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The multi-scalar nature of urban security and public safety: Crime prevention from local policy to policing in Lisbon (Portugal) and Memphis (US)

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Abstract

The article contributes to recent discussions on convergence/divergence of local policies for urban security and public safety amid globalization, exploring comparatively local approaches to crime prevention and explaining differences/similarities through multilevel connections. I analyze situational prevention, social policy and proximity/community policing in two “not-so-global” metropolises: Lisbon, where security is the goal of a wide set of policies in many fields; and Memphis, where social problems have become security issues and policing the only game in town. Differing approaches are explained on the grounds of *political* traditions, neoliberalization of *policy* and multilevel relations among *polities*. I discuss implications for the relation between policy and policing: police attempts at social outreach amid coupling/decoupling of security with/from urban policy; and the “mission creep” of policing when it is expected to lead prevention. Conclusions advocate that policy reform is necessary at many levels to deal with the intersection of crime, retrenching welfare and aggressive policing in US cities such as Memphis.

Keywords: neoliberal urban policy; local policies; local police; community policing, comparative urban studies.

1. Introduction

Security, which has been for most of modern history a competence of nation-states, has become a field where vertical relations among polities and horizontal connections among places play an increasingly crucial role. This article focuses on local policies for urban security (or public safety),¹ that is, policies for the prevention of crime and violence, because they offer an advantageous perspective from which to explore policy convergence/divergence and links between multiple levels of government, global trends and local practices. Crime prevention intersects with all areas of urban policy; not only policing, justice and surveillance, but also “employment, education, urban planning, housing, health, youth protection, social exclusion” (Chalom et al. 2001, ii), hence its strong dependence on political, policy and polity arrangements. Urban security is a field where, despite global trends of convergence, there exist significant differences within contexts, such as the Western world, considered to be characterized by important degrees of homogeneity.

An emerging scholarship is interested in the understanding of urban security policy change amid/despite globalization and neoliberalization (see next Section). This article enriches existing debates by exploring comparatively the overall approach to crime prevention in local polities, and seeking to understand differences and similarities through connections with supra-local levels. I focus on the operational distinction between social and situational approaches to crime prevention (and law enforcement), paying particular attention to the relationship between urban and social policy, and policing.

I have two goals, one theoretical and one normative-practical. In line with Robinson’s reflections (2016) on comparative urban studies, my first goal is “moving beyond the ‘global’/‘local’ dichotomy”. I will focus mainly “on the specific set of flows, networks,

connections, influences, circulations which add up to what had been called ‘globalization’” and use these as a “way to understand the empirical and conceptual connections amongst distinctive places” (ibidem, 12) in the making of local policies for crime prevention. As such, I adopt a “generative” comparative tactic, “in which a virtual field of conceptualization [i.e. urban security] can be provoked and enriched through bringing different singularities, or cases, into conversation” (ibidem, 18). My second goal is to collect comparative evidence in support of structural reforms of urban security policy-making. I build on Healey’s suggestion that transnational learning is possible; and that it “works most productively through rich narratives—in-depth cases—rather than through ‘best practice’ summaries or attempts at typologies which systematize qualities of context and try to match them with qualities of experiences” (2012, 196).²

I shall, thus, employ case study research—see Flyvbjerg (2006) and Robinson (2016) on its value for comparative research and generalization. This article studies urban security policy-making in two “not-so-global” metropolises, Lisbon (Portugal) and Memphis (US), in two regions (Southern Europe and Southern US) that have been for a long time at the “borderlands” of urban theorization (cf. Sandercock 1995; Baptista 2013). Not only have the two cases been under-explored by previous research, but they are also useful in problematizing explanations of linear policy convergence amid globalization. The analytical strategy is to compare two cases that emphasize different challenges and policies: in Lisbon, low crime rates are mirrored by a mix of social and situational crime prevention; in Memphis, high crime rates are mirrored by a strong emphasis on law enforcement and situational prevention.

The article is structured as follows. Section 2 reviews the literature about global trends in security and transformations in local urban security policy-making, to make the case for a multi-scalar, exploratory comparison. Section 3 depicts the complementarity of the case studies—

regional frameworks, local conditions, institutional organizations and challenges with crime—against the background of recent trends of neoliberalization. Section 4 provides methodological notes. Section 5 discusses the different approaches to crime prevention in Lisbon and Memphis, looking at urban policy in general and focusing on community/proximity policing. Section 6 provides three arguments to explain these differences: longstanding *political* conceptions of urban security; local effects of neoliberalization on urban *policy*; and multilevel institutional organization (i.e. relations among *politics*). Against this background, in Section 7 I focus on the implications for the intersection between urban policy and policing: I discuss the conditions necessary for police to perform social outreach tasks through community policing and the constraints that impede them; and the way many social problems have become security issues in (cities like) Memphis, fostering the “mission creep” of police departments. Two main takeaways are: Firstly, a multiplexing of multi-scalar determinants and trends on the cultural, sociopolitical and institutional levels is necessary to explain policy differences and convergence/divergence in urban security; and secondly, policy reform is necessary at many levels to deal with the intersection of crime, retrenching social policy and aggressive policing in Memphis—and many other US cities.

2. From the global security moment to the local production of practices

Daniel Goldstein coined the term “security moment” (2010, 487) to emphasize the global scale of recent discourses about security, according to which the world has entered “a new phase of global history characterized by increased surveillance of potential security threats, expansive government powers to investigate security breaches, armed intervention in places abroad that supposedly fostered terrorism, and restrictions on individual freedoms in the name of protecting

personal and national security” (ibidem). Recent global practices of security have been widely debated in cultural studies (Araujo 2008/2009), political theory (Neocleous 2007), international relations (Burke 2013) and anthropology (Maguire, Frois and Zurawski 2014). The literature on “urban geopolitics” (Graham 2010; Rossi and Vanolo 2012 [2010]) has exposed how global cities have been restructured in the name of anti-terrorism and security. These works have stressed the growing relevance of national, and supranational, public and corporate security agendas in shaping the everyday lives of citizens around the world and attacking civil rights.

A recent ethnography of the production of the European Union’s common policy on immigration and security (Feldman 2014) offers an example of the value and limits of these approaches. The study makes sense of the proliferation of security policies “which are strikingly similar in form despite the variety of places in which they are crafted and of people who participate in the task” (ibidem, 64). In the process described, the policy advances through a rationalized administrative agenda, in which individuals have no real power to negotiate. The study arrives at the conclusion that the “local” is a theoretical concept without place in the current *production* of European security policies. However, it does not address the fact that the *implementation* of policies, at the very least, is subject to the decisions of governments and civil servants in the most varied locations—consider, e.g., the differing responses of European countries to the recent “refugee crisis”.

Goldstein “attempt[ed] to break with this familiar framing of the security moment” (2010, 487). Making the case for a “critical anthropology of security”, Goldstein dissected the relationship between global pressures, Latin American regional trends, Bolivian policy-making and the local production of security in amongst institutional and grassroots practices.

Goldstein's approach and the tension among different scales and levels are crucial to exploring local urban security policy-making amid global trends. Battistelli (2013) summed up three such trends: institutional convergence (decentralization, localism and recentralisation); increasing 'participation' between attempts to make police action more attentive to local requests and expectations that citizens become active agents of prevention; and privatization and public-private partnerships. An emerging literature has discussed how to make sense of these processes amid globalization and neoliberalization: Some have emphasised variegation and hybridization (cf. Brenner et al. 2010), others have problematized the domination of such explanatory concepts (cf. Lippert 2014). In-depth and/or comparative studies have explored four dimensions:

- changing national approaches to crime prevention in the context of broader socioeconomic shifts (Hebberecht and Baillergeau 2012; Edward and Hughes 2013);
- local effects and international travels of national agendas—e.g. emergence of “community safety” in the UK (Raco 2007) and convergence in Sweden (Lidskog and Persson 2012);
- local importation and hybridization of global practices—e.g. Business Improvement Districts (Lippert 2014) or public camera surveillance (Hier and Walby 2014);
- multilevel policy transfer within specific dimensions—e.g. policing and regulation (Lippert and Walby 2013) and municipal corporate security (Walby and Lippert 2015).

