



Documentary Research Prototype for the Military Police of Paraná on Community Mediation as a Community Policing Instrument in Brazil: An Analysis of Implementation in the Military Police and Future Perspectives

Prototype for Document Retrieval for the Military Police of Paraná about the Community Mediation as a Tool for Proximity Policing in Brazil: An Analysis of Implementation in the Military Police and Future Perspectives

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Summary

This article investigates the implementation of community mediation as a tool for community policing in the Brazilian Military Police, analyzing its challenges, potential, and future prospects. The relevance of the topic lies in the search for alternatives to the traditional public security model, often criticized for its emphasis on repression and the use of force, to the detriment of prevention and dialogue with the community. The research, of an exploratory nature and based on a literature review, examines the legal and institutional framework of community mediation in Brazil, the structuring of Community Mediation Centers (NUMECs) in the Military Police, the types of conflicts mediated, and the challenges and potential of the tool. The results indicate that, although in a consolidation phase and still facing challenges such as cultural resistance within the corporation and the need for greater investments, community mediation presents promising results in reducing crime, improving the institutional image of the Military Police, and building a culture of peace. The article argues that community mediation, implemented strategically and in partnership with the Public Prosecutor's Office, the Judiciary and other social institutions, can strengthen community policing, making it more civic-minded, dialogic and closer to the community, in addition to contributing to social justice and social cohesion.

Keywords: Community mediation, Military Police, Community policing, Public safety, Culture of peace, Social justice.

Abstract

This article investigates the implementation of community mediation as a tool for proximity policing in the Brazilian Military Police, analyzing its challenges, potentialities, and future perspectives. The relevance of this theme lies in the search for alternatives to the traditional model of public security, often criticized for its emphasis on repression and the use of force, to the detriment of prevention and dialogue with the community. The research, exploratory in nature and based on a bibliographic review, examines the legal and institutional framework of community mediation in Brazil, the structuring of Community Mediation Centers (NUMECs) in the Military Police, the types of conflicts mediated, and the challenges and potentialities of the tool. The results indicate that, although in the consolidation phase and still facing challenges such as cultural resistance within the corporation and the need for greater investment, community mediation shows promising results in reducing crime, improving the institutional image of the Military Police, and building a culture of peace. The article argues that community mediation, implemented strategically and in partnership with the Public Prosecutor's Office, the Judiciary, and other social institutions, can strengthen proximity policing, making it more citizen-oriented, dialogical, and closer to the community, in addition to contributing to social justice and cohesion.

Keywords: Community mediation, Military Police, Proximity policing, Public security, Culture of peace, Social justice.

1 INTRODUCTION

The traditional public security model, centered on repression and the use of force, has often been



It has been questioned for its limited capacity to deal with the complexity of contemporary social problems (Balestreri, 2003; Freire, 2009). The emphasis on repression, in addition to not guaranteeing a reduction in crime, contributes to the distancing between the police and the community, perpetuating a cycle of violence and mutual distrust (Skolnick & Bayley, 2006). In this context, conflict mediation emerges as a valuable tool in the construction of a new way of thinking and practicing public security, one that is more civic-oriented, preventive, humanized and closer to the population.

Community mediation, in particular, seeks to establish a dialogue between the police and the community, promoting citizen participation in conflict resolution and the construction of peaceful solutions to problems that affect public safety (Trojanowicz & Bucqueroux, 1994). Through mediation, the parties involved in a conflict are encouraged to find, with the help of an impartial third party, the mediator, mutually satisfactory solutions that meet their needs and interests. This approach contrasts with the adversarial logic of the judicial system, in which the imposition of a decision by a third party prevails, often distant from the reality of the parties.

The implementation of community mediation in the Brazilian Military Police, although still in the consolidation phase, has shown promising results in reducing crime, improving the institutional image of the Military Police, and building a culture of peace (Miranda, 2011; Mourão, 2015; Silva, 2014). However, for the tool to reach its full potential, it is essential to analyze the challenges and potential of its implementation, which will be done in this article. Based on the analysis of the Brazilian experience and international examples, the article argues that community mediation, implemented strategically and in partnership with other social actors, can contribute significantly to the consolidation of a community-based police force, closer to the community and committed to social justice.

