

and might equals right. As one female gang leader in August Town, Jamaica, put it, "We have our own justice, the state does not provide justice."¹⁹

Security privatization can also exacerbate insecurity among the urban poor. In communities home to thousands of bored, poor, young men, public officials have established vigilante groups to conduct violent counter-attacks on gangs. In Rio de Janeiro, for example, Brazilian military police have led private vigilante groups to drive out gangs and take control of slums in paramilitary style operations. The extent to which vigilante groups hired to crack down on crime are protecting civilians from gangs involved in criminal activity, or actually are gangs themselves, is often unclear. For example, in the impoverished suburbs of Cape Town, South Africa, a vigilante group called People Against Gangsterism and Drugs (Pagad) was formed to rid the community of gangs by murdering gang leaders. This led gangs to seek vengeance on Pagad, exacerbating inter-gang warfare and creating a vicious circle of violence.²⁰

Security privatization tends to exacerbate the gap between the rich and the poor, creating pockets of wealth amidst sprawling poverty. Evidence from Brazil indicates that social segregation and territorial exclusion are directly linked to higher levels of urban violence. Among the 28 most territorially segregated cities in São Paulo, 25 of them had the highest homicide rates.²¹ The bifurcation of security services also tends to reduce pressure on the state to provide these services, thereby deepening social stratification. Correspondingly, predatory pressure on slum dwellers to provide their own security increases both the supply and demand of firearms, gangs, and vigilante groups. These groups lack access to legitimate channels of justice, exercising instead extrajudicial punishments – including torture and murder – that violate fundamental human rights. And since many such groups are comprised partially or even predominantly of youth, the threats to human security among vulnerable children are compounded.

Building the capacity for public security provision is at the heart of addressing these problems. At the local level, community policing has emerged as an innovation that combines collective self-help and public sector capacity-building. Community policing is one way to respond to failures in public security provision. In these schemes, police officers are assigned to specific neighbourhoods for lengthy periods of time, allowing mutually-supportive trust relationships between civilians and police to be fostered. In Bogotá, community policing helped to reduce homicide rates from 7,144 in 1993 to 3,194 in 2002, such that per capita homicide rates are now the lowest of

¹⁹ Dowdney (2003), p.237.

²⁰ Botha (2001).

²¹ Moser and Rodgers (2005), p.27.