All in all, this literature has discussed tensions between vertical (multilevel relations) and horizontal (convergence/divergence) connections. This article contributes to such discussions by comparatively exploring the *overall* approach to urban security and public safety in local polities, and seeking to understand differences and similarities through *multi-scalar* connections with supralocal levels—it adds to existing studies, which tend to focus on specific topics and/or specific

levels/scales. In particular, this approach will allow the reconsideration of the explanatory power of concepts such as neoliberalization, seeking a more nuanced understanding of policy convergence/divergence in the light of political traditions and institutional organisations.

3. Setting the frame: regional context, case studies and methodology

3.1. Comparison at the borderlands: regional frameworks and case studies

I expect to produce fresh insights through the study of urban contexts in two regions at the “borderlands” of urban theory (cf. Sandercock 1995; Baptista 2013); that is, at a marginal position in the core developments thereof. For a long time, mainstream urban scholarship has neglected to explore the peculiarities of Southern European and Southern US urban contexts, preferring to focus on their socioeconomic “under-development”—as compared to the experiences of European central countries and the UK, and those of the East Coast, the Rust Belt and California. Traditional explanations of such development patterns are overwhelmingly culturalistic—see Putnam on the “Hobbesian” Southern Italian societies (1993), Reed (1972) on the “enduring” US South or the recurring use of the “Third World” metaphor (King 1982; Goldfield 1981, 1027). Recent scholarship has criticized the underdevelopment explanations and maintained that the Southern US and Europe should rather be considered vanguards of neoliberalization processes and their slower economic development to be the result of long-term uneven development (Hadjimichalis 2011; Lloyd 2012). The two regions show analogies in terms of the recent transformation processes fueled by neoliberalization and globalization: spatial reorganization, metropolization and counter-urbanization, plus stratification, polarization and fragmentation (Rushing 2009; Arbaci and

Malheiros 2010; Lloyd 2012). The study of places undergoing turbulent processes of urban restructuring has been seen as a way to reconsider explanatory terms such as postmodernism, globalization and neoliberalism (Leontidou 1993; Peacock 2007; Lloyd 2012; Baptista 2013) and revisit theories about urban geopolitics often based on the study of a few global cities (Tulumello 2017).

Though the two regional contexts have been experiencing similar trends, they have been selected to compare cases of “maximum variation”, which permits us to “obtain information about the significance of various circumstances for case process and outcome” (Flyvbjerg 2006, 230). I have, thus, selected two cases “paradigmatic” (ibidem) of complementary, if not radically different, problems and policy approaches to urban security. The strategy of comparing different cases, albeit in contexts that have experienced similar global trends, is designed to provide evidence for discussing how those global trends clash with, and are hybridized by, different national/regional frameworks and local arrangements.

Indeed, the two regional urban frameworks present substantial sociospatial differences: Southern European cities are dense and compact, whereas Southern US ones are extremely spread out; Southern European cities show low levels of spatial segregation (Arbaci and Malheiros 2010) while significant patterns of racial and class segregation are found in Southern US cities (Massey et al. 2009).

Lisbon (550,000 inhabitants) is the capital of Portugal and the central city of the main Portuguese metropolis (2,800,000 inhabitants). Lisbon has recently been consolidating its role as a national growth engine and emerging as a regional metropolis. Complex and contradictory trends of suburbanization, reurbanization, regeneration and gentrification, as well as growing sociospatial polarization boosted by the economic crisis, characterize recent times (Ferrão 2003; Seixas et al.

2016). Memphis (650,000 inhabitants), second city of the state of Tennessee, is the center of a metropolitan area that extends into the bordering Arkansas and Mississippi (1,350,000 inhabitants). Memphis' recent history is characterized by the contradictory persistence of historical White privilege with turbulent economic growth and corporate globalization (Rushing 2009). All in all, Memphis is representative of a typical US metro, with a poorer, racially-mixed central city surrounded by predominantly White, affluent suburbs, and significant patterns of segregation; while structural problems, social ills and racial tensions are especially acute (Santo 2017).

The complementarity of the cases extends to local institutional arrangements. With local policies, I refer to the municipal (primarily) and metropolitan levels. In Portugal the municipality is the only subnational administrative level in a very centralized country, while three subnational levels exist in the US: municipality, county and state. Significant differences exist even when referring to the same polities. Portugal's national territory is divided into municipalities that have the same governmental duties and relationships with the central state. On the contrary, a complicated patchwork exists in the US. Firstly, not all the municipalities have the same degree of legislative and governmental autonomy; Memphis, governed by Home Rule, has a wide degree of autonomy.³ Secondly, the territorial organization at the metropolitan level is uneven; the typical metropolitan area (including Memphis) is made up of a central municipality of ancient incorporation, suburban municipalities (often incorporated recently) and unincorporated lands managed by the county.

In addition, the institutional organization of the police is complementary. While in the US policing is a local competence, in Portugal criminal police—Policia de Segurança Pública and Guarda Nacional Republicana, responsible for urban and rural areas respectively—are national

bodies, while municipal police forces are administrative bodies, mainly with responsibility over code enforcement.

3.2. Crime trends compared

Portugal historically has a low violent crime rate. The murder rate is consistently low, between 1 and 2 per 100,000 inhabitants per year (Figure 1). Reported violent crimes grew during the 1990s and up to 2004 (Figure 2), then they stabilized and dropped (van Dijk et al. 2007; Tulumello 2017, 33-34). Lisbon is one of the safest big cities in Europe and the world (ibidem), despite having violent crime rates higher than national averages (Figure 2); two metropolitan areas exist in Portugal (Lisbon and Porto), while the rest of the country is composed of towns and medium cities where general crime rates are lower. The homicide rate in Lisbon city is extremely low, counterintuitive to the concentration of violent crime (Figure 1); in Portugal, the rare homicides are a result of domestic violence or disputes between acquaintances in a pattern typical of towns and rural environments.⁴



Figure 1. Murders per 100,000 inhabitants in Lisbon and Portugal. My elaboration on data United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (<https://data.unodc.org/?lf=1&lng=en>) (accessed February 1, 2017).

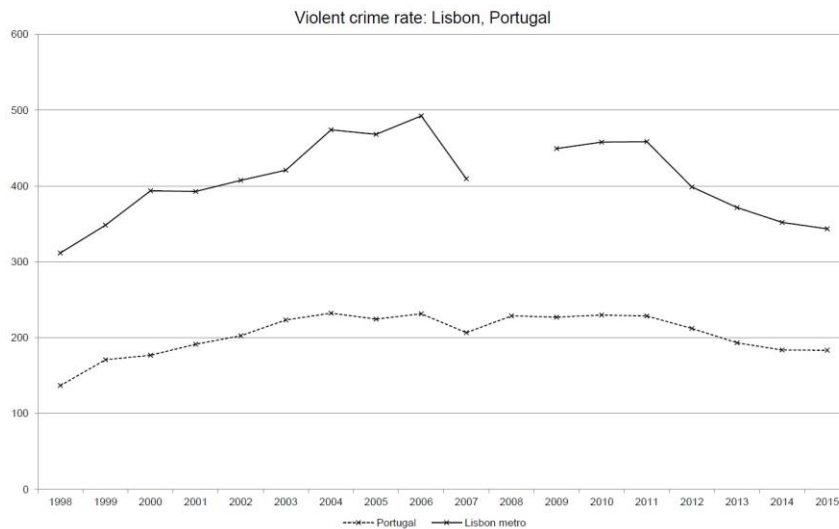


Figure 2. Violent crimes reported per 100,000 inhabitants in Portugal and Lisbon metro (police districts of Lisbon and Setúbal). My elaboration on data System of Sistema de Segurança Interna (www.parlamento.pt/Fiscalizacao/Paginas/RelatoriosSegurancaInterna_XIII.aspx) and Instituto Nacional de Estatística (www.ine.pt/xportal/xmain?xpid=INE&xpgid=ine_base_dados&contexto=bd&selTab=tab2) (accessed February 1, 2017).

