




POLICE REFORM AND INNOVATION IN LATIN AMERICA. AN ASSESSMENT

Hugo Frühling
Centro de Estudios en Seguridad
Ciudadana - Universidad de Chile

Content:

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- I. The concept of democratic policing
 - II. Changes in the architecture of policing in W. Europe
 - III. The Latin American police. Diverse and similar
 - IV. Police reforms in recent years
 - V. Is there a police system?
 - VI. Recruitment and training
 - VII. Executive supervision and political concensus
 - VIII. Relationships with the citizenry
 - IX. Decentralization of police services and local government
 - X. Police accountability

Democratic Policing. Main Principles

- **responsiveness**
- **accountability**
- **Representative of the population**





RECENT CHANGES IN POLICING

- New architecture built around services and decentralization
- Expansion of accountability mechanisms
- Evidenced based policing



The Latin American Police . Differences and similarities

Diversity in number of police forces,
professionalism, public support,

Strong influence of armed forces and military regimes in
the police

Highly stratified officer corps

Traditional training system

Weak accountability systems

Number of Police forces and institution to which they report

Countries	Nº of police forces	Report to
Panamá	Plural	Ministry Gov. and Just. and Procurad.
Dominican Republic	One	Secretaría Interior y Policía
Nicaragua	One	President
Guatemala	Plural	Ministry of Gov.& Municipalities
Honduras	Plural	Ministry of Gov. and Municipalities

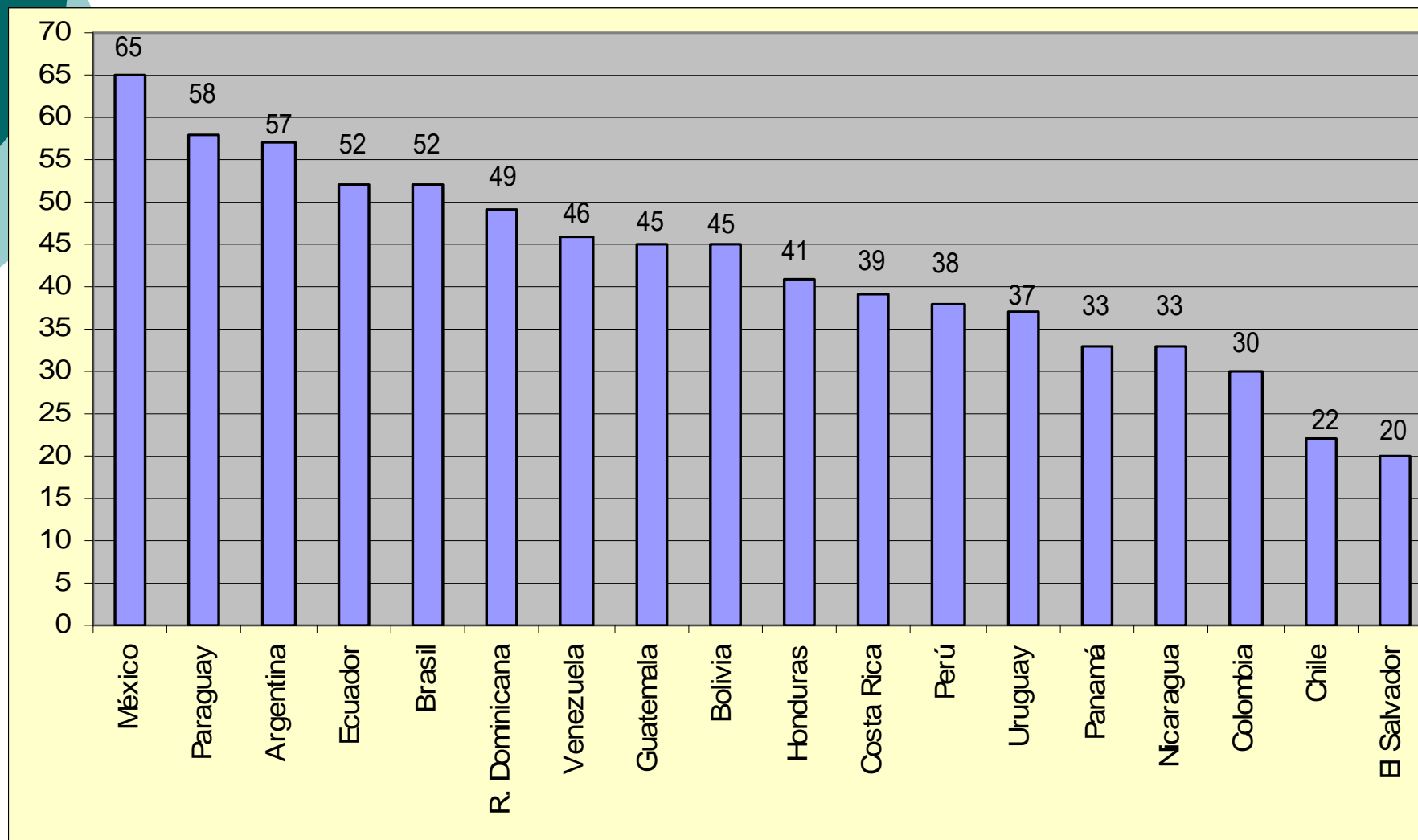
Number of police forces and institutions to which they repond

