

**Participatory Security:  
Participation, Citizen Security and the Inequities of Citizenship in Urban Peru**

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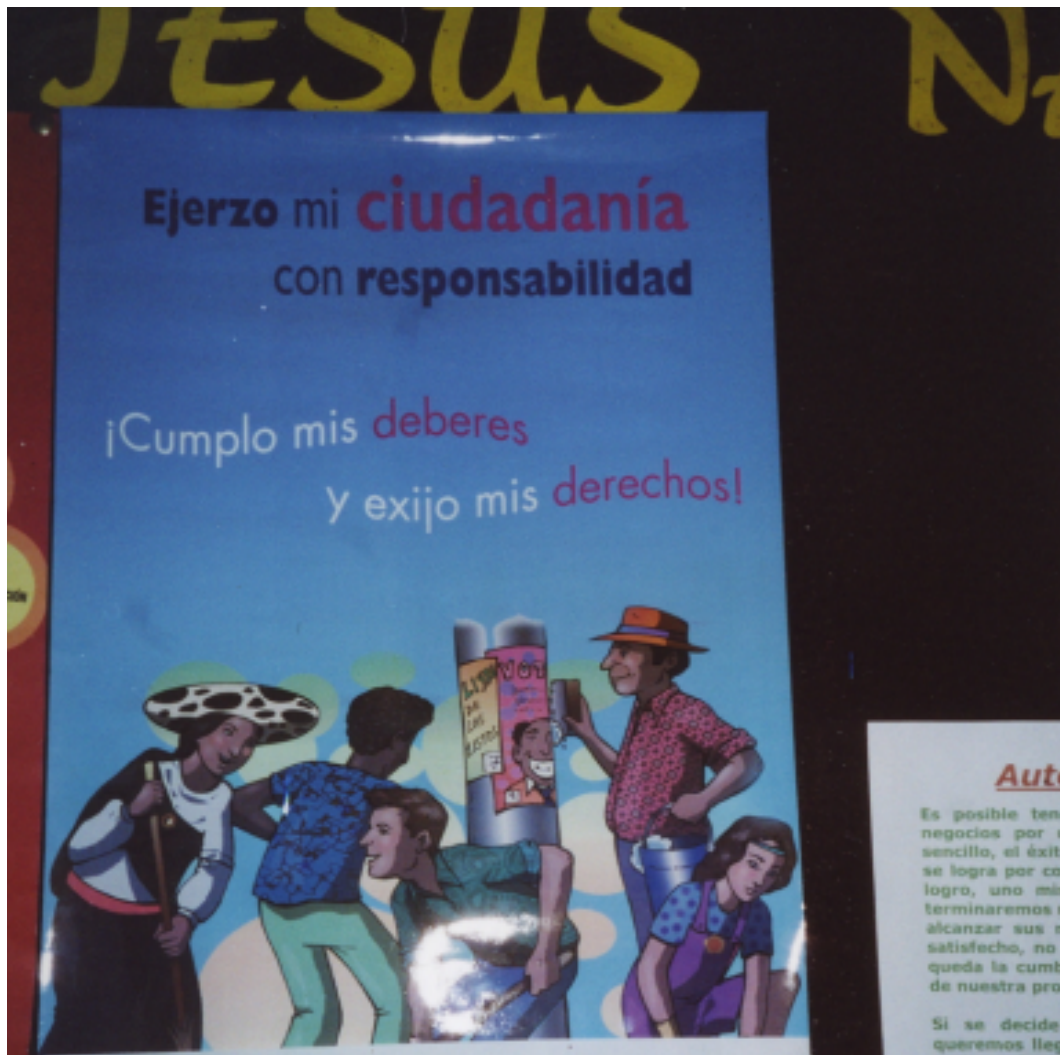
**ABSTRACT**

This article explores how urban security policies that profess “inclusion” in public governance through civil participation can in fact institutionalize local politics of exclusion and inequality. Drawing on ethnographic examples from urban highland Peru, I argue that municipal programs promoting citizen security as ‘everybody’s task’ mask deep disjunctures of participatory governance. In practice, peripheral and city centre neighbourhoods were expected to participate in markedly different fashions. As participants thus came to embody citizenship unequally, this model, which I have termed ‘participatory security’, effectively institutionalised new dimensions to the layered imbalances of urban citizenship in new and highly consequential ways.

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Glossy posters hanging in local municipal offices in the highland provincial capital of Ayacucho, Peru, continuously remind visitors of the governing national policies of ‘citizen participation’. The cartoonish cast of characters – generically representing a culturally (and presumably socially) diverse but united nation – is involved in what can only be assumed to be ‘labouring for the good of the community’. Displayed through an assortment of font, colour, italics, and bold prints, the text reads: ‘I exercise my citizenship with responsibility. I fulfill my *duties* and demand my *rights*!’ This deceptively simple and potent declarative statement also seems to suggest that this communal labour – an embodiment of citizenship – is also essential to

the health of the nation. The imagery and the text, together, further emphasise the explicit ways in which current models of governance link democratic ‘responsibility’ to the twin concepts of *derechos y deberes*: the rights and duties, of democratic citizenship.



The ‘*derechos y deberes*’ poster, displayed on a bulletin board in a district municipal office, reads: ‘I exercise my citizenship with responsibility. I fulfill my duties and demand my rights!’ The words ‘citizenship’, ‘duties’, and ‘rights’ are highlighted in red. (Photo by author.)

