies, existing evidence is not very promising about their ultimate effect. In Brazil, the *Ouvidorias* did not appear to effectively curtail police abuses, since the lack of investigative powers blunted their clout and they depended on previously existing internal controls (Lemgruber et al. 2003). In Kenya, as already explained, IPOA was simply unaware of most deaths in police actions. In South Africa, some scholars believe that the creation of IPID has provided the South African Police Service with an apparent justification for not being internally accountable for its use of force (Bruce, 2020), i.e., for relaxing its own internal controls, given that there would already be an external body charged with doing that. Undoubtedly, any external oversight instance should also work to strengthen internal controls on the use of force, since it is much harder to achieve its purpose if police are indifferent or even opposed to such aims.

The only possible exception is INDECOM, in Jamaica, which claims that, as a result of its work, deaths in police shootings diminished slightly from 733 in the three-year period before its creation to 687 in the first three years of its existence, and then declined sharply to 327 in the following three years, after they established working protocols and awareness sessions. Even though many other factors beyond the existence of INDECOM may obviously have influenced this evolution, these figures look promising.

4. The establishment of **training courses for officers related to use of force**. All police organisations have training for the use of force as part of their basic initial courses and many have also regular updates, particularly for firearms and also when new technology devices are introduced. Yet we are referring here to training that was specifically devised with the intention of controlling or reducing use of force that might be excessive, often after complaints by public opinion or civil society organisations. This is an extensive practice in many countries. Such training is generally theoretical, exposing officers to human right documents and principles. In some cases, the training is also practical, trying to teach how to stop, search and intervene in tense situations while respecting human rights and minimising the use of force (International Committee of the Red Cross, 2017). Most of these training sessions have no evaluation at all, beyond the feedback of course participants. In some cases, an evaluation is carried out but is generally limited to measuring officers' attitudes, opinions and knowledge before and after the training (see, for example, Probert, 2018, for an evaluation of police training in Malawi). Although such evaluations are relevant, it is hard to tell whether the expression of different attitudes by police officers, in a context where social desirability may lead them to do so, ultimately affects the way they behave in the field. Also, numerous scholars have noted that informal socialization and police (sub)cultures are at least as important as formal training in

determining police behaviour, also with respect to the use of force (Belur, 2010; Chan, 2000). Ideally, impact evaluations of such training should monitor incidents of use of force by officers over time to compare results of those who took and those who did not take the course, but such an enterprise is expensive, time-consuming and requires the full cooperation of the police institution.

In any case, the possible over-reliance on police training as the main tool to control police violence in some contexts could be interpreted as resulting from a belief that abuse of force is basically rooted in technical failures rather than in political, cultural and institutional factors.

5. Use of **technology to monitor officers** and prevent abuses. The employment of modern technology has been suggested as a way to significantly improve monitoring of officers, and eventually to obtain incriminating evidence, in a profession that is traditionally characterised by low levels of supervision, considering that officers are often alone in the street, or in very small groups, and commanding officers are seldom present. GPS devices are used to locate officers and police vehicles during the shift. Also, vehicle-cameras (dash-cams) and officer-worn cameras have been proposed as providing a new age of monitoring. Although some officers resist the cameras and there are issues of privacy, the prevailing rationale is that ‘good officers’ have nothing to lose, and they can even be protected from false allegations. The proliferation of videos of police fatal shootouts has certainly changed the prevailing debate on use of force in some countries in the Global North (Sherman, 2018). There have been some experimental evaluations suggesting that body cameras can reduce incidents of use of force (Ariel et al., 2014; Jennings et al., 2015), although not all results were significant (Yokum et al., 2019) and a systematic review concluded that “there remains substantial uncertainty about whether Body Worn Cameras (BWC) can reduce officer use of force” (Lum et al., 2020). There are hardly any evaluations of BWCs in the Global South, even though many cities seem to believe they are a good idea. In São Paulo, for example, after the very recent introduction of body cameras, the press reported that the number of civilians killed in police shootouts in the 18 police stations that used the device has been reduced from 19 in May 2021, before the cameras, to 0 in June 2021 after the cameras¹¹. Overall, the number of deaths in the state of Sao Paulo was reduced by 54% in that period, considering all police stations with and without the equipment (Globo, 2021). The time is certainly too short to evaluate impact, but the figures have advanced the cause of BWCs in the country.
6. Administrative **measures to disincentivise police use of force**. Under this category we include policies and interventions that, rather than singling out individual officers who abuse force in order to punish or retrain them, are meant to discourage the use of force in the institution as a whole. Some of

¹¹ Galvão, C. (12, July 2021)

them were devised specifically to that effect, while other measures had other aims but resulted in that outcome.

Some policing programmes in high-violence areas, where police use of force is common, were devised with the intention of reducing overall violence, but may also serve as a way to contain police use of force. This was the case of the Police Pacifying Units (UPP) in Rio de Janeiro violent slums which were meant to reduce shootouts and to recover territorial control from criminal gangs. The programme did reduce homicide rates in intervened areas during the first years by around 50%, but the strongest impact by far was precisely the reduction of deaths resulting from police interventions which fell by 88% (Cano et al., 2014)¹². This was also important politically in that it challenged the logic that criminal violence can only be fought with State violence, which is common within a militarised public security paradigm.

