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Educational policy for training the Military Police: reverberations and paths to be followed¹

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Abstract

The increase in violence and crime has generated discussions about police education. The study analyzes the knowledge about the formation of the Military Police in Brazil after the approval of Law 13.675 of 2018. A qualitative approach was adopted, developed through bibliographical research, books and scientific periodicals. Muniz, Tavares dos Santos and Poncioni were references in the study. The analysis of Law No. 13.675 of 2018, which created the current National Public Security Policy, was also carried out. Data were treated by content analysis. There is a growing demand for redemocratization and reformulation of training processes for Military Police, reinforced by the new national public security policy. The law guides the training of public security professionals to act preventively, in order to overcome the traditional repressive police model, which proves to be inefficient in combating crime and violence.

Keywords

Police; Education; Formation; Public Security.

A política educacional de formação de policiais militares: reverberações e caminhos a percorrer

Resumo

O aumento da violência e da criminalidade gerou discussões sobre a educação policial. O estudo analisa os saberes sobre a formação da Polícia Militar no Brasil após a aprovação da Lei nº 13.675/2018. Adotou-se uma abordagem qualitativa, desenvolvida por meio de pesquisa bibliográfica de livros e periódicos científicos. Muniz, Tavares dos Santos e Poncioni foram referências no estudo. Também foi realizada a análise da Lei nº 13.675/2018, que criou a atual Política Nacional de Segurança Pública. Os dados foram tratados pela análise de conteúdo. Constatou-se uma demanda crescente de redemocratização e reformulação dos processos formativos de policiais militares reforçada pela nova Política Nacional de Segurança Pública. A lei orienta a formação dos profissionais de segurança pública para atuarem de forma preventiva, a fim de superar o modelo de polícia tradicional repressivo, que demonstra ser ineficiente no combate à criminalidade e à violência.

Palavras-chave

Polícia; Educação; Formação; Segurança Pública.

¹ Versão para inglês por Marina Lima Pompeu.

**Política educativa para la formación de policías militares:
repercusiones y caminos a seguir**

Resumen

El aumento de la violencia y del crimen ha generado discusiones sobre la educación policial. El estudio analiza el conocimiento sobre la formación de la policía militar en Brasil luego de la aprobación de la Ley 13.675/2018. Se adoptó un enfoque cualitativo, desarrollado a través de investigaciones bibliográficas de libros y revistas científicas. Muniz, Tavares dos Santos y Poncioni fueron referencias en el estudio. También se realizó el análisis de la Ley 13.675/2018, que creó la actual Política Nacional de Seguridad Pública. Los datos se trataron mediante análisis de contenido. Existe una demanda creciente de redemocratización y reformulación de los procesos de formación de la policía militar reforzada por la nueva Política Nacional de Seguridad Pública. La ley orienta la formación de los profesionales de la seguridad pública para actuar de manera preventiva, con el fin de superar el modelo policial represivo tradicional, que resulta ineficaz en el combate al crimen y a la violencia.

Palabras clave

Policía; Educación; Formación; Seguridad Pública.

1 Introduction

Violence in Brazil frightens society and generates a deep feeling of insecurity. The alarming rates connected to this social fact are highlighted in social discourses and the media, leading to discussions that focus on public safety, especially about institutions that are responsible for public security. It is common to see criticism from the society that point to the existence of a feeling of insecurity in the face of existing criminality.

Western societies have gone through complex and antagonistic processes: in one hand, there are democratic political systems and an expansion of civil and individual rights; on the other hand, there is a destabilization of the institutions responsible for social control and an increase, at least as far as the society can perceive, of social facts such as violence. In this context, the classic model of military police training becomes the target of questioning and criticism that point to the need of a new professional profile.