The appropriation and modification of ‘participation’ to emphasize rights and responsibilities has been especially effective in the problematic of maintaining citizen security

(*seguridad ciudadana*). The rhetoric implicating the entire community in urban security is circulated through abundant government slogans such as ‘Citizen Safety, Everybody’s Task’ (*Seguridad Ciudadana, Tarea de Todos*). In this article, I challenge this official definition of citizenship – which implies an idealised and uncomplicated equation by which democratic rights and responsibilities assure social equality – by presenting ethnographic examples of inequitable community participation within municipal citizen security programs. More specifically, I examine these municipal urban security programs as part of an emerging model of what I am calling *participatory security*: a broad political strategy for governing urban security through the mechanisms of democratic participation. The term ‘participatory security’ is intended to draw attention precisely to the complicated relationships between the doctrines of citizen security and the philosophies underpinning participatory democracy. In defining the role of civil ‘participation’ – what those duties or responsibilities are – local participatory security policies and programs project unequal expectations upon diverse segments of the population. By differentiating responsibilities for residents of the city centre (*casco urbano*) and residents of the peripheral areas (*cinturón de la ciudad*), these programs have created a geography of participation that has served to further reinforce and institutionalise inequality. As will become apparent, the implied impartiality or universalism of the slogans claiming that urban security is ‘everybody’s task’ obscures the deeply ingrained social differentiation *within* the allocations of causal and political responsibilities. In practice, these ‘participatory security’ programs effectively serve as sites for the active (re)construction of profoundly disjunctured urban citizenship.

## Participatory Security

According to Rachel Neild, the term ‘citizen security’ was coined in Latin America in the late 1990s to broadly encompass ‘threats to public, social, and political order posed by rising common crime and fear of crime’ (Neild 1999:1). In Peru, the term ‘seguridad ciudadana’ stood alone as an organizing principle by 2003, when it became national politics through the creation of the National Citizen Security System, mandating local offices and committees throughout the country. Around the same time, the United Nations was embracing the new concept of ‘human security’, defined as ‘freedom from want and freedom from fear’ (Commission on Human Security 2003). Although the concept of ‘seguridad ciudadana,’ at least as formulated in Peru, was less abstract than that of ‘human security,’ and intended to address urban crime and violence in a more direct way, they both (along with other international debates and doctrines of public order) mark a sharp departure from traditional policies of state or national security.<sup>1</sup> Thus we see the significance of Daniel Goldstein’s assertion that ‘what might be called “security talk” now stands prominently alongside ‘rights talk’ in contemporary geopolitics” (Goldstein 2007:50), so much so that the ‘security paradigm’ is not only transnational but also ‘extraordinarily fundable’ (59). Though traditional ‘national’ security remains a powerful criterion of political legitimation in Peru, the re-conceptualized social and political keyword of ‘*citizen* security’ has been encoded with other concepts of freedom and universal rights, and positioned to represent the concrete as well as intangible elements of the ‘public good.’

Equally significant, Peru’s model of citizen security was inseparable from the simultaneous formulation of its model of democratic citizen participation (*participación*)

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<sup>1</sup> There are numerous additional sources on citizen security in Latin America (and Peru), from a range of perspectives, including: Arriagada Luco and Morales Lazo 2006, Bailey 2004, Basombrío Iglesias 2004, Carrión Mena 2003, Carrión Mena and Núñez-Vega 2006, Dammert 2006, Durand Zevallos 2005, Estévez 2001, Flora Tristan 2004, Frühling 2007, Frühling and Tulchin 2003, Hoecker 2000, Mayorga 1997, Ramacciotti 2005, Ungar 2009, Whitehead 2002.

*ciudadana*): the soul of the citizen security paradigm involved not just a shift to emphasize individual securities but, more importantly, an ideology of *collective responsibility and organization*. With this in mind, I am referring to this model of governing urban security ‘participatory security’ in order to highlight the deep ideological, philosophical, and legislative connections that were forged between the nascent Citizen Security System and the popular ideals of democratic participation.<sup>2</sup> The new participatory security paradigm champions a model of participatory democracy that frames the tasks of governance, and specifically of governing urban security, as shared responsibilities between government institutions and local citizens. Indeed, the team who originally designed the country’s Citizen Security plan held as a ‘guiding principle’ that ‘without the participation of the citizenry, insecurity cannot be confronted’ (Costa and Basombrío Iglesias 2004:68). This incorporation of ‘participation’ is visible throughout the laws establishing Citizen Security as an institutional system. For example, according to the national citizen security law, the mandate of the provincial citizen security committees is to ‘promote the organization of neighbourhood groups [*juntas vecinales*] in their jurisdiction.’ Locally we see participation framed even more directly as a tool of governing security. The ‘strategic plan’ written by the Provincial Citizen Security Committee states that: its *objective* is to ‘consolidate security and tranquillity’ and to ‘recover the youth and spread values’; its *vision* is ‘a changed city, where the people’s behaviour is constructive’; and its *mission* is to ‘reduce common crime and hazards *with the participation of civil society*’ (Comité Provincial de Seguridad Ciudadana de Huamanga 2004a).