Among the policies that were specifically designed to reduce police use of force we can mention the following examples:

- a) Programmes that **remove officers who are involved in fatal shootings from the streets** for a certain period, in order to reduce stress and hence decrease the probability of their using lethal force again. This is relevant since research has shown that stress by police officers seems to be associated with a more pervasive use of lethal force (Magaloni & Cano, 2016). In the State of Sao Paulo, the government introduced the Monitoring Programme of Military Police Officers involved in High-Risk Events – PROAR (*Programa de Acompanhamento de Policiais-Militares Envolvidos em Ocorrências de Alto Risco*) in 1995, which took off the streets for a period of 6 months all officers involved in fatal shootings. They were assigned to foot patrolling in the centre of town, an activity where chances for violent escalation tend to be minimal, and were given psychological support. However, the main incentive arose from the fact that the new patrolling shifts conflicted with typical police shifts of continuous 24 hours, which then allow for officers to work as private security guards in their spare time. Thus, officers within the PROAR programme saw their professional routine upended, which prompted resistance within the ranks. Also, officers saw foot patrolling downtown as a waste of time or as second-rate policing. The average number of killings by police went down during the first

¹² The internal validity of the interpretation that attributed the impact to the UPPs was strong, given that an interrupted time-series design was employed and that each of the 13 communities had a different starting moment. The evolution of crime in the rest of the city was also used as a control variable. The mostly likely interpretation of the logic of the intervention is that permanent police presence avoided aggressive police operations that had been common and also diminished the risk that criminal groups might want to invade the territory.

years of the programme by 58% (Neme, 2007) when compared with the worst years of 1991 and 1992, though this of course could also have resulted from regression to the mean. Indeed, 1992 was the year when the infamous massacre of Carandiru took place, where police killed 111 inmates inside the prison in one single day. The programme lasted until 2002; in 2003 the number of civilian deaths rose by 60% with respect to the previous year, though, as usual, it is hard to attribute causality to one factor.

- b) Initiatives to **monitor police use of force** in the institution as a whole and in its units. These may be framed within programmes designed to bring down lethality or simply as a way to improve internal control. In any case, the sheer fact that the phenomenon is to be monitored sends a clear signal that deaths should be contained and they are not to be treated as mere externalities of police work or, worse, as a sign of productivity. Indeed, as already mentioned, the Interamerican Court of Human Rights determined the yearly publication of the data on lethal force in several rulings as a mechanism to avoid repetition of abuses.

Again in the State of São Paulo, a Special Commission for the Reduction of Lethality in Actions Involving Police Officers (*Comissão Especial Para Redução da Letalidade em Ações Envolvendo Policiais*) was created in 2000¹³. This commission, which was integrated by officers of several police organisations, by the Police Ombudsman and by members of civil society, was meant to analyse cases of fatal outcomes through forms that were to be filled in by police officers involved in shootouts. Its task was to identify risk factors and to propose preventive measures in order to prevent fatal outcomes. There are no known evaluations of the impact of this Commission.

The State of Minas Gerais, also in Brazil, published a yearly report on the use of lethal force for a number of years starting in 2005. Initially, this was done by the Police Ombudsman and the effort was later continued by other state institutions (Secretaria de Estado de Defesa Social, Minas Gerais, 2008). These reports included a ranking of police units according to the number of people killed by their officers. This generated pressure for the commanders of the first units to justify the high levels of force and to try and avoid appearing at the top of the list again in the following year. It is generally believed that commanders have a crucial role in regulating use of force, particularly in militarised structures. Research in the state of Rio de Janeiro estimated that between 5 and 8% of the variance between police units in terms of the number of civilians killed by each of them

¹³ Special Commission for the Reduction of Lethality in Actions Involving Police Officers, 2001 (<http://www.ssp.sp.gov.br/LeNoticia.aspx?ID=18220>).

could be attributed to the effect of the commander and this was considered to be an underestimation (Fundação Guimarães Rosa, 2016)¹⁴.

- c) Measures to **monitor use of force by individual officers**. Even though use of force should be exceptional in police work, evidence, particularly on lethal force, tends to show it is often concentrated in some units and in certain officers. Police subcultures in some units may be more permissive towards the use of force. Also, some pieces of research point out that police units that use most lethal force are those where officers are often most fatally victimised (Husek, 2017). This could be expected under the principle of proportionality of the use of force, but it may also hint at police subcultures that are more prone to violence. In fact, this same research estimated that the number of civilians killed by a police unit increased significantly the day after a police officer had been killed on duty in that same area.