District level data not released in 2008.

Despite two and a half decades of decreasing crime—e.g. the murder rate has halved since the early 1990s (Figure 3)—, the US is the Western country with the highest violent crime rates. Crime

drops have not been evenly distributed across the country and, while they have been particularly evident in major cities (Baumer and Wolff 2014), other cities, including Memphis, have experienced different trends. In Memphis, the homicide rate is among the highest found in the West; in 2014, there were 21.3 homicides per 100,000 inhabitants in Memphis and 15.5 in Shelby County,⁵ respectively more than four and three times the national average. Despite significant instability, murder rates have dropped over the long-term, slowly converging towards the national average (Figure 3). Violent crime shows high, extremely unstable and increasing rates (Figure 4), and stems mainly from domestic violence and intra-communal disputes (interviews with a high-ranking MPD official, a former MPD consultant and a member of the Memphis Crime Commission).



Figure 3. Murders per 100,000 inhabitants in the US, Memphis and Shelby County. My elaboration on data UCR, NIBRS (years 2013 and 2014) (<https://ucr.fbi.gov/>) and Population Estimates by the United States Census Bureau (<http://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/popest.html>) (accessed February 1, 2017).

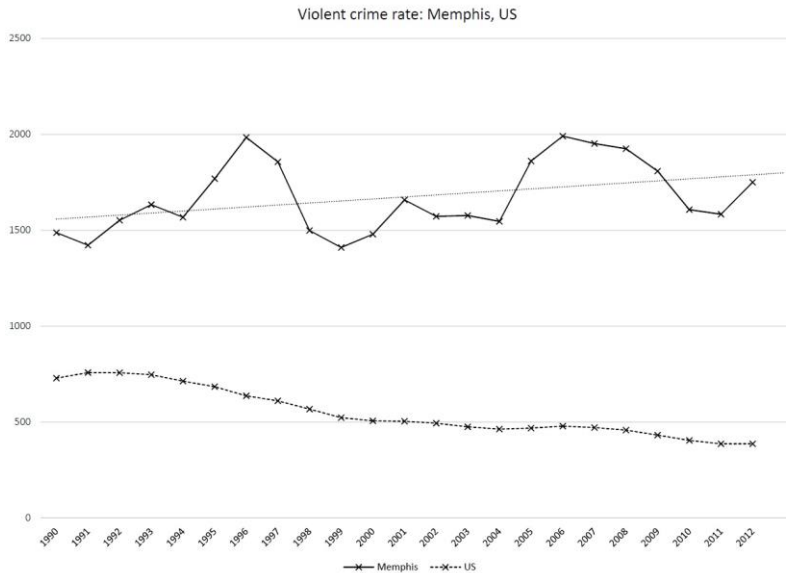


Figure 4. Violent crimes reported per 100,000 inhabitants in US and Memphis city. My elaboration on data UCR (<https://ucr.fbi.gov/>) (accessed February 1, 2017).

4. Methodological notes

The empirical part of the article is based on a medium- to long-term research engagement: 2013-2015 in Lisbon; January-July 2016 in Memphis. In the Lisbon metro, I have studied urban security policies in three municipalities, Lisbon, Barreiro and Cascais, with in-depth focus on Lisbon city. In Memphis, I have focused on the municipal level—urban planning policy is shared with Shelby County. I have collected data from two main sources: analysis of documents—policy documents, municipal decisions, institutional websites, records of reunions of municipal boards, plans and projects; and work meetings and qualitative interviews with policy makers and experts.⁶ In addition, I have taken advantage of the participatory observation I have carried out with local groups engaged in community organization in two neighborhoods where crime is considered a crucial problem, Alta de Lisboa in Lisbon and Klondike Smokey City in Memphis.⁷ Though the

scale of analysis of this article is municipal and metropolitan, some insights from the participatory observation will promote a better understanding of the way policies are implemented locally.

5. Urban security policy-making in Lisbon and Memphis

Security and safety are about prevention (see Schneier 2003); and urban security and public safety about prevention of crime and violence in the city. To prevent means, in short, to act preemptively so as to ensure that “an event does not come to pass” (Anderson 2010, 228). In operational terms, the policies for crime prevention can be separated into two paradigms: social prevention and situational prevention (see Tulumello 2016b for an in-depth discussion). From the perspective of social prevention, crime is the result of societal problems such as poverty, inequality and asymmetric power relationships. Individual safety, understood as a common good among other such common goods, is pursued through redistributive justice (Morelle and Tadié 2011), that is, long-term policies that foster more equitable and cohesive cities. The situational paradigm, by contrast, emphasizes the rational choice of individuals; accordingly, a crime occurs when a motivated offender meets a suitable victim in a favorable context (Felson and Clarke 1998). The situational paradigm seeks prevention through policies that reduce the opportunities and make it more difficult to commit a crime (Brantingham et al. 2005). In addition, law enforcement, albeit acting after a crime is committed, is considered to have a preventive function too (ECOSOC 2003); effective law enforcement is expected to deter future criminals through the expectable consequences of the criminal act. In this sense, the preventive action works in the same way as that of situational prevention, through influence on the rational choices of the potential offender.

The Lisbon metro has been a space of experimentation for crime prevention policy recently. Prominent examples are: the community policing in Alta de Lisboa (a pilot project in replication in other districts; see Section 5.1); the strategic plan for urban security in Cascais, an attempt at producing evidence-based grounds for deploying situational prevention tactics (mainly CCTV and patrolling); and a safety audit in Barreiro, with the explicit goal of questioning the relationship between perceptions of safety and real dangers. All in all, especially in Lisbon and Cascais, the most problematic dimension is the actual drive to expand security measures in contexts characterized by low crime. One may conclude that most situational policies have been implemented in response to social demands for more safety—despite low crime rates, Portuguese citizens are among the most concerned with safety (van Dijk et al. 2007; Tulumello 2017, 33-34)—without questioning the demands themselves; CCTV projects implemented in Lisbon in tourist areas, where crime rates are extremely low, are cases in point. In Barreiro, however, the councilor responsible for safety, when interviewed about the safety audit, expressed an interest in problematizing social requests for safety:

Some data will show that some of the issues raised [by the public] are real, others are less real. Understanding where improvement can be achieved is crucial, often small issues can bring about improvement. At the same time, [we intend to] demystify some myths about security and the existence of insecurity. The population will have access to better information and will, thus, feel safer.⁸

The analysis of local social development plans and planning policy broadens the understanding of the conceptualization of security in the Lisbon metro; and highlights the existence of long-term concerns for social prevention, which complement situational interventions. In social development

plans, security and feelings of safety are often mentioned in diagnostic phases, whereas fields highlighted for intervention are: social cohesion; inclusion of social groups; and specific problems in council housing and deprived neighborhoods. The social study for Lisbon's 2013-2015 social development plan exemplifies a conception of the relation between development and safety which is quite common among policy makers (Rede Social de Lisboa 2009, 20):

Significant disparities between economic and social opportunities exist in cities. Such disparities can be spatial (among neighborhoods) and social (among groups); frequently the two types coexist [...]. This reality harms the attractiveness, competitiveness, social inclusion and security of cities.⁹

In planning policy, differing approaches have been found (see Tulumello 2016b for an in-depth study): emphasis on the role of design to foster situational prevention in Cascais; and the function of urban regeneration to create “vibrant”, hence allegedly safe, neighborhoods in Lisbon. In the words of a planner from Lisbon:

We are aware that when some urban conditions are guaranteed, security is guaranteed as well [...]. If we achieve a cosmopolitan city with a compact urban fabric, a vibrant city with a multiplicity of uses and activities, [...] we are creating natural conditions for security, without any need for, say, behavioral regulations (interview).