As a model for governance, the participatory security apparatus (including new urban security institutions and programs) was, in many instances, layered upon new and existing

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<sup>2</sup> There are numerous additional sources on citizen participation in Peru, including: Carrión 2004; Dietz 1998; Quintero 2001; Remy 2005; Tanaka 2001; Tanaka and Ardelá 2002; Tanaka and Meléndez Guerrero 2005; Zárate Ardelá 2005

programs and institutions of participation (particularly the municipal offices of Neighbourhood Participation and Citizen Participation). These alliances are crucial to the impact that the new participatory security paradigm had on the government's efforts to (re)define notions of urban citizenship as dependent upon collective efforts to promote and maintain security, now identified squarely within the realm of the 'public good.'

The idealism of democratic 'participation' is highly seductive, offering the potential for egalitarianism or horizontality, inclusive cooperation, and the dream that social inequalities can be remedied or at least minimised. However, as we will in the following ethnographic examples of participation within Ayacucho's citizen security programs, the powerful ideology of the 'common good' was, in practice, anything but common, since the inequitable allocation of *rights* corresponds directly to the inequitable allocation of 'responsibility' to solve problems of urban insecurity. Revealing additional dimensions to what Julia Paley has termed 'the paradoxes of participation' (2001), these examples demonstrate how 'citizen participation' is in fact valued and promoted differently across urban neighbourhoods. In practice, communities, residents, and citizens were not all expected to participate equally; instead, peripheral and city centre neighbourhoods were expected to participate in markedly different fashions. Parallel to the ideology of inclusion, therefore, 'participation' simultaneously functions as a strong organizational model, not only of governmental tasks and priorities but also of social differences, extending the well-worn paths of class and racial divides. Even more noteworthy, far from an inalienable right provided by the state, 'security' was in fact an *earned* right.

The dimensions of inequity and paradox that we will see within the model of participatory security also hold significant implications for our understandings of participatory governance more broadly. As participants come to embody citizenship unequally, I argue that

these ‘participatory security’ programs effectively institutionalise new dimensions to the layered imbalances of urban citizenship. In spite of programs purporting to promote ‘inclusive’ participation, we instead see how directly ‘the map of exclusion goes hand-in-hand with the map of citizen security’ (Bengoa 2000:53).

## **Faces of ‘Seguridad Ciudadana’**

### *Documenting Insecurity: Neighbourhood Organization of Jirón Asamblea*

Just one day after Ayacucho’s provincial municipality declared a ninety-day citizen security emergency resulting from violence attributed to the city’s nightlife, government officials carried out the latest in a long stream of interventions to forcefully close several unlicensed nightclubs. The clubs in question were concentrated along the first two blocks of Jirón Asamblea, radiating out from the city’s historic main plaza. Following requests from municipal officials organizing the closures, a group of women from the street’s neighbourhood organization (*junta vecinal*) took a public stand, holding signs and chanting outside of the clubs being closed. Towards the end of the operation, while the State Attorney for Crime Prevention (*Fiscal de la Prevención del Delito*) was finishing his report and the police were still on guard, the president of the neighbourhood organization was allegedly held at knife-point by the infamous owner of one of the clubs, who threatened that if she continued to press for closures she would be killed.

The next morning (September 2, 2004) seven of those women went to file an official report with formal testimonies in the State Attorney General’s Office (*Fiscalía*). One at a time, the women took a seat at one of the three large metal desks crammed into the small room, opposite a government employee who took their testimonies, guiding their answers in what seemed to be to be a less-than-objective fashion: ‘The guy was wearing a yellow jacket, right?’

Yes'. *Música latinoamericana* was playing on a small battery-operated radio sitting on one of the other desks. The rest of the women waited on the balcony overlooking the colonial courtyard as they recounted the previous night's events and shared their own stories of living amidst the nightclubs. Despite the scripted quality to their narratives, it was clear that the personal stories had not yet circulated within their newly-formed organization, and although most of them were long-time residents of the neighbourhood, they did not know each other.

The women also intended to talk personally with Jaime Cuadros, the State Attorney who was present during the incident, hoping to include his testimony in their report. They were polite but relentless as they returned time after time to request an appointment, repeatedly turned away by his secretary ('he's busy, come back later'). The turning point came when a separate group of young women were given an appointment, and the members of the neighbourhood organization began to cause commotion. They recognised the women as employees in the closed nightclubs, and considered this the ultimate offense: How is it possible, they objected loudly, that the doors are open for those women who work in illegal businesses, who are *prostitutes* [their most frequent accusation against the female workers], but they are closed to us when we were just threatened with a knife right in front of the Fiscal himself?

Given the prominent position of Fiscal Cuadros in the city's administration, his office was notably unequipped. He had no computer (that was on his secretary's desk outside) nor typewriter (also on his secretary's desk). There was no office phone. Only countless manila folders labelled across the front with highlighter, and loose A4 paper on which he jotted random notes and scribbles. He was cordial to the women but adamant that he would not provide a testimony and defensive against their pleas. As they stressed the risks that they ran as common citizens he interjected continuously with comments reminding them that he was also at risk: 'They easily



could have stuck a knife in me, too.... All of us there last night exposed ourselves, not just you’. As the women reiterated that ‘we are witness to [these problems] and we are here fighting on behalf of the whole community (*pueblo*)’, the Fiscal snapped back: ‘do you think *I’m not working?*’ The conversation ended abruptly, dissatisfying for all parties.