The issue of violence in Brazil has raised discussions that turn to the training field of police officers. In 2018, those discussions resulted in the National Public Security Project, entitled SUSP - Public Security Single System, established by Law No. 13.675/2018, together with the National Public Security and Social Defense Policy (PNSPDS) creation. The present study is based on this historical moment, from the

consolidation of the aforementioned law, which starts to guide the educational/training processes of the military police. The present study aims to analyze the military police education in Brazil: the training of military police officers, legitimized by Law No. 13.675/2018, which created the SUSP in Brazil. Beyond the normative field, it's extremely important to draw on texts by authors who study police education to understand the phenomenon analyzed. In this sense, Muniz (2001), Poncioni (2005, 2012, 2013, 2014) and Tavares dos Santos (2014) became references for this study.

The study of this issue is because recently the country has gone through a period of intense effort towards universal access to human rights (the right to security is mentioned here as a social right to be materialized by the State, to ensure that all citizens can lead their lives with dignity, with freedom of movement, guaranteeing their physical, mental, moral and patrimonial integrity) and to overcome violence, either through policies or through special programs aimed at improving safety indices, however without showing significant improvements.

2 Methodology

For a more detailed understanding of the analyzed object, it's necessary to study it qualitatively, to seek in-depth answers to the social phenomenon. Thus, the qualitative approach was adopted in this study.

The beginning of a scientific investigation requires a brief survey of data so that you can know the field about which you intend to do research. Thus, the article begins with bibliographical research on military police education in Brazil, based on publications by authors from different sources. The consulted sources were scientific books and periodicals that address the military police training after the end of the dictatorial regime. No studies evaluating the new Public Security Policy or the SUSP were found, possibly because it's a very recent policy. "The most important thing, for those who opt for bibliographic research, is to be sure that the sources to be researched are recognized in the scientific community" (SÁ-SILVA; ALMEIDA; GUINDANE, 2009, p. 69). In this sense, works of recognized researchers in the area of public security and the field of military police education were consulted to enrich the research about this social phenomenon.

Likewise, Law No. 13.675, of June 11, 2018, which deals with training for military police officers, was analyzed. The law originates from other regulations, guidelines, and ordinances to be followed by public security agencies, which notably include the military police. For Sá-Silva, Almeida, and Guindane (2009), the use of documents in researches facilitates broadening the understanding of objects that might lack historical and/or sociocultural contextualization. Document analysis favors the observation of the object to be researched, as it aims to identify information from documents, based on questions that the investigator wants to answer. One of the main characteristics of documental research, as pointed out by Sá-Silva, Almeida, and Guindane (2009), is that it uses materials and information that have not received any analytical treatment, and are, therefore, primary sources. In the analysis of documents, data and information were decoded, thus enabling the production of knowledge. With the collected data, we resorted to the content analysis methodology, which Bardin (1977, p. 42) defines as:

[...] a set of communication analysis techniques aiming to obtain, by systematic procedures and objective description of the messages' content, indicators (quantitative or not) that allow the inference of knowledge related to the production/reception conditions (inferred variables) of these messages.

Legal documents were analyzed, such as Law No. 13.675/2018, which instituted the SUSP and is used to guide the training processes of military police officers, in addition to important studies in the field of military police education.

3 Results and discussion

3.1 Police education: challenges and reverberations

In recent decades, there have been intense discussions seeking to answer the unknowns about public safety. It's currently known that the police alone cannot be responsible for all public safety problems, as they're a reflection of socially constructed problems. According to Monjardet (2012), not all social problems can be summarized in an institution. Beyond that, it's necessary to propose changes so that the police can

carry out their mission in a more effective and qualified way, which requires institutional changes, especially concerning police training.

Thus, Tavares dos Santos (2014) emphasizes that the emerging need to assess police training is justified by the visible difficulty in reducing crime and violence. According to the Brazilian Public Security Forum (FBSP, 2020), which collected data for the first half of 2020, it's estimated that one person is murdered in Brazil every ten minutes. The increase in the rate of intentional violent deaths was observed in 21 federative units.

When police officers don't have proper training/education, their actions can be based on imposition, intimidation, even adopting aggressive and/or abusive behavior, which border on illegality, if we think about these actions within democratic societies. In face of this issue, Jacondino (2015, p. 136) points out that “[...] basic professional training, carried out in military police academies, is of paramount importance for the constitution of the professional identity of police officers when values and beliefs about the profession are learned”.