1.1 Community Policing: Concepts, Principles and Challenges

Community policing is a policing model that seeks to break with the reactive logic and distance from the community, characteristic of the traditional public security model. Instead of focusing solely on crime repression, community policing prioritizes prevention, problem-solving and building relationships of trust with the community (Skolnick & Bayley, 2006).

According to Trojanowicz and Bucqueroux (1994), community policing is based on three main pillars:

country:

- **Police-community partnership:**The police must work together with the community in identifying problems, searching for solutions and co-producing public safety.
- **Troubleshooting:**The police must go beyond simply repressing crime, seeking identify and solve the causes of problems that affect community safety.
- **Community Guidance:**The police must be attentive to the needs and demands of the community, adapting its strategies and actions to local characteristics.

The implementation of community policing, however, faces a series of challenges, such as cultural resistance within police forces, lack of investment in training and infrastructure, difficulty in measuring results, and the need to overcome mutual distrust between the police and the community (Balestreri, 2003). The traditional organizational culture, based on hierarchy, rigid discipline, and the valorization of the use of force, can represent an obstacle to the implementation of a more horizontal, dialogic, and community-oriented policing model. In addition, the lack of investment in training and infrastructure can compromise the ability of the police to develop the skills and resources necessary for the implementation of community policing.

1.2 Community Mediation: Concepts, Principles and Applications

2

Conflict mediation is a voluntary and confidential process in which a

An impartial third party, the mediator, assists the parties in dispute to find, by themselves, mutually acceptable solutions to the conflict (Moore, 2014). Mediation is based on principles such as voluntariness, confidentiality, impartiality of the mediator, autonomy of the will of the parties and the search for consensus (Brasil, 2015b). Community mediation, in turn, refers to the application of mediation in community contexts, aiming at the resolution of interpersonal conflicts and the promotion of a culture of peace (Sales, Alencar & Feitosa, 2009).

Among the advantages of community mediation, the following stand out:

- **Reduction of violence and crime:**Mediation contributes to the peaceful resolution of conflicts, preventing them from evolving into situations of violence and criminality (Sales, Alencar & Feitosa, 2009).
- **Strengthening the social fabric:**Mediation promotes dialogue, mutual understanding and tolerance, contributing to the strengthening of the social fabric and the construction of a culture of peace (Miranda, 2011).
- **Democratization of access to justice:**Mediation offers an affordable and fast alternative to the judicial system, especially for communities with a history of social exclusion (Oliveira & Vieira, 2018).

1.3 Legal and Institutional Framework for Community Mediation in Brazil

The 1988 Federal Constitution, in its article 144, defines public safety as a duty of the State, a right and responsibility of all, with public safety agencies being responsible for preserving public order (Brazil, 1988). This “preservation of public order” implies preventive action, aiming to avoid the breakdown of social order (Vieira, 2016). Community mediation fits into this context as a tool for preventing and peacefully resolving conflicts, preventing them from evolving into situations of violence and criminality.

Resolution No. 125/2010 of the National Council of Justice (CNJ), a milestone in the institutionalization of mediation in Brazil, encourages the adoption of consensual mechanisms for conflict resolution, opening space for the participation of public security agencies in extrajudicial mediation (CNJ, 2010). Law No. 13,140/2015, known as the Mediation Law, regulated extrajudicial mediation, defining its principles, such as the impartiality of the mediator, equality between the parties, autonomy of will, the search for consensus, confidentiality and good faith (Brazil, 2015b).