This neighbourhood organization had a singular mission that was intimately tied to the continuing operation of nightclubs in the city centre, but their forms of engagement were often not by their own design. As they explained to the Fiscal, ‘we were told [by the mayor] that our presence was important [during the police intervention]. That’s *the only reason* that we were there!’ Despite being visibly shaken from the previous night’s events, and still lacking assurances that their safety was protected, the same group of women gathered together again that night, determined to be a part of the municipality’s ongoing efforts. The mood at the beginning was decidedly somber, and they agreed that they would not carry signs and certainly not shout their well-known and provocative chants. Instead, their task was to ‘just observe’, to participate through being present (*presenciar*). They waited until the streets were thoroughly closed with police blockades and even the city’s one tank, and they stationed themselves across the street from the action, well-blocked by police dogs with muzzles and municipal security (*serenazgo*) in riot gear. The women watched until it started to get dark and then they walked home together for safety.

These women requested that I accompany them on countless visits to most of the city’s governmental offices. Sometimes they requested that I accompany them in their activities because they thought my presence would bring more attention to their cause (which was certainly the case for their protest marches). For the trip to the Fiscalía, however, my presence was requested because they thought that they would be taken more seriously – and treated better

– if I was there as a ‘witness’ to their testimony, even though I was not a witness to the attack itself. Afterwards, the women all agreed that the Fiscal himself had ‘never before’ been as nice to them as he was that day. Nonetheless, one junta member wondered aloud after the visit, ‘is it worth the effort’ (*valdrá la pena*)? Even the president could veer toward pessimism, but would catch herself midstream, returning to her promises and her commitment to the community: ‘sometimes I just want to throw in the towel, I’m tired, but I think that [to be] defeated would be worse, it would be to disappoint so many people’ (personal communication, April 20, 2005).

### *Enforcing seguridad: Neighbourhood Organization in Los Olivos*

On a sunny Sunday morning (April 10, 2005), hundreds of residents of Los Olivos, one of the sprawling neighbourhoods on the far southeast side of the city, were gathered for a communal work party (*faena*). They were preparing a newly-acquired dirt plot for the construction of a community centre, and it was dusty and hot as they worked with picks and shovels, women and men, young and old: they dug large trenches, piled the dirt into high mounds, brought in more dirt on plastic tarps from the unpaved street outside, mixed it together, filled the trenches back in, packed it down hard, and then repeated the routine. At the back of the plot, under a blue plastic tarp precariously attached to a one-room adobe building, another team of women worked around open fires, preparing several huge pots of hominy and tripe stew for the crew doing the heavy labour. After several hours, the president called an end to the work and began a general meeting of the relatively new neighbourhood organization for the Asociación de Los Olivos. The group formed a circle, standing or sitting in the dirt.

Shortly after initiating the meeting, the president of the Association abandoned his finicky microphone and, at full voice, launched into a plea for greater participation from the

neighbourhood members in the affairs of the association. He reminded them emphatically of the risks associated with being community leaders (*dirigentes*) who were trying to ‘do something for our zone’. They received frequent threats and ‘could die at any moment’, he said, and they needed everybody to get involved (*meter la mano*), to demonstrate dedication, commitment, enthusiasm, and ‘love’. Today is not like yesteryear, he said, when ‘everything was obligation and punishment’ from community elders. Today ‘we live in a democracy’, and the wellbeing of Los Olivos depends not upon a few leaders but upon the *voluntary* labour ‘for the pueblo’, with *everybody* participating enthusiastically.

Los Olivos reaches into the most marginalised geographic corners of the city, one of the many urban expanses that are barely illuminated at night and serviced by only a few wide and dusty unpaved arteries. It is located in the district municipality of San Juan Bautista, infamous for being the most dangerous district of the city. Nonetheless, residents of Los Olivos were proud of their past successes in reducing the common crime and gang activities that were rampant in the early years when it was first populated and was considered a ‘no-man’s land’. They now claimed to have not a single active gang in their zone, having instead incorporated former members into the community’s many grassroots organizations and youth groups.<sup>3</sup>

Central on the agenda that day was a discussion about alternative strategies that Los Olivos could adopt for maintaining their security. This agenda was propelled by the presence and emotional appeals of the young man who was working as the sole night patrol for the zone, ‘risking his life’ in confrontations every night with ‘gang members and drunks’. He had come to the meeting because his boss refused to pay him, saying that residents of Los Olivos were not paying their monthly quota for the security service. He pre-emptively responded to allegations

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<sup>3</sup> The incorporation of gang members into formally registered ‘youth organizations’ is not unique to Los Olivos (c.f. Strocka 2006). There are also former gang members now incorporated into the provincial municipality’s serenazgo force (author interviews, April 5, 2005, April 8, 2005; c.f. Instituto de Defensa Legal 2005).

that residents ‘don’t see him on their street’, and therefore didn’t feel obliged to pay for the service, by saying that he cannot service all places at once: ‘I’m not a machine and I can’t fly’. It’s not fair, he concluded, to make him work if they weren’t going to pay him. By the end of the meeting the options were clear: either community members could vote to pay monthly quotas to continue hiring security service through an agreement overseen by the Association, or community members could vote to organise themselves in nightly patrols for their own neighbourhood security, as they had done for years in the past and as other areas continued to do.