The first form of socialization of the future military police officer in the police environment takes place in police academies during basic training. In this space, the police will have appropriate knowledge and technical skills to perform their duties. Thus, this socialization process is very important for the construction of a professional identity. The training period tends to discipline, shape, and attach the professional who will later be on the streets dealing with the most diverse social issues and, above all, with the non-criminal society. According to Poncioni (2005, p. 588):

[...] The importance of basic training carried out in police academies for the construction of professional identity is fundamental as a stage that makes a considerable difference to the professional life of the police officer, not only given the importance of the training experience in the formal acquisition of the professions' values and norms and the skills and abilities to work in the field, but also in the acquisition of values and beliefs about the profession, embodied in a common knowledge and culture base about what it means to be a police officer in a given professional police model.

Studies by Jacondino (2015) revealed that there are elements historically constructed in the institutional routine through which the training of military police officers remains based on the perspective of fighting crime, which sees the military police as a combatant in the war against crime. Concomitantly, few tools prepare the

same professional to deal with practices related to social problems. The author states that the training courses for military police officers remain fundamentally linked to the legal field, with disciplines and practices focused on Law.

Recently, knowledge from the Social Sciences has gained space in the policies and discourses of training military police officers is the inclusion of matters about Human Rights, Sociology and Anthropology. Zenaide (2018, p. 157) says that “The production of materials about Human Rights Education is a permanent demand in the education field”, and it's observed in diverse levels and modalities of teaching. Training with this emphasis requires time for improvement, as it has been implemented recently, especially since the end of the dictatorship in Brazil.

Knowledge based on Human Rights aims to overcome the model of police training based on the use of force and fighting crime. Also according to Jacondino (2015), linked to legal knowledge and the Social Sciences, there is still knowledge based on hierarchy and military discipline, which affects a conception - a specific pattern of training for military police officers - that contrasts with other types of knowledge, notably those coming from the Social Sciences, as it adopts characteristics coming from the armed forces. In any case, in situations such as Brazil, which recently experienced political and social re-democratization (in the 1980s), they began to live with increasing demands, in the sense that public safety establishes actions following constitutionally established democratic principles, because:

A democratic public security system requires, above all, human qualification and technical training for the system's direct agents, civil and military police, and military firefighters. There is no qualification and training without education; there is no education that can depend exclusively on elements acquired before and outside the institutions. (TAVARES DOS SANTOS, 2014, p. 22).

This change requires readjustments in police training/education. In a democratic society, police action based on principles such as ethics, self-control, and the ability to interpret the law and act according to the social context in which they work is assumed to be the norm. Police officers are expected to act following what is expected of citizen police, meaning to be focused on citizen security, prevention, mediation of conflicts, and confronting the various forms of social violence present in the social fabric (TAVARES DOS SANTOS, 2014). In other words, there seems to be a

certain consensus on the fact that it is imperative that, in a democratic society, to adopt:

[...] a new type of professional police model that emphasizes public service, police discretion, forged by a high level of education and training, and the search for a closer relationship between the police and the community, which is a characteristic of democratic societies (PONCIONI, 2013, p. 51).

Military police academies need to facilitate the modernization of the syllabus and the content of the subjects taught, whether practical, operational, or theoretical, through a virtual or in-person environment, carrying out formative, initial, and continuous training. In this sense, Soares (2019) emphasizes the ongoing need for training – which should be extended to all professionals – to consider the human being as an unfinished being; talking about training refers to a continuous process of learning and transformation. As pointed out by Tavares dos Santos (2014, p. 13), it's necessary “[...] to improve the training of police officers to transform them into competent professionals, who carry out a public service compatible with the demands and demands of a complex society where we live”.