Findings from Memphis highlight a completely different scenario, in which prevention is almost exclusively pursued by means of law enforcement and policing. The Memphis Police Department (MPD) is the pivotal element of security policy. MPD uses a zero tolerance approach,¹⁰ partially

balanced by efforts for community partnership. The period between 2005 and 2011 was characterized by significant investment in enforcement and technological policing. The number of officers grew by one fourth, topping 2,454 officers in 2011;¹¹ in 2006, a partnership between the University of Memphis and the MPD launched the Blue CRUSH (Crime Reduction Utilizing Statistical History) program. Blue CRUSH analyzes data from officers' reports and intelligent CCTV in order to forecast "hot-spots" where future crimes may occur, hence where enforcement should be targeted. According to a former MPD consultant, who led the design of the program: "Patterns are going to be good at forecasting where you're gonna have your crime problems. If you put officers in the right place, at the right time, on the right day, things are gonna happen" (interview). Blue CRUSH has been considered a best practice¹² and the main reason for the drop in violent crime between 2006 and 2011 (see Figure 4); however, evidence of this effectiveness is rather weak.¹³ Blue CRUSH has also been criticized for the risks of "preemptive discrimination" (Vlahos 2012) and racial profiling in police intervention—an activist of the Mid-South Peace and Justice Center has termed the program an "occupation model" (interview).¹⁴ Beyond hot-spot policing, MPD has led a variety of efforts: public-private partnerships such as the Operation Safe Community (the plan of the Memphis Crime Commission, composed of public and business leaders) or the Crisis Intervention Team (see Section 6.4); programs among youths and Black communities to build trust in the police; and charity programs, such as providing school supplies to households in need.

Beyond police services, the approach to crime prevention in other municipal divisions is almost exclusively centered on situational prevention. The division of Parks and Neighborhoods has managed the Neighborhood Crime Prevention Grant for small projects of video-surveillance, and lighting or cleaning up integrated in the Neighborhood Watch program (see Section 5.1).¹⁵ In

planning policy, emphasis is placed on spatial design through practices such as Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) (interviews with two chief planners and a high-ranking MPD official), which is an attempt at situational prevention by means of urban and architectural design (see Tulumello 2016b, 3-4).

Efforts in the field of social prevention are fragmented and inconsistently funded, making it almost impossible to discern this as a systematic endeavor of the city of Memphis. The plan of the Operation Safe Community, albeit predominantly composed of policing strategies, envisages efforts to reduce blight and the number of vacant properties, education of the youth, alternative sentencing for young first offenders and treatment of drug addiction. However, the plan, in the basic absence of resources, is being carried out through voluntary endeavors, as summarized by a member of the Crime Commission:

I can't make the Mayor or the police Chief do anything, but you get them on a strategy that they are passionate about. They dive into it and they work it hard. And so we have, all of these public leaders are involved in various strategies, and a lot of private leaders are too, but less so. So I think the real heart of what we are doing is collaboration and gentle accountability (interview).

The division of Housing and Community Development considers community revitalization to be a contributing factor in crime prevention. However, in a context of extremely scarce resources and dependence on external grants, planning in the long-term and addressing the specific problems at the local level is problematic. In the words of a chief planner from the division:

[Resource scarcity] wasn't as much of an issue when we were receiving much more funding from the federal government. We have just seen dramatic decrease in our funding since I've been here [17 years]. [...] [We experience a] lack of city, local, flexible funding, [...] the dollars that we have available have some fairly significant requirements attached to them.

5.1. Approaches to proximity/community policing

Policing, in the conceptual design of this research, was one among many practices, and not the main component, of urban security policy-making. However, having found in the field that policing is central to preventive efforts in Memphis, a discussion of the models of proximity/community policing is useful for a better understanding of the differences between the two cities.

Proximity policing (*police de proximité*), a model introduced in France in 1998, is based on the idea that the neighborhood level is the most appropriate for addressing problems linked to crime, through the creation of trust relationships between citizens and the police, and reframing of policing approaches from being reactive to proactive. Community policing entails a further step, that of creating collaboration relationships, while the police accept the involvement of citizens in the decision-making process to “reach a shared understanding of local public safety” (Thomas and Burns 2005, 74; see also Saborio 2014). This was the aim of the Lisbon municipal police in creating the program of community policing in Alta de Lisboa. The officers allocated to the program were selected for their listening skills and were specifically trained. The program was co-designed in one year during monthly meetings with the local community group; the priorities and routes of foot patrols were jointly decided—“community policing must be planned from the ground up with the community” (sociologist responsible for the program, interview). The officers

report monthly at the meetings of the Urban Safety team of the community group, where priorities are readjusted to cater for emerging needs. Over time, the officers have developed strong bonds with the local community, to the extent that they regularly act as social workers and manage relationships between the citizens and other institutions.¹⁶ According to a social worker in a local NGO:

We couldn't live anymore without community policing. It is now embedded [*entranhado*] among the partners [of the Community Group] and the population. The population knows they can resort to the municipal police and to the community policing, which is made up of people ready to help, [people] who carry out auditing work without repressive goals, [a work that is] very educational, very pedagogic, [a work made up] of identification of problems and listening. This changed everything. The perception that people have of the police has changed, especially with regard to the ease with which they can access the police and the proximity of the support (interview).

This evaluation sounds quite excessive when considering the shortcomings of the program: the allocation of only two officers covering one eight-hour shift daily; and the fact that the Community Group has been progressively institutionalized, losing the participation of important local groups (e.g. the associations of council housing tenants). All in all, however, the program can be considered a proper community policing practice.

The practices studied in Memphis, on the contrary, are described by the concept of proximity policing, where “the sharing of power between police officers and local residents regarding security and criminality issues [is] not anymore presented as necessary” (Saborio 2014, 275). In the Neighborhood Watch, a national program implemented widely in Memphis, (organized groups

of) citizens take responsibility for watching their neighborhood, reporting suspicious activities and distributing information among neighbors. The Neighborhood Watch emphasizes the role of communities in providing timely information to the police. While it is expected that reactive police work would be improved by such information and increased awareness of the citizens, citizens are unable to influence police action. The unidirectional nature of communication is evident in the words of the civil servant responsible for the Crime Prevention Grant:

The communication is stronger when you're starting to trust law enforcement. I've seen that play out in meetings where neighbors and communities feel comfortable in speaking to law enforcement about what they experience in their neighborhoods. And, then, in turn law enforcement express to them "thank you for sharing with me, *this is the kind of information we need to do our job*" (interview, emphasis mine).