Throughout the conversation, as opinions and perspectives were voiced, the two options were repeatedly framed within the discourse of responsibility and the need to ‘organise’ in order to fight for their own community’s needs. A youth organiser lectured fellow youth about fighting for their future: ‘there is still a lot to be done, we need to organise ourselves and commit ourselves’. Someone grabbed a radio provided by the municipality and radioed the central command to demonstrate that they indeed worked, but immediately the municipal serenazgo representative (and fellow resident) explained in detail how it was up to residents to use their whistles when there was a problem, to ‘surround a thief from all sides so he can’t escape’. Another member in charge of neighbourhood security (*seguridad vecinal*) reprimanded residents for not making proper use of the whistles that had been provided to the Association by the municipality for the purposes of local security measures, saying that they were only being used in carnival: ‘We can’t wait for the authorities to take care of our problems, everybody has to help, don’t wait for the whip to be thrown like old times!’

### **Geographies of *Seguridad*, Geographies of Citizenship**

These two moments of neighbourhood organization demonstrate certain critical differences in forms of participation and patterns of engagement in the city’s participatory security strategies.

Quite literally, members of these different communities were *embodying* differential citizenship: while city centre residents participated through indirect security activities such as filing police reports or ‘witnessing’ police interventions, residents of the peripheral community participated directly and physically through manual labour such as building their own community centre or performing their own neighbourhood night security patrols.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, the relationships and interactions that these neighbourhood organizations have with municipal officials expose fault lines within the rubric of ‘participation’ and the definition of ‘democratic responsibility’.

Dissecting how a social issue such as urban security becomes a ‘public problem’ begins with understanding the struggle over ‘the power to influence the definition of the reality of phenomena (Gusfield 1981:12). The power to interpret ‘reality’ and define the ‘crisis’ garners its political weight in the realm of defining responsibility. More precisely, it involves the power to draw connections between *causal responsibility* for the ‘social problem’ and *political responsibility* for solving it. The causal responsibility for Ayacucho’s insecurity is converted into political responsibility in part through the ideology of ‘participation’ espoused in municipal citizen security policies and strategies, which assert that democratic rights are predicated upon meeting certain responsibilities.

The power dynamics involved in this process are evident in the perspective of the current director of Citizen Security, who qualified an explanation of possible institutional support for neighbourhood organizations by saying ‘*but first*, we want to see that the population and the neighbourhood organizations *meet their responsibilities as citizens*’ (author interview, José Antonio Antezana, July 5, 2007, emphasis added). In setting the parameters of these

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<sup>4</sup> Sarah Lund (2001) provides an ethnographically rich account of the inequitable and patterned embodiment of citizenship in Peru, describing how the process of acquiring official documents requires citizens to physically perform the layers of state bureaucracy by walking from one office to another, waiting in lines, acquiring a relationship that is at once intimate and marginalizing.

‘responsibilities’, municipal participatory security programs value and cultivate certain kinds of relationships and activities over others, and the criteria that are formulated for evaluating exemplary forms of participation vary from one segment of the population to another.

As common crime and gangs emerged in the city’s public consciousness in the late 1990s, it was immediately associated with the *barrios*, the expanding marginal communities largely populated by then-recent migrants to the city, and the ‘torn social fabric’ resulting from the years of civil war with the Shining Path (1980-1993) (c.f. PAR 2002; c.f. Vergara Figueroa and Condori Castillo 2007). The prevalence of this association at that time is exemplified in the inaugural issue of a local magazine, which included statements from ‘people on the street’ about youth crime: ‘It all originates in the barrios.... They are the culprits of this social disgrace.... There didn’t used to be delinquents’ (Somos, 1997, No. 1, Year 1, page 19). Reminiscent of racist ideologies linking rural and indigenous peoples to inherently non-rational, instinctive, and often violent behavior (de la Cadena 2000, Poole 1994, Remy 1991), the urban poor are also portrayed as perpetuating lawlessness and as ‘havens for *antisociales*’ (Coronil and Skurski 2006:115, c.f. Aguirre 2005; Bailey 2004; Bengoa 2000; Caldeira 2000; Dinzey-Flores 2005; Goldstein 2004; Guano 2004; Rotker and Goldman 2002; Salazar 2000).

In other words, it is not simply that ‘youth delinquents’ *live* in the outlying neighbourhoods but that those peripheral – marginal – neighbourhoods *produce* delinquency and other social ‘disgraces.’ In the process, peripheral neighbourhoods are ideologically, socially, and politically marked as causally responsible for the city’s public safety problems.