1.4 Structuring of Community Mediation Centers (NUMECs) in the Military Police

The implementation of community mediation in the context of public security is carried out through the creation of Community Mediation Centers (NUMECs) within the military police, in partnership with the Judiciary (Oliveira & Vieira, 2018; Silva, 2014). These centers work to resolve interpersonal conflicts that may generate demands for the police, such as neighborhood and family conflicts, disturbance of the peace, threats, slander, insults, and minor bodily harm (Mourão & Strozemberg, 2015; Silva, 2014). The work of NUMECs is based on extrajudicial mediation, with the possibility of the mediation terms being approved by the Judiciary, acquiring the force of a judicial executive title (Oliveira & Vieira, 2018).

The structuring of NUMECs varies between states, but generally involves the selection and training of military police officers to act as mediators, the definition of service protocols, the creation of a suitable physical space for holding mediation sessions and the establishment of mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating results (Mourão, 2015; Silva, 2014).

NUMECs work in different stages:

- **Reception and screening of cases:**Cases arrive at NUMEC through referrals from other police units, the Judiciary, the Public Prosecutor's Office, other institutions or by spontaneous demand from the community. During the screening, the suitability of the conflict for mediation is verified, as well as the availability and interest of the parties in participating in the process.
- **Mediation session:**Mediation sessions are conducted by a trained mediator, in a neutral and confidential environment. The mediator helps the parties to communicate respectfully, to identify their interests and needs and to seek mutually satisfactory solutions to the conflict.
- **Preparation of the Agreement Term:**If the parties reach an agreement, it is formalized in a Settlement Agreement, which is signed by the parties and the mediator. The Settlement Agreement may be approved by the Judiciary, acquiring the force of a judicial enforceable title.
- **Follow-up:**After the mediation session, NUMEC monitors the case management, checking whether the agreement is being complied with and whether the conflict has been effectively resolved.

The experience of NUMECs has shown that community mediation can be an effective tool in conflict resolution, violence prevention and the promotion of a culture of peace (Miranda, 2011; Mourão, 2015; Oliveira & Vieira, 2018; Silva, 2014). However, the consolidation of community mediation as a community policing tool in Brazil depends on continuous investment in training,

1.5 Types of Conflicts Mediated by NUMECS

NUMECs mediate a wide range of interpersonal conflicts that, if not resolved, can result in police reports and, in some cases, escalate into crimes. Some of the types of conflicts most commonly mediated by NUMECs are:

- **Neighborhood conflicts:** disturbance of the peace, disagreements over animals domestic, use of common areas, property boundaries, etc.
- **Family conflicts:** discussions between spouses or partners, disagreements between parents and children, issues related to child custody, alimony, division of assets, etc.
- **Consumer conflicts:** problems with products or services, undue charges, defects, delivery delays, etc.
- **Traffic conflicts:** accidents without victims, arguments between drivers, material damage, etc.
- **Conflicts in schools:** disagreements between students, conflicts between students and teachers, bullying, indiscipline, etc.

It is important to highlight that community mediation in public safety does not replace traditional police action, but complements it (Sales, Alencar & Feitosa, 2009). In crime situations, repression is still necessary, but mediation emerges as an additional tool to deal with everyday conflicts, promoting a culture of peace, social justice and strengthening citizenship (Mourão & Strozemberg, 2015).

2 METHODOLOGY

This article is based on qualitative exploratory research, using bibliographical review as a research method. Books, scientific articles, official documents, legislation and technical reports relevant to the topic of community mediation, community policing and public security in Brazil were consulted, seeking renowned authors and relevant studies in the area.

The search for bibliographic sources was carried out in online databases, such as SciELO, Google Scholar, CAPES Periodicals Portal, Web of Science and Scopus. Official documents and legislation were consulted on the websites of the National Council of Justice (CNJ), the Ministry of Justice and Public Security (MJSP), the Federal Senate, the Chamber of Deputies, state public security agencies and international organizations such as the UN and the OAS.

The analysis of the collected data was carried out through critical and interpretative reading of the sources, seeking to identify the main aspects related to the implementation of community mediation in the Brazilian Military Police, the challenges and potential of this tool, as well as future perspectives for the consolidation of community mediation as a community policing instrument. The methodology of the bibliographic review allowed the systematization of the available knowledge on the subject, the identification of research gaps and the formulation of recommendations for future investigations.