In his studies, Poncioni (2013) identified that in Brazil many states still plan police work, especially training in public security, essentially towards combating criminal actions, often employing intensive use of war strategies and methodologies - typical of armed forces. Tavares dos Santos (2014) also indicates that the shortcomings and needs in military police academies in Brazil are a reflection of the militaristic and legal heritage of the past and a corporate segmentation. It is noteworthy that the military police academies nurture a militarized organizational culture, with an emphasis on discipline, military hierarchy, and training based on principles from the military world, still connected to an archaic pedagogical methodology. When referring to these points, Poncioni (2005, p. 595) alert:

It can be inferred that, so far, police academies don't have the necessary tools - [of] human and material resources - for new and different strategies that produce change and mobility for the occupational group as a whole, towards a new type of professionalism, which can guide a new conception of 'police work' for a more effective, more responsible and more effective performance in the conduct of public order and security, in the context of contemporary Brazilian society.

There is almost a consensus among intellectuals/scholars that the training and police education processes are outdated and inadequate. If we think about the processes of re-democratization, “[...] it's a current voice that the teaching and instruction offered to police officers should be improved” (MUNIZ, 2001, p. 188), but there isn't consensus on how this improvement would be viable.

In his studies, Tavares dos Santos (2014) states that, in police training, military or otherwise, there is a great appreciation of the professional experience. In police environments, it's very common to hear that “becoming a policeman is learned in practice” or “on the streets”, while a formal education is minimized and receives little value. According to Muniz (2001), police training, once restructured, must be correlated with other fields of knowledge, because police work is complex and demands many types of knowledge, from Law – which is the majority of police training –, to some areas of the Medicine – including elements of Psychology –, since routinely police officers find themselves in situations with people dealing with trauma or mental health. At the same time, those police officers need an adequate level of fitness and know personal defense techniques to do their jobs, and use force when necessary. In addition, Tavares dos Santos (2014) mentions that the police techniques used to resolve a crisis are extremely important, however they are not enough to resolve the contiguous occurrences the police face daily, since the vast majority of conflict cases are not necessarily criminal, as Bittner stresses (2003 *apud* JACONDINO, 2015).

Bittner (2003 *apud* JACONDINO, 2015, p. 83) also alerts to the fact that “[...] policing is a complex occupation, which faces serious problems and requires knowledge and skill. Paradoxically, and on the other hand, police officers have unparalleled power in society, being unprepared to deal with this power”.

In his studies, Poncioni (2005) identified that a few initiatives were taken towards the restructuring of education/military police training. The proposals to reformulate police training didn't address the police professional model or practical methodologies for carrying out routine activities, which focus on maintaining order and social security.

Since the first half of the 20th century, there has been talked of reforming the police and modernizing it, to adapt it to a democratic society. “In general, its implementation brought with it the expectation of reformers to make it more disciplined,

less discretionary in its operations, less politicized and more professional” (PONCIONI, 2005, p. 590), hence the issue of its militarization. However, making the police more professional requires training its employees. Education is an important tool, “[...] capable of raising the police to a standard of excellence to perform the functions inherent to its function in a democratic society” (PONCIONI, 2014, p. 49). In this sense, introducing professionalism is more than just training an individual to perform a job or function. Professionalizing the police requires providing it with a wide range of specific knowledge and techniques, inherent and intrinsic to the profession.

There are many understandings of what makes a profession, however, Poncioni (2014) emphasizes that formal knowledge and higher education are inseparable to characterize a profession. The knowledge of a given profession must be indispensable to the professional, that is, they are a monopoly of the profession, while they are inaccessible to laypeople or society in general. The author also mentions that professionalism is a characteristic of modern police, which raises the quality of police work, taken as a principle. Professionalizing the police implies making it more standardized in terms of actions and objectives.

When referring to these themes, Tavares dos Santos (2014) highlights that it's very difficult to professionalize the police in countries like Brazil, and ensure better working conditions, salaries, as well as improvement, via continuing education/training, for police officers.