A core principle of the local citizen security programs is that in addition to ‘punitive’ control measures (such as the forced closure of night venues or punishment for committing crime) any effective long-term strategy primarily involves ‘prevention’ (Costa and Basombrío

Iglesias 2004). Prevention, as formulated in the Provincial Municipality's Strategic Plan for Citizen Security, involves everything from coordinated patrols to 'public awareness' campaigns aimed at 'recuperating values' and cultivating a 'culture of peace' (Comité Provincial de Seguridad Ciudadana de Huamanga 2004a). The Lieutenant Mayor during the period of my research considered the creation of Youth Centres and the initiation of neighbourhood organizations in peripheral zones to be among the most substantial achievements of his administration (author interview, Gotardo Miranda Gutiérrez, June 20, 2007; c.f. Comisionado Para la Paz y el Desarrollo 2004). In the process of distinguishing repressive and preventative strategies, however, a strong fissure develops in the patterns of participation. City centre organizations are by and large engaged in the 'repressive' measures of securing order, such as being present during police interventions, filing police reports, and holding officials publicly accountable for enforcing laws and bringing justice to criminals. Organizations in the peripheral neighbourhoods, on the other hand, are allocated the 'preventative' measures, including night patrols, constructing community centres, organizing youth groups, and generally promoting 'civic values'. Linked to the *source* of the citizen security crisis, they are consequently held politically responsible for *preventing* future problems.

The 'Achilles' heal of communal prevention' programs, wrote Lucía Dammert, is the 'tendency towards exclusion, creating a threatening 'other', stigmatised as dangerous and allegedly legitimised by the community' (Dammert 2005:3). Although Dammert concluded that this tendency can be countered through 'the design of inclusive politics of participation in initiatives that generate higher quality of life for all citizens' (reminiscent of the language of 'human security'), the ethnographic examples examined here reveal instances in which participatory initiatives have had precisely the opposite effect. Government campaigns

promoting citizen security as ‘everybody’s task’ did not counter exclusion but rather masked the deep disjunctures that emerged in contemporary participatory governance, as causal responsibility for urban insecurity is converted into inequitable ‘responsibilities’ to *solve* the problem. In practice, the ‘responsibility’ to solve problems of urban insecurity was allocated differentially, such that peripheral and city centre neighbourhoods were expected to participate in markedly different fashions.

### **Inequities of Participatory Security**

Most members of city centre *juntas vecinales* occupied an influential structural position in the city’s society, in which they were socially, politically, and economically capable of putting considerable pressure on specific authorities. Junta members often had familial ties to specific acting officials or relationships with governing political parties (which was APRA at that time). They often had extensive experience with the hierarchies and infrastructure of local government and were comfortable and confident moving around the government offices that were scattered throughout the city centre. They could also apply pressure through the very public and powerful medium of the media, since as prominent families, important local business owners, and respected professionals, their complaints and accusations appeared frequently in print, radio, and television news. Where they encountered lukewarm reception from reporters or news sources they were neither intimidated nor inconvenienced by the fees charged to have their prepared statements read in their entirety. Despite wielding enormous public pressure and possessing direct and personal relationships with key government officials, however, neighbourhood organization members in the city centre most often felt that their efforts were futile and that they were not taken seriously. More palpable still was the sense that their role in the city’s citizen security controversies, and the associated risks, went unacknowledged.



Many non-governmental agencies and government forums for dialogue and consensus (such as the *mesas de concertación*) endorse ‘citizen vigilance’ (*vigilancia ciudadana*) as a ‘principal tool’ of democratic participation and the abstract civil responsibility to hold government authorities accountable in their official duties (*fiscalizar*) (Transparencia n.d.). This is precisely the civic activity that most occupied the agendas of juntas vecinales such as Jirón Asamblea’s. Their principal actions were limited to a particular category of formalised interactions with state institutions: filing continuous official documents in government institutions, such as complaints (*denuncias, reclamos*) or demands (*solicitudes, memoriales*). While some of their complaints were against other members of civil society (such as discoteca owners, as in the case described above), the vast majority of complaints were against specific government officials for not enforcing municipal resolutions and ordinances and for not carrying out their duties. Another form of their civic engagement with citizen security policies was through a powerful campaign for municipal accountability, raising public awareness of corruption and incompetence in the municipality and demanding that officials commit themselves to securing citizen security.

Inside of the municipal offices, however, ‘*participation*’ is defined and evaluated through another set of criteria. This is nowhere stronger than in the realm of citizen security, where participation is framed as synonymous with collaboration in the practical implementation of municipal security strategies. ‘*Vigilance*’ as practiced by the city centre organizations is perceived as an obstacle to effective collaboration and a hindrance to realizing the municipality’s ‘broad’ agenda of citizen security. One critical component to the relationship that city centre neighbourhood organizations had with municipal officials is that they all organised on their own accord and were not representative of the municipality’s official initiatives in the formation of

neighbourhood organizations. Not only were they often antagonistic towards government officials, they did not follow the municipality's priorities in identifying citizen security concerns, and as a result they received no institutional support (logistical or material) from civil participation programs. Alexi Avilez, then-director of the municipal office of Neighbourhood Participation (*Subgerencia de Participación Vecinal*) justified this decision very explicitly by observing that they were too 'limited' to their singular concern over nightlife in the city centre and did not work for 'citizen safety at every level' (author interview, April 5, 2005), meaning that they did not share the same set of priorities outlined in the provincial municipality's 'forty-one identified factors' for insecurity in the city (Comité Provincial de Seguridad Ciudadana de Huamanga 2004b). As long as the city centre neighbourhood organizations did not share this agenda, with the same approximate idea of priorities, then they would receive no institutional support, they would be hard pressed for warm welcomes, and they would not be considered an 'exemplary' form of civil participation.