Similarly, the Community Outreach program (an MPD pilot program ongoing in three precincts), designed after the Blue CRUSH, serves to "communicate to community in general that you're changing the strategy in general and, then, what the results [are] on an ongoing basis" and, in doing so, reduce the risk of "pushbacks" (former MPD consultant, interview). Also in this case, while "town hall" meetings are organized regularly to meet citizens, no co-decisional process is institutionalized. These events are the place "where the community has an opportunity to say anything that's on their mind" (high-ranking MPD official, interview). "Some [of this feedback] were been used in adjusting strategies" (former MPD consultant, interview). In other words, it depends on the personal will of the officers to decide whether or not the citizens' feedback is to be used to modify practice. Moreover, the Community Outreach replaced the Co-Acts units, which were proximity units located in community centers all around the city. In Klondike Smokey City,

the suppression of Co-Acts is considered a major problem by the citizens, mostly the elderly, who I met during the participant observation.

As far as prevention paradigms are concerned, the concept of community policing is grounded in the acknowledgement that the problems with crime and safety perceptions are “internal” to a given community and the police, thus, contribute to overcoming them, mixing social with situational prevention (Saborio 2014)—as exemplified by community policing in Alta de Lisboa. On the contrary, the emphasis on the auto-organization of communities is overwhelmingly present in practices such as the Neighborhood Watch and in the words of policy makers in Memphis:

I envision a community where the community is policing itself and you don't need law enforcement to come in because they are not allowing individuals to sell dope by their homes or harbor fugitives... or harbor any type of ill activity that spills out in the community (high-ranking MPD official, interview).

Such emphasis implicitly reinforces the idea of the criminal as an “external”, alien and rational threat, and accordingly the focus is overwhelmingly on situational prevention: “Neighborhood Watch works because it reduces opportunities for crime to occur; it doesn't rely on altering or changing the criminal's behavior or motivation.”¹⁷

6. Explaining the differences

This section presents three arguments, to discuss the differences of approach to urban security and public safety previously described, adopting a comparative strategy centered on the discussion of relations among scales (from the local to the global) and levels of governmental action (from

municipal to national policies). As such, I will discuss: (i) the political conceptions of urban security in the two contexts; (ii) the way global trends of neoliberalization of security have affected local security-making; and (iii) institutional frameworks and multilevel relationships (i.e. Portuguese centralization and US federalism)—respectively focusing on politics, policies and polities.

6.1. (National) political frameworks: security as a goal

If policy-making was a rational cycle problem/solution/evaluation, one would expect policy makers to act in the way they consider most effective to minimize the impact of crime. One could, then, speculate that policy makers in Lisbon, in a context of low impact crime, are relatively freer to experiment with long-term approaches through redistributive policies; while their counterparts in Memphis, who face more significant challenges, are inclined to pursue short-term measures with expected direct impact. Rational choice theories, however, only marginally explain extant policy-making practice (cf. Colebatch 2005). While mainstream research on security and safety has used evidence-based approaches in the endeavor to find technical “solutions” to the “problem” of crime, I have advocated a need to look critically into urban security as a matter of politics (Tulumello and Falanga 2015; Tulumello 2016b). This is supported by the findings of this research.

The three municipalities studied in the Lisbon metro are characterized by different political cultures. For the last decade, Lisbon has been governed by the main Portuguese center-left party (Partido Socialista), Cascais by the main center-right party (Partido Social Democrata) and Barreiro by the communist party (Partido Comunista Português). In the set of policies analyzed, a shift from the emphasis on social towards situational prevention was observed when moving from

the left to the right of the political spectrum (cf. Tulumello 2016b). Although this is a preliminary result, it is a hint of how political traditions have a role in shaping the way urban security is conceptualized as a public goal.

In order to extend the comparison to include the (Southern) US, I shall refrain from insisting on the left-right political spectrum; where should the Democratic and Republican parties be placed in the European political context? Memphis has been governed for decades by Democratic mayors with a set of policies that are typical of European center-right parties—e.g. emphasis on fiscal adjustment and tax reduction, attraction of corporate investment, and zero tolerance for crime. Yet sociopolitical cultures are strongly embedded in the differences between the conception of public policy in Portugal (and other European countries) and that of the US. Research in the Lisbon metro has shown how, despite different emphases on situational and social paradigms, all policy makers conceive urban security as a goal for a broad set of policies, those aimed at directly reducing the likelihood of crime and those indirectly promoting security through the improvement of societal cohesion. This mix is found all around Southern Europe (Recasens et al. 2013) and is consistent with the welfare tradition of Europe, where the state is expected to play a central role in the promotion of overall social advancement. The successful decriminalization of the use of drugs in Portugal in 2001 is a case in point; in fifteen years, the levels of addiction and death from drug use have dropped dramatically (Murkin 2014).

The dominant conception of the role of the state is very different in the US: “There is effective consensus that the state should refrain from imposing a moral orthodoxy and confine policy-making to attainment of secular goods—safety, health, security, and prosperity—of value to all citizens regardless of their cultural persuasions” (Kahan 2011, 25). As such it is understandable that security and safety are considered goals for public policies directly acting on the likelihood of

the occurrence of a criminal act; while the adoption of welfare as a means for the long-term prevention of crime would clash with “the values and cultural persuasions” of the dominant consensus. This has become more evident since the end of the New Deal Consensus with the emergence of a political culture more oriented toward repression (Simon 2007). There are significant variations in political traditions across the US because of the autonomy granted to the states, but Kahan’s insights seem particularly appropriate to describe the political context in the South, including Memphis (see, e.g, Peacock 2007; Rushing 2009). Indeed, the analysis of the weekly mail updates sent during 2016 by the mayor of Memphis¹⁸ was useful in confirming that the structural reasons for poverty, inequality, mental health problems and racial strife are marginal to government action and discourse. On the contrary, “public safety”, along with economic development, is the most frequent concern, security being discussed almost exclusively as a matter of policing. An excerpt from an email (May 6) provides an eloquent picture:

These two items alone [two reports of indictments and arrests] demonstrate how hard our law enforcement community is working to fight violent crime. [...] Our interim police director, said it best this week when he was asked what message he had for criminals in Memphis: “We are coming after you.” That we are. We’re fighting violent crime in our city every hour of every day, *thanks to the hardworking men and women of MPD* (emphasis mine).

The horizontal, longstanding differences in national and local political cultures emphasized here should now be complemented by a comparative outlook of the relations among multiple scales and governmental levels.

6.2. The local amid the global: neoliberalization and urban security

To begin with, I shall emphasize processes of policy convergence/divergence in light of global neoliberalization, which, according to Brenner (1999) has fueled processes of state “rescaling”, that is, transference of power and resources upward and downward. This, according to critical scholarship, was accompanied by contradictory patterns of state retrenchment (especially of welfare), and expansion (the use of public resources to allow the deployment of allegedly free markets) (Peck 2004; Brenner et al. 2010). As a result, urban policy has been transformed by public-private partnerships, privatization and liberalization of services (Sager 2011). Neoliberal state rescaling has affected urban security in contradictory ways; (global) cities witnessed the exponential growth of corporate security sectors (Graham 2010; Rossi and Vanolo 2010) at the same time as local governments faced the burden of budget cuts and often had to delegate the implementation of security solutions to citizens and local businesses (Peck 2012; Trémon 2013).