3 RESULTS

The implementation of community mediation in the Brazilian Military Police, although progressing every year, is still in the consolidation phase, facing a series of challenges, but also presenting great potential for the transformation of public security in Brazil:

3.1 Challenges of Implementing Community Mediation in the PM

- **Cultural resistance:** Traditional police culture, focused on repression and the use of force, can generate resistance to the adoption of mediation practices. It is common to see mediation as a “social worker thing” and not a legitimate police activity (Mourão & Strozemberg, 2015). Overcoming this cultural resistance requires long-term work, which involves raising awareness among police officers about the importance of mediation, providing adequate training, and creating incentives for them to work in community mediation.
- **Lack of structure and resources:** The implementation of NUMECs requires investments in infrastructure, such as adequate physical space, office supplies, computer equipment, telephone and

internet. The lack of financial and human resources can compromise the effectiveness of community mediation (Silva, 2014). It is essential that state governments allocate specific resources for the structuring and operation of NUMECs, ensuring that they have the necessary conditions to meet the population's demands.

- **Inadequate training:** Acting as a mediator requires specific communication skills. communication, active listening, impartiality, conflict management, knowledge of legislation and ethics in mediation. Inadequate training of military police officers can compromise the quality of mediation and community confidence in the process (Cooper, 2003). It is crucial that mediator training courses are taught by experienced professionals, with consistent theoretical and practical content, and that police officers receive ongoing training, with a focus on updating and deepening their knowledge.
- **Lack of integration with the justice system:** The effectiveness of community mediation depends on of coordination with the Public Prosecutor's Office and the Judiciary, for the approval of agreements and the guarantee of legal certainty. The lack of integration with the justice system can generate legal uncertainty for those involved and compromise the effectiveness of the agreements (Oliveira & Vieira, 2018). It is essential to create case referral flows between NUMECs, the Public Prosecutor's Office and the Judiciary, in addition to establishing partnerships to carry out joint actions.
- **Lack of knowledge among the population:** The population is often unaware of mediation community mediation as a tool for conflict resolution and, therefore, do not seek it out. The lack of information can lead to the underutilization of NUMECs and the failure to meet latent demands in the community. It is essential to carry out campaigns to publicize community mediation, in different media, to inform the population about the service, its benefits and how to access it.

3.2 Potential of Community Mediation in the PM

- **Strengthening community policing:** Community mediation brings the Military Police closer together. community, promoting dialogue, trust and collaboration in problem-solving (Skolnick & Bayley, 2006; Trojanowicz & Bucqueroux, 1994). By acting as mediators, military police officers have the opportunity to learn about the reality of the community, build bonds of trust with residents and deconstruct stereotypes.
- **Crime prevention:** Peaceful conflict resolution prevents disputes from escalating. come and result in violence or crimes, contributing to the reduction of crime (Sales, Alencar & Feitosa, 2009). By mediating low-complexity conflicts, NUMECs free up police officers who work in repression to dedicate themselves to more serious crimes, optimizing public security resources.
- **Improving the institutional image of the PM:** Acting as mediators transforms the perception public participation of the Military Police, which is now seen as an institution capable of promoting social peace and resolving conflicts in a peaceful and fair manner (Mourão, 2015). Community mediation contributes to the humanization of the Military Police, bringing it closer to the community and showing that it is concerned with the peaceful resolution of conflicts.
- **Relieving the burden on the judicial system:** Conflict mediation offers an alternative to dispute resolution, reducing the judicialization of conflicts and relieving pressure on the judicial system (Oliveira & Vieira, 2018). Mediation, as an extrajudicial method of conflict resolution, contributes to reducing the number of legal proceedings, providing greater speed in resolving disputes and relieving pressure on the judiciary.
- **Building a culture of peace:** Community mediation promotes dialogue, mutual understanding and tolerance, contributing to the construction of a culture of peace in the community (Miranda, 2011). The culture of peace is based on respect for human rights, non-violence, justice social and in the peaceful resolution of conflicts.
- **Promoting social justice:** Community mediation, when considering the social reality of parties, contributes to the promotion of social justice. The parties involved in a conflict often have different levels of power and access to information. The mediator, aware of these asymmetries, acts to ensure equal conditions between the parties, promoting equity and social justice.
- **Community Empowerment:** Community mediation, by encouraging active participation of the parties in building solutions to their conflicts, contributes to the empowerment of the community. The parties, instead of delegating the solution of the conflict to a third party, as occurs in the judicial system, take the lead in the search for solutions, strengthening the feeling of belonging and the ability to