Although municipal officials wished that the city centre organizations shared the municipality's citizen security agenda and they were sometimes visibly exasperated by the physical absence of residents when the going got tough, there were *limits* to what was *expected* or *needed* from them. In practice, the women were *not* expected to take physical action in the realm of citizen security, such as manual labour in constructing civic centres or performing night rounds themselves. Such expectations *were* held, by contrast, of neighbourhood organizations in the peripheral areas, and the forms of engagement practiced by residents in Los Olivos fit squarely into municipal conceptions of ideal forms of participation. The high value placed upon activities in areas such as Los Olivos reflects the city's concept of participation in general, in which local control over these activities was an integral part of its citizen security strategies. In

the world of circulating statistics about insecurity in Ayacucho, one of the most-repeated concerned the ‘three hundred’ police officers allocated for the entire metropolitan city. This dreadfully small force was barely enough, the argument went, for protecting the city centre and it was certainly not sufficient to reach the peripheral areas. District security forces (*serenazgo*) were equally undersized: the district of San Juan Bautista (in which Los Olivos was located) was home to over thirty-five thousand residents but boasted only six individuals in their municipal security forces. Chronically under-staffed, municipal security forces thus depended upon the kind of coordinated local control over security (mainly at night) that was being negotiated in the Los Olivos meeting.

The district of San Juan Bautista was the first in the city to establish a *serenazgo* force in 1998, two years before the provincial municipality (Acuerdo de Concejo No. 059-2000-MPH/CM). From its initial conception, it was designed to function as a joint effort between the municipality and organised civil groups, such as neighbourhood organizations. In fact, initially all district residents were required to pay monthly dues for the security operation with the specific amount varying according to the individual’s residency zone (*La Calle*, January 12, 1998 page 4). Coordinated participation of grassroots organizations continues to fill the persistent funding gaps in municipal security programs. While the municipality provides organizations in peripheral areas with some provisions, these supplies were so limited that neighbourhood groups frequently had to organise their own events and activities to raise money to purchase additional supplies, such as whistles, sticks, or whips (*chicotes*), in order to outfit their night patrols (author interview, April 6, 2005).

The municipality trusted and depended upon the neighbourhood organizations in Los Olivos, providing them with precious resources reserved only for the most exemplary

neighbourhood organizations. Local organisers in Los Olivos, however, held an alternative interpretation of their relationship with the municipality. Underlying the discussion during the citizen security meeting was the tacit – and sometimes clearly articulated – assumption that local problems in Los Olivos will not be solved through formalised relationships with the municipality or institutionalised avenues of engagement with government institutions. Police and serenazgo are secondary affairs, necessary for subsequent formal procedures but not to be relied upon for the critical tasks of capturing delinquents, protecting their neighbourhood, and assuring security and order.

## **Disjunctures of Participatory Citizenship**

Given the long history of antagonism in Peru between civil organizations in marginalised urban areas and the various local and national government entities, it might seem paradoxical, at first glance, that the civic activities found in the peripheral neighbourhoods, such as Los Olivos are, at least in certain contexts, more highly valued by municipal officials than those of the city centre and considered more exemplary forms of participation. But an over-simplified dichotomy between centre and periphery precludes an understanding of this local dynamic. Forms of organization found today in the city centre and in peripheral areas (such as Los Olivos) are only the most current incarnation in a history of formal relationships with government entities that have stipulated the *differential* involvement and incorporation of neighbourhood organizations.

Similarly, the perspective that marginalised communities are uniquely vulnerable to the effects of a ‘torn social fabric’ also informed the common belief that organizations in the periphery are better organised, more committed, and more motivated to participate. Residents of the city centre, it is argued, ‘don’t participate’ (*no colaboran*) in government citizen security programs because they have become too complacent. When contrasted with a movementist

model, city centre forms of engagement (such as *denuncias* or *solicitudes*) are further interpreted not as legitimate forms of participation but as markers of disillusionment and discouragement. Reflecting an ideology about poor communities and migrant populations, the theory suggests that residents of the peripheral neighbourhoods ‘need’ to organise in order ‘to survive’, or that they organise because they have ‘more to lose’. An urban version of the essentialised characteristics of ‘*lo andino*’ adds a further overlay, which is beautifully illustrated in municipal legislation for the ‘Participation of Neighbourhood Self-Development Organizations’ (Ordenanza Municipal No 18-2001-MPH/A). Through the language of underdevelopment and marginalised communities, this ordinance celebrates the virtues of a hardworking population with high moral and ethical virtues who are concerned about the wellbeing of the community, and stipulates that the ‘foundation’ of the self-development work carried out in these communities is ‘the *minka* – communal work and *ayni*, as a tradition of reciprocity’ (Article 10). In addition to maintaining moral prestige and rejecting bribery, laziness and gossip, other ‘obligations’ of organization members are ‘obligatory active participation in the work parties (*faenas*) and scheduled shifts (*jornada*)’ as well as ‘participating actively in the work of citizen security’ (Article 12).

A common line of argument in Ayacucho reasons that civil organizations in peripheral areas (such as communal kitchens or Mother’s Clubs) were converted by President Alberto Fujimori (1990-2000) into mere distributors of centralised and hierarchical clientelist government control, and the protests from members of these aid programs are commonly discredited in local media as being the voice of populism. As the lasting popularity (and efficacy) of government aid programs are likewise dismissed as merely ‘recycling the misery’, they are stripped of any other meaning. In response to the racist tinges of these characterizations, Peruvian scholars researching these forms of *barrio* organization have gone to great lengths to

demonstrate that they are not social spaces devoid of political action and meaning.<sup>5</sup> Today, organizations such as the communal kitchens are framed as examples *par excellence* of the possibilities and potentials of democracy to incorporate *barrio* residents in governance through participatory venues such as the *Mesas de Concertación* (Blondet and Trivelli 2004).