We can observe the differing impact of these trends in Lisbon and Memphis. In Portugal, some critics interpreted the growth of the public security sector during the early 2000s, as well as the growth of the corporate security sector—also thanks to injection of public resources—as a sign of the neoliberal reconfiguration of the state (Rodrigues and Teles 2008). However, the national security sector has also been subject to cuts since 2011, with the full-scale implementation of austerity policies following the international bailout of the Portuguese debt (see Seixas et al. 2016). Private security, moreover, is used almost exclusively in corporate and household security, and not in public urban spaces. Local governments, as we exemplified in the Lisbon metro, despite having suffered significant cuts, preferred to keep urban security as a matter of public policy.¹⁹

On the contrary, urban security policy-making in Memphis is paradigmatic of the contradictory trends of state growth and public disengagement amid neoliberal restructuring in the Southern US. On the one hand, the budget of MPD has kept growing²⁰ even in a city under the long-term rule of “austerity urbanism” (cf. Peck 2012). On the other hand, public disengagement is evident in three dimensions. Firstly, privatization, as particularly evident in Blue CRUSH, implemented in partnership with IBM and SkyCop corporation. Secondly, the disengagement of political responsibility for the decision concerning spatial allocation to resources—affluent communities have been funding the expansion of Blue CRUSH in their areas (member of Memphis Crime Commission, interview), while the Neighborhood Crime Prevention Grant exemplifies the allocation of funds to the best bid and not on the grounds of a policy strategy. Thirdly, delegation of the responsibilities of the public sector to the self-organization of citizens—rather than creating space for co-decision, public actors expected that citizens would step up and substitute public policy, as exemplified by the role of community self-defense (cf. Section 5.1), this being quite widespread around the US (see President’s Task Force on 21st Century Policing 2015, 41-50).

6.3. Multilevel institutional frameworks

Beyond political cultures and the effects of global trends on policies, institutional organization crucially shapes multilevel relationships; patterns of centralization/decentralization (i.e. relations among polities) help explain further differing approaches to urban security in Lisbon and Memphis. Portugal is a centralized state—a long-term remnant of 50 years of dictatorship that ended in 1974—with a low proportion of subnational public expenditure,²¹ centralization being particularly evident in security policy, as the Homeland Security Law (53/2008) states that security

is the exclusive responsibility of the central state. The national strategies for security that have been launched since 2008 are based on law enforcement and situational prevention. An intervention of a former Ministry of Internal Affairs (Pereira 2010) sums up the national government's conception of security, mentioning cooperation among security agencies, police staffing, border control, proximity patrols and video surveillance.²² In recent times, municipal governments have felt the need to gain maneuvering room in order to answer (growing) social demands for safety. However, not many substantial results in terms of formal decentralization were achieved. For instance, an advisor to the councilor responsible for safety in Lisbon, when interviewed, considered the Local Pacts for Security launched in 2008 as an opportunity for decentralization, because they transferred resources for security to the municipal level. However, the agreement between the state and municipalities limited the role of local actors to the provision of information to national security agencies (MAI and ANMP 2008).²³ This helps explain the efforts of local governments. On the one hand, local governments have included safety goals in a broad range of policy fields. On the other hand, before 2000 only Lisbon and Porto had municipal police, but in the last fifteen years more cities have invested in the creation of their own municipal police forces. This has also produced some conflicts of attribution between the state and municipalities—tellingly, two municipal police officials interviewed in Cascais denied any responsibility for urban security, in contrast with what is stated on the website, where *segurança* (security) is listed as the first area of intervention.²⁴

The US, a federal country, is more decentralized, both in terms of public expenditure²⁵ and the degree of local governmental autonomy (see Section 3.1), which includes public safety and criminal justice (the latter at county level). Unsurprisingly, law enforcement and situational prevention are core goals of municipal authorities, while social policy is more often considered to

be the responsibility of the federal and state governments, which provide for it mostly through grants—e.g. the case of the housing policy in Memphis. In the words of a high-ranking MPD official, federal and local money are “different buckets”, not to be mixed, and it is through federal money that welfare should be provided (interview).

The local responsibility for urban security plays a major role in shifting the economic capacity of city governments, as an overview of municipal expenditure shows.²⁶ In recent times, local budgets of Southern European and US cities have seen significant cuts. The efforts to improve safety can be understood in a framework of relatively scarce, and shrinking, resources. In 2016, Lisbon city plans to spend about 1,360 euros (~1,500 dollars) and Memphis city 1,020 dollars per inhabitant.²⁷ In Memphis, 38.1% of the budget is allocated to police services and 18.2% to urban and social policy,²⁸ including human resources. In Lisbon, 21.9% of the budget is allocated to urban and social policy²⁹ with only 0.2% to municipal police—neither value includes human resources, which account for 30.0% of the total budget. In short, the budget of Memphis is significantly burdened by the local responsibility for urban security:

Most of everything we do here [in social and urban policy] is federal money [...]. Now there is a price to be paid for that. Which is, if you spend all this money for law enforcement to deal with problems that law enforcement cannot address, which is poverty, which is generational poverty and lack of economic opportunity and social mobility, well then... you're gonna have to keep spending the money with law enforcement (Memphis activist, interview).

This was indirectly confirmed by a high-ranking MPD official, who admitted that social policy would indeed reduce the structural causes for crime; but insisted that as long as there is “demand” for police services, police cannot be reduced (interview).

7. When policy and policing clash: from social outreach to “mission creep”

Finally, I shall discuss the implications of the arguments presented in the previous section for the relations between local policy and policing, and their clash in cases such as (cities like) Memphis. I will firstly use the case of community policing to emphasize the conditions necessary for police to perform social outreach tasks in order to *support* social prevention, and the constraints that impede them in doing so. Secondly, I shall broaden the discussion, focusing on the risks of the expectation that police *lead* social prevention.

7.1. Community policing amid coupling/decoupling of security and local policy

Goetz and Mitchell (2003; 2006) have studied attempts in US cities to shift policing and criminal justice towards community-building and reintegrative approaches, discovering many difficulties and failures. All in all, “community policing” in the US has been associated with a wide range of practices, such as aggressive order maintenance, nuisance abatement and problem-oriented policing (Goetz and Mitchell 2003), which are proximity practices but not “community policing” proper—i.e., co-decisional practices aimed at the construction of an understanding of safety that is shared by the police and the local communities. Goetz and Mitchell (2003; 2006) explained such failures in the light of organizational reasons: the resistance of police agencies and officers to act as “agent[s] of social outreach” (2003, 224); and in general, the difficult coexistence of the two goals, order maintenance and reintegrative policing. This is evident, for instance, in the use of “stats” to evaluate police work, a growing trend in the context of New Public Management practices (see Schneider 2014). In the words of an activist in Memphis:

When you are judging all officers by their stats, then you create incentives for officers to charge people with higher crimes, or in certain cases to cut corners and keep their stats up. [...] I am not evaluated at how good a police officer I am. [...] I am evaluated based on what stats I produce (interview).

This “internal” understanding can be enriched by linking organizational issues with “external” constraints, such as the political climate and institutional frameworks. Strong pressures and rich federal funding, by the federal government, made militarized departments of local police in the name of the “war on drugs” in the 1980s and 1990s and the “war on terror” in the 2000s (Harwood 2014; Walby and Lippert 2015). Attempts to implement community policing, thus, have to face both a general political climate oriented toward crime suppression (cf. Section 6.1) and the pushbacks of police departments organized as mini-armies and with incentives, paradoxically, to increase crime numbers. This is especially evident in Memphis where the creation of the police as a social outreach actor seems rhetorical and instrumental in reducing “pushbacks” to aggressive policing tactics (see Section 5.1).

Comparative evidence permits the inclusion of the implications of the coupling/decoupling of security with/from urban policy. In Memphis, those competences are coupled at the local level and police departments have been growing at the expense of the latter, because local leaders meet strong political pressures to be “tough on crime”—as the analysis of the mayor’s email update clearly shows (see Section 6.1).