deal with your own problems.

3.3 DISCUSSION: COMMUNITY MEDIATION AS A PILLAR OF NEIGHBORHOOD POLICING

The growing demand for more civic-oriented, democratic, humanized public security focused on guaranteeing human rights requires the incorporation of new practices and approaches by security agencies (Balestreri, 2003; Freire, 2009). Community mediation, as a community policing tool, aligns with this demand, offering an alternative to the traditional policing model, based on repression and the use of force.

International experience shows that community mediation, when implemented strategically and in partnership with other actors in the justice system, civil society and the community itself, can contribute significantly to reducing crime, improving the quality of life of the community and strengthening the legitimacy of the police (Cooper, 2003; Mourão, 2015; Skolnick & Bayley, 2006). In the United States, for example, community mediation has been successfully used in several community policing programs, with significant results in reducing crime, improving police-community relations and promoting social justice (Skolnick & Bayley, 2006).

In Brazil, despite the challenges faced, the experience of states such as São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro and Minas Gerais demonstrates the promising results of community mediation in resolving conflicts, preventing crime and improving the institutional image of the Military Police (Miranda, 2011; Mourão, 2015; Oliveira & Vieira, 2018; Silva, 2014). In São Paulo, for example, the Military Police's community mediation program, created in 2001, has already carried out more than 1 million services, with high rates of conflict resolution and satisfaction of the parties (Military Police of the State of São Paulo, 2023).

The implementation of community mediation as a community policing tool in Brazil is still under construction, but it already demonstrates enormous potential for transforming public safety. However, for community mediation to become a pillar of community policing in Brazil, some points require attention:

- **Cultural change in the PM:** It is necessary to overcome cultural resistance to mediation by promoting a change of mindset in the PM. It is essential that the institution recognizes community mediation as a legitimate police activity that is fundamental to building citizen security (Mourão & Strozemberg, 2015). This cultural change involves reviewing police academies' curricula, valuing community mediation as an area of police activity, and creating mechanisms to recognize and reward police officers who excel in this area.
- **Investment in structure and resources:** The creation and maintenance of NUMECs requires investment. investments in infrastructure, materials, equipment and human resources. It is necessary to ensure that NUMECs have the necessary conditions to function properly and meet the demands of the community (Silva, 2014). In addition to ensuring adequate physical infrastructure, it is necessary to invest in information technology, case management software, online platforms for scheduling sessions and materials for publicizing community mediation.
- **Quality training:** The training of military police officers to act as mediators The quality of community mediation is essential for the quality of community mediation. Training courses should be taught by experienced professionals, focusing on communication techniques, active listening, impartiality, conflict management and ethics in mediation (Cooper, 2003). Training should be ongoing, with the provision of improvement courses, specialization courses and exchanges with other institutions that work with mediation, in Brazil and abroad.
- **Integration with the justice system:** The articulation with the Public Prosecutor's Office and the Judiciary dictionary is crucial for the approval of agreements and the guarantee of legal certainty. The creation of protocols referral and the establishment of partnerships between the PM, the MP and the Judiciary can strengthen the community mediation and ensure the effectiveness of agreements (Oliveira & Vieira, 2018). Integration with the justice system can also occur through the creation of courts specialized in low-complexity conflicts, which use community mediation as the preferred method of dispute resolution.
- **Community participation:** Community participation is critical to success community mediation. The community needs to take ownership of the tool, participate in the selection and training of mediators, monitor the results and contribute to improving the service. The creation of community security councils, with the participation of community representatives, can be an important instrument for the democratic management of public security and for strengthening community mediation.