3.2 The new Public Safety Education Policy in 2018

For Consaltér and Fávero (2019, p. 154), “[...] educational policy is everything that a government does or does not do in education”; they are actions that the State must adopt for the benefit of the community. The literature that addresses educational policies in the field of Public Security alerts to the fact that the resources and efforts directed to this field are usually the results of demands so that results are achieved, by the organizations in charge of public security, in dealing with the feeling of insecurity that exists in society. However, it is necessary to reach the core of the problem, which is configured in the increase of quality police service, which derives from quality education/training (GOLDSTEIN, 2017).

The concern with public security in Brazil notably emerged from 2000, the period in which the first Public Safety Education Policy was organized at state level, which was followed by two other plans, in 2003 and 2007 (SPANIOL; JUNIOR; RODRIGUES, 2020). In these three plans, it was possible to identify important attempts to create a democratic governance system for public security policy, based on cooperation between the different government levels, with common goals and objectives between the various public security bodies, aiming to meet the needs of society and the reduction of violence and crime. However, they were not enough to resolve the insecurity experienced in the country. Educational public policies should not be influenced by partisan policies, as they are always the risk of being discontinued, compromising the purpose for which they were originated and, ultimately, their success (CONSALTÉR; FÁVERO, 2019).

The new National Policy for Public Security and Social Defense in Brazil, approved by Law No. 13.675/2018, has a ten-year implementation period, that is, from 2018 to 2028. This policy began with the implementation of the Unified Public Security System, with the Ministry of Justice and Public Security being responsible for coordination and management. For the implementation of the objectives of the National Policy on Public Security and Social Defense, Law No. 13.675/2018, in article 38, institutes the Integrated System of Education and Professional Development, consisting of programs aimed at: “[...] planning, agreeing, implementing, coordinating and supervising management, technical and operational education activities, in cooperation with the units of the Federation”, with the purpose of “[...] identifying and proposing new educational methodologies and techniques aimed at improvement of their activities”. In this sense, the system can “[...] support and promote qualified, continuous and integrated education” and “[...] propose mechanisms for professional development”.

The Integrated System of Education and Professional Development is made up of programs, namely: the National Curriculum; the National Network for Advanced Studies in Public Security (Renaesp); the National Distance Education Network in Public Safety (EaD-Senasp Network); and the National Quality of Life Program for Public Security and Social Defense Agents. The actions of the programs are aimed at expanding and improving the teaching capacity of public agents, to manage improvements in the performance of professionals (BRASIL, 2018).

The National Network of Higher Studies in Public Security “[...] created a network of specialization courses having human rights as a transversal content” (ZENAIDE, 20018, p. 157). It's an education project organized by the National Secretariat for Public Security and higher education institutions to promote specialization courses in public security. The courses were developed to qualify professionals for a new way of doing public security, mainly oriented towards Human Rights and citizen security. The program aims to bring state public security agencies closer to Brazilian universities, which allows the development of traditional technical/operational training and the study of laws, together with academic training, with the acquisition of scientific knowledge of social phenomena, historical, economic, and cultural.

The main focus is the democratization of public security professionals' access to learning and professional development processes. Therefore, it takes into account the possibility of “[...] articulating the practical knowledge of public security and social defense professionals with academic knowledge”, showing a new way of doing public security, committed to “[...] citizenship, human rights and education for peace”, thus achieving “[...] understanding of the phenomenon of violence” (BRASIL, 2018, article 40). It's extremely important that police qualification is carried out continuously; that studies be carried out that point to the partnership between the police and the university, to offer better content, more consistent assessments and pedagogical standards more suitable for police education.

For many years, narratives were heard that proclaimed the need to follow community policing, which translates into “[...] a democratic organizational method, which allows the co-participation of society to build an environment of peace, in which police action is aimed at the ultimate goal of improving the quality of life of the population” (BRASIL, 2019a, p. 9).

The new National Policy on Public Security and Social Defense (BRASIL, 2018, article 5) provides for the:

[...] emphasis on proximity policing actions, with a focus on problem-solving; [...] encouraging the development of programs and projects focused on promoting a culture of peace, community security and the integration of security policies with existing social policies in other bodies; [and] [...] social participation in public security issues.