Continuation

Countries	No of police forces	Report to
Brasil	Plural	Ministry of Justice, Governors, and Mayors
Chile	Plural	Ministry of Defense
México	Plural	Mayors, governors, Federal Government

How probable is it that you can bribe a policeman in Latin America? 2004

"Imagine que un amigo suyo extranjero le preguntara qué probabilidad hay aquí de poder sobornar a policías para evitar una detención ¿Qué le diría usted?. -Aquí solo "muchas probabilidades" más "bastantes probabilidades" -





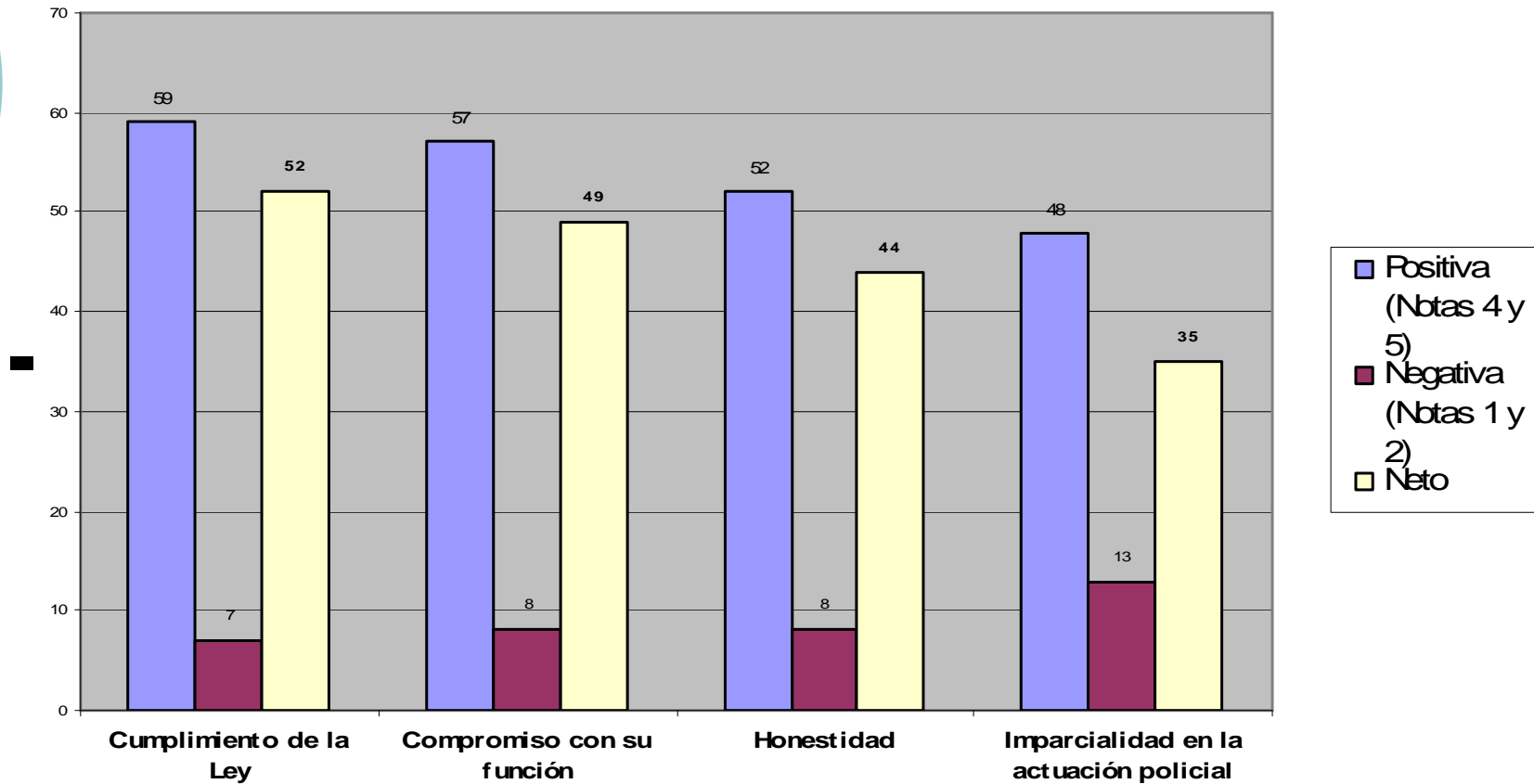
SURVEYS ON PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS OF THE POLICE