- **Monitoring and evaluation of results:** It is essential to monitor and evaluate the results of community mediation, to identify its impacts on reducing crime, improving the institutional image of the Military Police and building a culture of peace. Collecting and analyzing data on the types of conflicts mediated, resolution rates, party satisfaction, mediation costs and recurrence of conflicts can support decision-making and the improvement of the tool (Mourão, 2015). Based on the analysis of the data collected, it is possible to improve practices, develop new strategies and ensure the effectiveness of community mediation.

4 CONCLUSION

Community mediation is a promising tool for building a new way of thinking about and practicing public safety in Brazil, one that is more civic-minded, dialogic, humanized, and closer to the community. The implementation of community mediation in the Military Police, through NUMECs, demonstrates that it is possible to overcome the adversarial and punitive logic of the traditional public safety model by focusing on dialogue, peaceful conflict resolution, and community participation.

The experience of NUMECs shows that community mediation contributes to reducing crime, improving the institutional image of the Military Police, relieving pressure on the judicial system, building a culture of peace, promoting social justice and empowering the community. However, for community mediation to become a pillar of community policing in Brazil, it is necessary to overcome challenges related to cultural resistance, lack of structure and resources, inadequate training, lack of integration with the justice system, lack of knowledge among the population and the need to monitor and evaluate results.

The future prospects for community mediation in Brazil are promising. Each year, more and more Brazilian states implement community mediation programs in their military police forces, and civil society is organizing to demand public policies that promote a culture of peace and social justice. However, the implementation of community mediation must be accompanied by continuous investment in training, infrastructure, inter-institutional coordination, community participation, and monitoring and evaluation of results. Investing in community mediation is a commitment to building a more just, peaceful, and democratic society.

4.1 Suggestions for Future Search:

- **To assess the impact of community mediation on reducing crime, criminal recidivism and on the population's sense of security;** Conduct quantitative and qualitative studies to measure the impact of community mediation on reducing crime, comparing crime rates in areas with and without the action of NUMECs.
- **To analyze the perception of military police officers about community mediation and the factors that influence it. Influence their adherence to this tool;** Conduct opinion polls and focus groups with military police officers to identify the factors that motivate or discourage action in community mediation.
- **Investigate the experience of citizens who used community mediation, analyzing their level of satisfaction with the service and the results achieved;** Conduct satisfaction surveys with NUMEC users to assess the quality of service, the effectiveness of mediation and compliance with agreements.
- **Compare the effectiveness of community mediation with other restorative justice tools, such as restorative circles and peer-to-peer restorative justice;** Conduct comparative studies between different methods of restorative justice, analyzing their advantages and disadvantages in relation to the community mediation.
- **Identify good practices for implementing community mediation in military police forces in Brazil and abroad, with a view to supporting the formulation of more effective public policies;** Conduct case studies in different countries to identify successful models of implementing community mediation in public safety.
- **Analyze the role of community mediation in preventing violence against women, in resolving conflict resolution in the school environment and the promotion of a culture of peace;** Develop research that investigates the application of community mediation in specific areas, such as domestic violence, school violence and intercultural mediation.

- **Analyze the challenges of implementing community mediation in contexts marked by violence and crime, such as peripheral communities and conflict areas;** Conduct research that investigates the specific challenges of implementing community mediation in contexts of high social vulnerability, violence and crime.
- **To assess the impact of community mediation on the mental health of military police officers, considering the high rates of stress, anxiety and depression in this professional category.** Conduct research that investigates the relationship between community mediation work and the mental health of military police officers, analyzing whether community mediation can contribute to reducing stress and promoting the psychological well-being of police officers.

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