In Lisbon, however, competence over urban security, which is located at the national level, is decoupled from that, located at the municipal level, over urban and social policy—and local governments are not the primary recipient of public demands for security. As such, though a focus on repression and situational prevention is evident at the national level (cf. previous section), the

scenario for local policing is very different. In Lisbon, where municipal police are not responsible for law enforcement, community policing could be designed as an integration of national police action—while Co-Acts had to be suppressed in Memphis to create the Community Outreach program. Local police in Portugal are not evaluated through stats and it is therefore less of a problem for officers to carry out “social work” tasks. On the contrary, attempts by national police agencies to develop proximity policing have found internal pushbacks similar to those experienced in the US (Durão 2011). It is worth mentioning that local police staffing in Lisbon is made up of temporarily assigned national police officers. That is to say, the same officers, in different organizational contexts and under different political pressures, find different incentives to develop practices of community policing—the decoupling of security and social policy at the local level being a crucial driver.

7.2. Social problems as security issues

The intersection of the trends described in the previous section—a minimalist political conception of the role of the state, neoliberalization of urban policy, localism of public expenditure—has meant that, in (cities like) Memphis, many social problems became security issues, mental health being a case in point.

Given the incidence of violent acts involving mental health consumers, the MPD has developed a partnership, the Crisis Intervention Team, which has successfully limited harm and has become a national model (Compton et al. 2008). However, the need itself for such intervention emphasizes the absence of health care that would prevent violent events from happening in the first place. In this respect, although CIT is often considered to be an attempt at social prevention, it can hardly

be considered as such—or, for that matter, *prevention*. CIT does not address the (social) causes of certain violent situations (that is, mental disorders), it does not ensure that “an event does not come to pass” (cf. Section 5); it is deployed when a violent event is already happening. As such, despite being an attempt by the police to compensate for social welfare cutbacks, CIT paradoxically exemplifies the reasons why, beyond rhetoric, police can hardly perform (social) prevention. On the contrary, “treatment” for mental health problems, so to speak, is eventually provided by the criminal justice system. An activist suggested that “‘201’ [street name of Memphis jail] is the largest mental health facility in the state” (interview). Indeed, the prevalence of mental health disorders in prisons and jails, particularly among youths and minorities, is a massive issue in Tennessee and at a national level (Prins 2014; Washington 2014).

In the words of a former MPD consultant, this is a generalized trend: “There is a tendency to keep falling back on having the police solve the problems” (interview). While social services were being reduced in scope and funding, police departments and the criminal justice system were requested to step up and deal with social ills—all interviewees agreed that this is the case in Memphis. And, as happened with mental health, this brought about a “mission creep” (former MPD consultant, interview) of policing tactics towards an increasing number of fields of social policy like poverty, homelessness and drug addiction at the expense of real social prevention that the police are not equipped to perform.

8. Conclusions

This comparative discussion of urban security and public safety in two contexts at the margins of mainstream urban studies has illustrated how the extant policy-making is the output of a

complex mixture of multi-scalar determinants and trends on the cultural, sociopolitical and institutional levels. The study of places at the borderlands of epistemological production has been particularly useful in showing how external pressures intersect and clash with longstanding political traditions and local conditions in shaping the processes of policy transfer, convergence and divergence. It was my contention that comparative, in-depth and critical research could help “generate” a “field of conceptualization” (Robinson 2016, 18) for urban security and public safety. Indeed, the arguments I used to discuss the differences between the cases of Lisbon and Memphis can be used to generate four insights with broader conceptual utility to take theoretical steps towards a better understanding of crime prevention at the intersection of multiple levels of government.

Firstly, (national, regional and local) *political* traditions are a necessary dimension in the understanding of local approaches to urban security. The actual implementation of security policy-making also needs to be understood on the grounds of wider conceptualization of the relationship between the state, the public and the private spheres. At the core of this conceptualization lies the “origin” of safety threats; in (contexts like) Memphis, the discourse on crime is dominated by the vision of “external” threats to the “community”, which is, thus, responsible for self-defense; while in (contexts like) Lisbon, there is a tendency to acknowledge the need to address “internal” societal problems (cf. Melossi 2003, 383), hence the role of the state in long-term prevention.

Secondly, different contexts are affected differently by global trends in urban *policy*. In Memphis, the high rate of violent crime and the historical persistence of structural social ills and racial strife are entangled with the patterns of neoliberalization in urban security—growing public apparatuses of law enforcement amid welfare retrenchment and disengagement of public policy—confirming Lloyd’s conclusion (2012) that the Southern US should be considered a vanguard of

neoliberalization. On the contrary, despite the powerful trends of neoliberalization that have recently been putting welfare in crisis in Southern European countries and the full enforcement of austerity in Portugal since 2011, urban security remains solidly a public responsibility in Lisbon. This, on the one hand, confirms how neoliberalization, and particularly its Portuguese version, is characterized by significant ambiguities and contradictions (Baptista 2013; Tulumello 2016a), and more generally the need to look at neoliberalism in its actual, variegated versions (Brenner et al. 2010). On the other hand, we found confirmation that the study of places at the borderlands of urban theory is useful to problematize linear understanding of policy transfer from global trends to local contexts (see, e.g., Lippert 2014).

Thirdly, centralization/decentralization patterns among *polities* can influence local security-making in unexpected ways. While the temptation to advocate decentralization—in the name of accountability, subsidiarity and proximity—is always strong in the centralized Southern European countries, my evidence shows that some degree of centralization can promote more holistic practices of urban security. In Portugal, the state responsibility for urban security implies that local governments can work with social and situational policies, at the same time as centralized resources for law enforcement can be distributed where they are more necessary. On the contrary, the local responsibility for public safety in the US means that some local governments, especially in less wealthy cities, are burdened by the cost of police departments. Paradoxically, decentralization of security-making does not automatically entail increased autonomy of local policy; while in Lisbon, under a centralized state, there is room for local actors to experiment outside the borders of formal attributions, in Memphis, despite formal autonomy, there is little possibility of thinking beyond law enforcement.

Fourthly, the comparative focus on community policing has emphasized the intersection of the three dimensions of politics, policies and polities with issues of police organization. My cases show that the decoupling of urban and social policy may help with implementing community policing as a contribution to long-term crime prevention and having officers buying into such a goal; while the coupling of security and social policy can entail a creep of aggressive policing practices towards all the fields of policy action.

Beyond comparative-theoretical discussion, this article had a normative-practical goal, which is inevitably more relevant for Memphis—and many other US cities suffering similar problems at the intersection of crime, retrenching social policy and aggressive policing. This article showed that practices of crime prevention in these places are characterized by a paradox; they are the core goal of political action at the same time as they tend to be conceived less and less as a matter of proper, holistic public policy. This generates contradictions such as that between the emphasis on the defense of communities from external threats and the fact that the largest share of violent crime stems from intra-communal disputes and domestic violence. In these places, “most governmental action focuses on symptoms, not causes.”³⁰

In short, when “urban security” or “public safety” (with their crucial dimension of order maintenance) are not accompanied by holistic “prevention” (intended as addressing the causes of crime), social problems tend to become security issues. Policing becomes the only game in town despite evidence that it can hardly lead (social) prevention—for both organizational and structural reasons. As such, the creep of police happens at the expense of structural prevention; hence the need to shift crime prevention away from policing—particularly in contexts where structural problems and crime are deeply interconnected.