A markedly different line of analysis argues that as the subsequent government of Alejandro Toledo (2001-2006) sought to disassociate these aid programs from previous populist politics by eliminating the payouts to participants, they took an ideology that it is ‘not good’ to simply give handouts to the poor, and they converted it into the expectation that poor women (in particular) should *volunteer* their time to projects aimed at improving their neighbourhoods (Mortensen 2010). In this article we have seen similar patterns in the model of participatory security, whereby communities on the periphery of the city were expected to govern their own security, to volunteer their own time and bodies. It is in this vein that my analysis of differential and exclusionary geographies of participation likewise challenges a facile assumption that their involvement in ‘participation’ programs results in governing practices that better respond to their priorities, let alone a radical change toward more inclusionary citizenship. Instead we see how social, racial, and class differences are paradoxically brought to life *through* democratic programs of ‘participation’ in local governance, and *through* the civic philosophy asserting that democratic rights are *predicated* upon meeting certain responsibilities.

Writing about urban security in Cochabamba, Bolivia, Daniel Goldstein described how international discourses of rights and security appeared contradictory to urban residents of the outlying *barrios*, many of whom demonized the discourse of human rights as protecting criminals and thus preventing the effective maintenance of security (Goldstein 2004). *Seguridad*

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<sup>5</sup> Steven Gregory observed a similar trend in scholarship on black inner-city communities in the United States (1998:8-9).

*ciudadana*, or citizen security, however, was intended to strike a different balance: ‘rather than pitting rights *against* security, seguridad ciudadana acknowledges security *to be* a right, guaranteed by the state to its citizens’ (Goldstein 2007:59, emphasis added). While Peru’s doctrine of citizen security similarly postulates urban security as a universal right, the experiences described in this article paint a very different picture of the possible and lived relationships between rights and urban security. The official discourse of *rights and responsibilities*, particularly when put into motion through seguridad ciudadana programs, has the effect of pitting rights *directly against* security. With resources and infrastructure stretched beyond their limits, government officials and institutions were forced to make selective decisions in the implementation of security measures. Security simply could not be guaranteed an equal right of urban citizenship. To be sure, the city centre often received disproportionate benefits from the presence of security forces (such as the National Police and Municipal Serenazgo).

Likewise, another of the most influential factors in the overall calculation of municipal security measures was the assessment of a given community’s *own participation* in the security efforts, their own embodied practice of security. All of this suggests the rather provocative addition to the observation that security itself was not, in fact, an unconditional right guaranteed equally to all citizens: the official assessment of participatory commitment to security was leveraged in a tight calculation of differential, and differentially earned, rights to institutional support from the seguridad ciudadana apparatus. As the provincial municipality’s Director of Citizen Security stated to me, carefully calculating his words, ‘any citizen who fulfils his duties is *more than welcome* to exercise his rights’ (author interview, José Antonio Antezana, Subgerente de Seguridad Ciudadana, July 5, 2007, his emphasis).

## Conclusion

I have juxtaposed these ethnographic examples of ‘participatory security’ programs in order to illuminate some of the precise mechanisms by which the ideals of democratic inclusion in public governance are overpowered by the promotion of differential forms of participation. The disparities in the forms of participation examined in this article are not simply examples of an imperfect system failing to meet an attainable goal of inclusivity. Rather, they remind us how highly misleading it would be to suggest that ‘participation’ can ever be fully direct, inclusive, or equal; it is by nature filtered through layers of historical relationships and experiences, and as such it is highly exclusionary. The structured model of neighbourhood organization and political participation – which champions a myth of unity through (participatory) citizenship – further obscures the range of important internal fissures. Interrogating how evaluations of ‘ideal’ modes of participation are calibrated to diverse social contexts exposes some of these structures of exclusion. In addition, these experiences illustrate how the policies and practices of participatory security further reinforce existing social differences by placing unequal expectations and demands on different segments of the population.

While the dominant national and international democratic paradigms present urban security as a right of citizenship, we have seen here that this right is not necessarily an inalienable one guaranteed by the state; in some instances, institutional programs of participatory security have effectively redirected security to be an *earned* right of citizenship. The inequitable result is a disjunctive urban citizenship (Holston and Caldeira 1998, Holston and Appadurai 1999; Mohanty and Tandon 2006). These disjunctures are effectively naturalised and depoliticised through the parallel doctrines of citizen security and participatory democracy. It is at this juncture that we see the full effect of government programs – and their glossy posters –



espousing that democratic citizenship involves rights *as well as* responsibilities, *derechos y deberes*. In essence, only the citizens who fulfil their duties (as defined by certain institutional programs) are then eligible to exercise their rights, or, in any case, to have their demands prioritised and respected by those same institutions. By translating geographies of causal and political responsibility for urban insecurity into geographies of participation, the participatory security paradigm has the effect of actively reinscribing existing social distinctions by institutionalizing local politics of inequality.

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