Without mentioning the term, it appears that the policy presented comprises a form of community-type policing. As a result of the law, the National Community Police Directive was created, by Ordinance No. 43, on May 12, 2019, which aims to guide the actions of public security professionals and structure the National Community Police System. The concept of community police emerged with the creation of the modern police – Metropolitan Police of England, created in 1829 – with the primary goal of protecting society, hence adopting the supremacy of preventive actions over repressive actions. Its precursor, Robert Pee, stated that “the police are the people and the people are the police”, meaning that every police officer is part of society, just as anyone should participate in the police and in the problems it seeks to overcome, as it is a question of problems of the whole society, not just the police (BRASIL, 2019b).

The community policing ideology was built on the idea of co-responsibility between police and society, for the construction of a healthy social environment, and this should be the guiding principle of any and all police action. Oliveira and Lima (2016) point out that police education with an emphasis on Human Rights should be used as the main tool for standardizing police actions. In this sense, it's important to introduce the fundamentals of community policing to professionals in the training phase, given that one of the basic guidelines of the National Community Policing Directive is that preference be given to the “[...] employment of all new police officers -trained in the Community Policing activity” (BRASIL, 2019a, p. 31). This is because the curricular matrix developed in contemporary police training courses is based on the principles of this type of policing. Beyond that, among younger professionals, there is greater acceptance of the establishment of close bonds with the community and respect for Human Rights. Lima, Bueno, and Mingardi (2016) understand that one of the ways to maximize the introduction of the democratic and citizen policing model by the police officers themselves is to introduce networks for sharing and defending technical knowledge in the professional training policy so that internal criteria are created validity and legitimacy, defining what is not acceptable in police practice.

Jacondino (2017) recognizes that advances have been made concerning the training of Brazilian police officers in recent years, however, the author mentions that the disciplinary regimes that still exist - resulting from militarized institutional regimes -

tend to act on the bodies of police officers to originate a professional attitude different from that advocated by the new training models.

5 Final considerations

From the analyzed material, there is a growing demand for re-democratization and reformulation of the training processes of military police officers, brought about in recent decades and reinforced, above all, by the new National Public Security Policy, instituted by Law No. 13.675/2018, which created the Unified Public Security System. At various times, the law guides the training of public security professionals through an essentially preventive approach, to overcome the repressive police model, which for several has proved ineffective in combating crime and violence.

One of the alternatives that have been strongly reinforced is the training of the military police from the emphasis on policing more humane and closer to the community. Arguably, education is one of the main mechanisms of social transformation; there is no way to advance in discussions and issues about public security in Brazil without touching the core of the problem.

Currently, Human Rights and citizenship should be the cornerstone of the courses that instruct these professionals, as they spread knowledge that surpasses the training model of the military police, essentially prepared to use force and fight crime with war tactics.

Education is the most indispensable tool to raise the police's standard of excellence in performing the duties inherent to their duties. The researched literature made evident the fact that the educational system of public security in Brazil presents, on the one hand, progress, but, on the other hand, it has some dilemmas. Progress, due to the implementation of the new National Policy for Public Security and Social Defense, which provides for the renewal of curricula, professional development, and the promotion of qualified, continuous, and integrated education; dilemmas, as this is a recent policy, which is intertwined with traditional institutional values and practices and affects behavioral patterns - of police officers -, not necessarily related to democratic contexts and/or processes such as monitoring and evaluation of the results of the actions carried out.

There is a need for studies that contemplate the new National Policy for Public Security and Social Defense' acceptance, notably by the military police, responsible for ostensible policing. It's also essential to scientifically monitor and analyze the educational processes of military police carried out in Brazil, since it's based on the understanding that the presence of the police, even in democratic societies, is essential for the maintenance of order and social peace.

Another question that emerged from the present study, for which no theoretical foundation was found so far: the usual training time of the military police in Brazil - which is relatively fast compared to other professions that require a course superior – is enough to train a professional who performs such complex functions?

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