It is beyond my scope to suggest specific recommendations for the restructuring of the US institutional system. However, findings from this article suggest two areas of reform, which are crucial if structural, long-term crime prevention in places like Memphis is to become a serious priority of policy-making from the local to the federal level. In the first place, it is high time for a discussion on the possibility of centralizing, at least at the metropolitan level, some responsibilities for urban security. Unfortunately, this does not seem to be on the agenda of discussions about criminal justice and police reform—e.g. the report of the President’s Task Force on 21st Century Policing recommends the creation of incentives for micro agencies to “take steps towards shared services, regional training, and consolidation” (2015, 28-29) but does not discuss structural problems of institutional organization at the metropolitan or state level. Secondly, my findings resonate with Kantor’s call (2016) for rethinking US urban policies in terms of making the whole policy environment more just, hence more capable of tackling structural issues—including regional and metropolitan imbalances—at the root of crime, with an increased role of national government. At the time of writing (February 2017), early signals by the Trump administration suggest that the federal government will (keep) not lead(ing) such reforms for some time to come. My hope is that cities will be capable of stepping up and creating political networks in the struggle for structural change.

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¹ In the US, the prevention of crime falls into the field of “public safety”, in international English it falls into “urban security” and/or “urban safety”, the distinction between security and safety being especially fuzzy in urban studies (Tulumello and Falanga 2015). I shall use the terms according the International Centre for Prevention of Crime, which defines urban security as a “public good delivered by the state under regular circumstances” and urban safety as “a subjective feeling of being secure as experienced by citizens” (ICPC 2012, 3).

² The use of the “best practice” approach is ubiquitous in discussions at international institutions—see, e.g. a document commissioned by the Global Network for Safer Cities (EFUS and ICPC 2014).

³ Home Rule “gives local governments governing authority to make a wide range of legislative decisions that have not been addressed by the state. By contrast, the Dillon Rule creates a framework where local governments can only legislate what the state government has decreed” (Russell and Bostrom 2016, 1).

⁴ In 2014, 25% of homicides were committed by the partner and only 16.3% of those with known perpetrator were committed by a person with no relationship to the victim—my elaboration on data SSI (2015, 46).

⁵ Which covers most part of the metropolitan area (940,000 inhabitants). I use county data, rather than data from the Metropolitan Statistical Area, because crimes are reported by municipal and county authorities and some unincorporated sections of the Metropolitan Statistical Area are included in territories of counties that extend well beyond the metropolitan area.

⁶ In Lisbon metro 13 interviews and six work meetings, in Memphis 10 interviews (one interviewee provided written answers to a list of questions) and three work meetings. Interviewees were politicians, civil servants (departments of police, civil protection, urban planning, housing and community development, social policy) and academicians (criminology), plus one activist (Mid-South Peace and Justice Center, Memphis) and a lawyer (Memphis Crime Commission).

⁷ In Alta de Lisboa, I have followed the activities of the team Urban Safety of the local community group (Grupo Comunitário da Alta de Lisboa); in Klondike Smokey City, a partnership between the University of Memphis, Department of City and Regional Planning (activities coordinated by Antonio Raciti and Laura Saija) and the local Community Development Corporation. I have attended the monthly meetings of the Community Group and CDC, and further events and activities. In addition, I have carried out five interviews and focus groups with activists and policy makers in Alta de Lisboa; while in Klondike Smokey City I have collaborated in the production of a participatory plan for community development.

⁸ Quotations from interviews and policy documents in Portugal are my translations.

⁹ One should, however, highlight that the social development plan just approved (January 2017) adopts a narrower understanding of security, limited to the field of policing, with reference to community policing (Rede Social de Lisboa 2016, 115-117)—whether this is a sign of a shifting approach is too early to say.

¹⁰ See the MPD website, www.memphispolice.org/mission.asp (accessed February 1, 2017).

¹¹ Data City-Data, available at www.city-data.com/crime/crime-Memphis-Tennessee.html#ixzz3LUrBJSD9 (accessed February 1, 2017).

¹² The Memphis Police Department was the recipient of the 2009 award for Excellence in Law Enforcement Communications and Interoperability (Large Cities) by the International Association of Chiefs of Police.

¹³ Allegations of effectiveness are grounded in the comparison of crime rates with 2006. However, the rationale of comparing crime rates to one single year characterized by a peak of crimes is debatable; while the comparison of the five years of implementation with the five previous years suggest Blue CRUSH may have helped with some property crimes (Vlahos 2012). Indeed, a consultant and a high-ranking official of MPD, interviewed, agreed that hot-spot policing is effective for those crimes where the rational decision is more important (particularly property crimes like burglary) and less on violent crimes, which often stem from disputes.

¹⁴ Blue CRUSH has been reduced since 2011 because of a shrinking number of officers (around 2,000 in 2015), but the recently elected city administration wants to deploy it in full activity again and hire officers to bring the total up to 2011 levels.

¹⁵ The grant will be directly managed by the MPD starting in 2017.

¹⁶ In every meeting of the Urban Safety team I have attended, police officers reported such cases, e.g. follow-up of people with drug addiction in their relations with health and care services or mediation between the municipal housing authority and tenants.

¹⁷ From the website of the National Crime Prevention Council, www.ncpc.org/topics/home-and-neighborhood-safety/neighborhood-watch (accessed February 1, 2017).

¹⁸ Registration at the link

https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/TNMEMPHIS/subscriber/new?qsp=TNMEMPHIS_5 (accessed February 1, 2017).

¹⁹ I have found the involvement of private actors in only one case. A private consultant coordinated the realization of the Strategic Security Plan of Cascais. According to the consultant, interviewed, the main reason for the municipality to opt for the outsourcing was the fact that the consultant himself, former head of national police, could have better access to crime data, kept by national departments and hardly accessible to local authorities (cf. Durão 2011).

²⁰ The size of MPD has doubled between 1989 and 2006 (Warren 2015). More recently, police budget grew from 200 million dollars in 2005 to 227 million dollars in 2016 (values in 2009 chained dollars), a real growth of 13.4% and from 32.9% to 38.1% of total city expenditure—my elaboration on the original budgets, available at www.memphistn.gov/Government/FinanceDivision.aspx (accessed February 1, 2017).

²¹ In 2011, local expenditure was 10.5% of public expenditure, against an average of 25% in the European Union, plus 4.5% expenditure by regions, which, however, are localized bodies of the national government (Dexia and Conseil de Communes et Régions d'Europe 2012).

²² A national video surveillance program was launched in 2005.

²³ A “new generation” of Local Pacts for Security has been launched in July 2016. According to preliminary documents (GSEAAI 2016), local authorities may have substantial competences.

²⁴ See www.cm-cascais.pt/area/policia-municipal (accessed February 1, 2017).

²⁵ In 2013, public expenditure was 24% local (city and county), 28% state and 48% federal—my elaboration on data Congressional Budget Office (www.cbo.gov/publication/45278) and United States Census Bureau (<http://factfinder.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/index.xhtml>) (accessed February 1, 2017).

²⁶ My elaborations on the original budgets, available at www.cm-lisboa.pt/municipio/camara-municipal/financas/instrumentos-previsionais, www.memphistn.gov/Government/FinanceDivision.aspx (accessed February 1, 2017).

²⁷ This is useful to understand the context for city governments' action and does not imply that there are less funds spent at the local level in Memphis than in Lisbon—one should consider county expenditure and locally allocated federal and state spending in the US, and locally allocated state spending in Portugal.

²⁸ Divisions Parks and Neighborhoods (7.9%), Housing and Community Development (0.7%) and Grants and Agencies (9.6%).

²⁹ Divisions Planning (3.1%), Housing and Local Development (2.9%), Social Rights (1.5%), Green Spaces, Environment and Energy (3.4%), Urban Health (3.3%), Mobility and Transportation (0.4%), Culture (3.1%) and Education and Sports (4.2%).

³⁰ To use a sentence by Joseph J. Wood at a lecture for a Fulbright Enrichment Seminar (April 20, 2016; unpublished). Although the lecture was about the policies around structural racism in Baltimore, this expression brilliantly summarizes some of the issues discussed in this article.

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