The Military Police of Rio de Janeiro asked the State University of Rio in 2014 to create an index that would identify officers who made an excessive use of lethal force so they could be submitted to training, or eventually taken off the streets, in order to avoid tragedies. For the management of the police, it was mainly a way to identify outliers and prevent negative incidents of high public repercussion. But on the other hand, this was clearly an institutional incentive to reduce use of force as a whole. The index measured individual officers' consumption of ammunition during the previous six months, weighting it by the prevailing level of violence in the area of his or her beat and by the type of function the officer performed (on-foot patrolling, car patrolling, tactical response, etc.). Those who exceeded the expected average by more than two standard deviations were chosen for retraining. The programme was introduced experimentally but later discontinued. It was not submitted to evaluation.

- d) **economic incentives for police officers**. It is not uncommon for police in many countries to adopt police management systems inspired by the so-called 'Compstat' model of NYPD, where commanders have to periodically report on their local crime rates and targets are set according to which each unit is to be evaluated. In some cases, these management strategies incorporate monetary awards for units that successfully meet their targets. Several Brazilian states have resorted to this as a way to try to bring crime rates down. The state of Rio de

¹⁴ This research was complicated by the fact that there was little rotation between individual commanders, so that almost half of the commanders had commanded only one unit. This makes it much harder to disentangle the effect of the unit from that of the commander. Furthermore, it strengthens the possibility of endogeneity in that there might have been some influence of the commander him or herself in the choice of the unit.

Janeiro created the Integrated System of Targets and Results Monitoring (*Sistema Integrado de Metas e Acompanhamentos de Resultados -SIM*) in 2009¹⁵. Police units receive pay bonuses according to homicide and robbery rates in their area, with the former having more weight. Later, in 2011, the government included civilians killed in police interventions, together with homicides, in a wider indicator called 'violent lethality'¹⁶. In other words, police units who used lethal force more often reduced their likelihood of receiving a bonus, in a striking contrast with the 'bravery awards' that had been introduced in the 90's that had encouraged police shootouts. The number of civilians killed by police in Rio diminished after this change in the indicator in 2011. In 2009, the police killed 1,048 civilians, then in 2010 it fell to 855. In 2011, 2012 and 2013 the figure reached the lowest point in many years: 523, 414 and 413, respectively¹⁷. Even though the decreasing trend was pre-existent and, as usual, many other factors may have impacted this result, many scholars are convinced that the introduction of police killings within an indicator which had to be minimized in order to obtain a pay bonus had a significant impact in reducing use of lethal force.

Last, a number of general **recommendations** can be offered for future interventions in order **to restrain police abuse of force**, which could be useful for state officials, civil society and also for the international community in planning cooperation on this field:

1. **Promote national legislation that regulates police use of force unequivocally** and that incorporates international principles and guidelines into it.
2. Introduce **better recording systems for use of force** so that every incident, however minor, is recorded and can be later analysed. This should also apply to the use of less lethal weapons. In the case of lethal force, a report should be filed by every officer who draws a weapon, even if it is not fired, and if it is, the report should contain information on every shot that was fired, position and reaction of the target, etc. The need to fill in a detailed report should serve as a warning that use of force is meant to be an exceptional measure and that it will be submitted to scrutiny.
3. **Improve individual officers' monitoring systems** through the use of technology, such as body-worn cameras, and also through regular analysis of

¹⁵ Estado do Rio de Janeiro, Brasil (2009).

¹⁶ Estado do Rio de Janeiro, Brasil (2010).

¹⁷ Own calculations from official data disseminated now by the Instituto de Segurança Pública (<http://www.isp.rj.gov.br/>). Since cases are reviewed over time, one may see slight changes in the online figures.

- incidents of use of force so that officers that often get involved in such incidents can be made accountable and preventive measures can be taken.
4. Institute **internal official commissions within police forces that regularly analyse cases of use of force** in order to consider institutional measures that could be taken to reduce such cases. Such measures can encompass many different areas, such as doctrine, recruitment, training and monitoring. The disciplinary and criminal investigations in relation to events of use of force should be carried out by agencies other than these special commissions so that officers cooperate more willingly with the latter.
 5. Introduce a **regular reporting system on the use of force** so that information and analysis are periodically disseminated to the general public. Again, reporting may in itself be a disincentive for the abuse of force, particularly for units and officers that tend to concentrate such incidents.
 6. **Rely more on administrative measures** for the containment of abuse of force **rather than just on the criminal system** or on other oversight mechanisms that follow the criminal investigation model. In countries or areas where use of force is very high, **specific programmes, targets and incentives** should be created to return to acceptable levels.
 7. **Protect police officers.** Officers are entitled and expected to use force to protect themselves within the principle of proportionality. On the other hand, abuse of force is often justified within and outside the ranks by the risk officers are exposed to. Indeed, Skogan (2013) found that the frequency of self-reported use of force by Brazilian police officers was mostly related to the perception of a risky work environment. Furthermore, research in some countries has shown a strong link between police officers killed and civilians killed. Thus, any investment in the protection of officers (bullet-proof vests, shields, bullet-proof vehicles, etc.) is something that, beyond its undeniable merit in itself, may also help reduce police use of force.

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