

The Center for the Study of Violence (NEV/ USP) aims to explore how the legitimacy of key institutions is constructed or jeopardized in the contact between citizens and civil servants.

Since 1990, NEV has analyzed aspects of the intertwining of democratic consolidation and the persistence of violence. Recently, the research program focused on the study of the quality of democracy from the perspective of human rights and violence. Successive expectations and predictions about democracy have failed so far: there has been no regression, but democratic rule of law remains a distant goal. How well institutions perform while applying the law, or implementing programs dictated by laws will reflect on their legitimacy. This in turn should reflect on the legitimacy of laws and on the strengthening of rule of law.

In this new phase, the center will carry out research focusing on local institutions: the municipal administration; the local school, health center, labor courts, police services, and local justice centers. Emphasis is given to new innovative legislation and programs. The NEV will explore how macro and micro phenomena come together and impact each other. This will be done from the perspective of the citizens, as well as the civil servants, involved.

The study will take the form of a longitudinal panel with multiple contacts over a period of time. International comparisons on specific issues will take place through similar topical studies that will be carried out in Mexico City and Johannesburg (the police and courts); and in New Delhi, Cape Town, and Berkeley (housing, land use, use of public space, among others). Cut crossing issues are law enforcement in the frontiers with Ecuador, Mexico and South Africa (Johannesburg). In all settings, gender and vulnerable age groups (youth, children and the elderly) will receive special analyses.

In terms of knowledge transfer, NEV will partner with institutions for strategic exchange of information, work methods, and common projects, such as the Brazilian Forum for Public Security; national media such as newspapers, television and radio; local and international non-



governmental organizations; and public opinion leaders in the public sector, in particular policy makers and legislators. Workshops to discuss specific forms of knowledge and information exchange will be organized with the aid of knowledge transfer experts who will evaluate our past strategies and suggest the best ways to optimize our new activities. An international seminar will be organized to discuss how to improve the “translation of scientific results to the public at large, in particular those with little access to scientific information.”

The objective of the educational program is to develop human resources to carry out interdisciplinary research related to democracy, violence and human rights. The activities will include the organization of a Centre for Permanent Debate on Violence, Human Rights and Democracy in urban settings, designed to stimulate new approaches to such issues in a critical way; an on-line Forum, which will foster debate; and interdisciplinary undergraduate courses. Some of the themes proposed for the courses are Democracy and Authoritarianism, Health Care and Human Rights, Anthropology and Law in Contemporary Brazil, Violence in the Brazilian Culture, and The Authoritarian Discourse. An interdisciplinary course on Innovation in Management applied to the police and the criminal justice system is to take place. The courses are aimed at university students, schools, local governments and non-governmental organizations.

## Host Institution

University of São Paulo (USP, campus São Paulo)

## Associated Institutions

El Colegio del Mexico, Mexico  
Latin American Social Sciences Institute  
Indian Institute for Human Settlements (IIHS), India  
University of Columbia, United States  
University of California, United States  
University of Cape Town, South Africa  
Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation,  
Johannesburg, South Africa  
State Data Analysis System Foundation, SEADE

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