- They can identify general perceptions of the police by social class, and age level
- They can identify gaps between public perceptions and quality of service delivery
- They can determine the perceptions of those who had contacts with the police

MAIN CAUSES OF PRESENT LEVELS OF CRIME IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD, IN ACCORDANCE WITH SOCIOECONOMIC GROUP. FIRST MENTION (%)

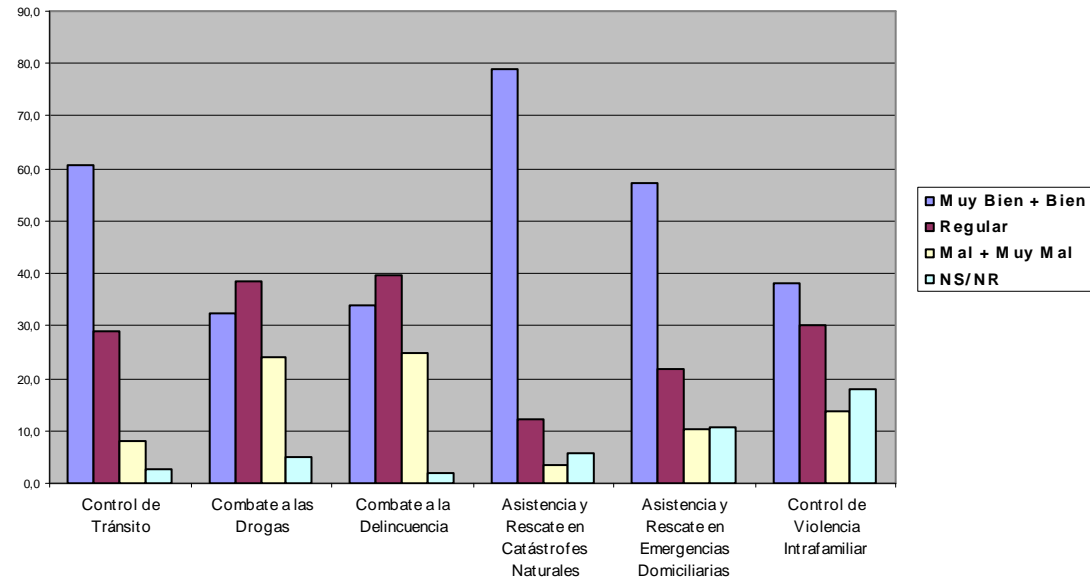
REASONS	TOTAL	ABC1	C2	C3	D	E
Lack of police presence	24,1	17,1	23,5	24,4	23,9	24,4
Unemployment	20,4	16,6	16,2	17,8	22	27
Drug consumption	16,3	4,8	10,3	14,4	18,4	19,6
Being close to dangerous neighborhoods	7,7	1	9,9	9,9	6,5	3,7
Soft on crime sanctions applied to criminals	6,9	20,8	13,1	8,1	5,3	3,7
Lack of recreational facilities for youngsters	5,3	5,2	3,1	5	5,7	5,8
The population does not take preventive measures	2,8	8,7	4,7	3,3	2,1	2,2

EVALUATION OF CARABINEROS, ACCORDING TO CERTAIN ASPECTS



Fuente: Estudio Percepción y Evaluación de la labor de Carabineros de Chile. Ministerio del Interior-Carabineros, 2003.

EVALUATION OF THE PERFORMANCE OF CARABINEROS





INFLUENCE OF ARMED FORCES IN THE POLICE

- Ideological influence under military regimes
- Training systems
- Resistance to external accountability



Police Reform in Colombia in 1993

- A National Council of the Police and Citizen Security is created
- Municipal commands are established
- A National Commissioner of the Police in charge of monitoring investigations on police wrongdoings.

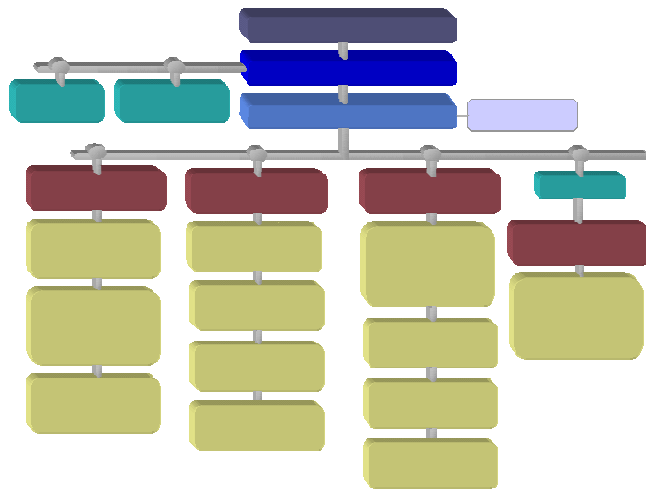
Main changes experienced by the police in Latin America

Demilitarization in Central America

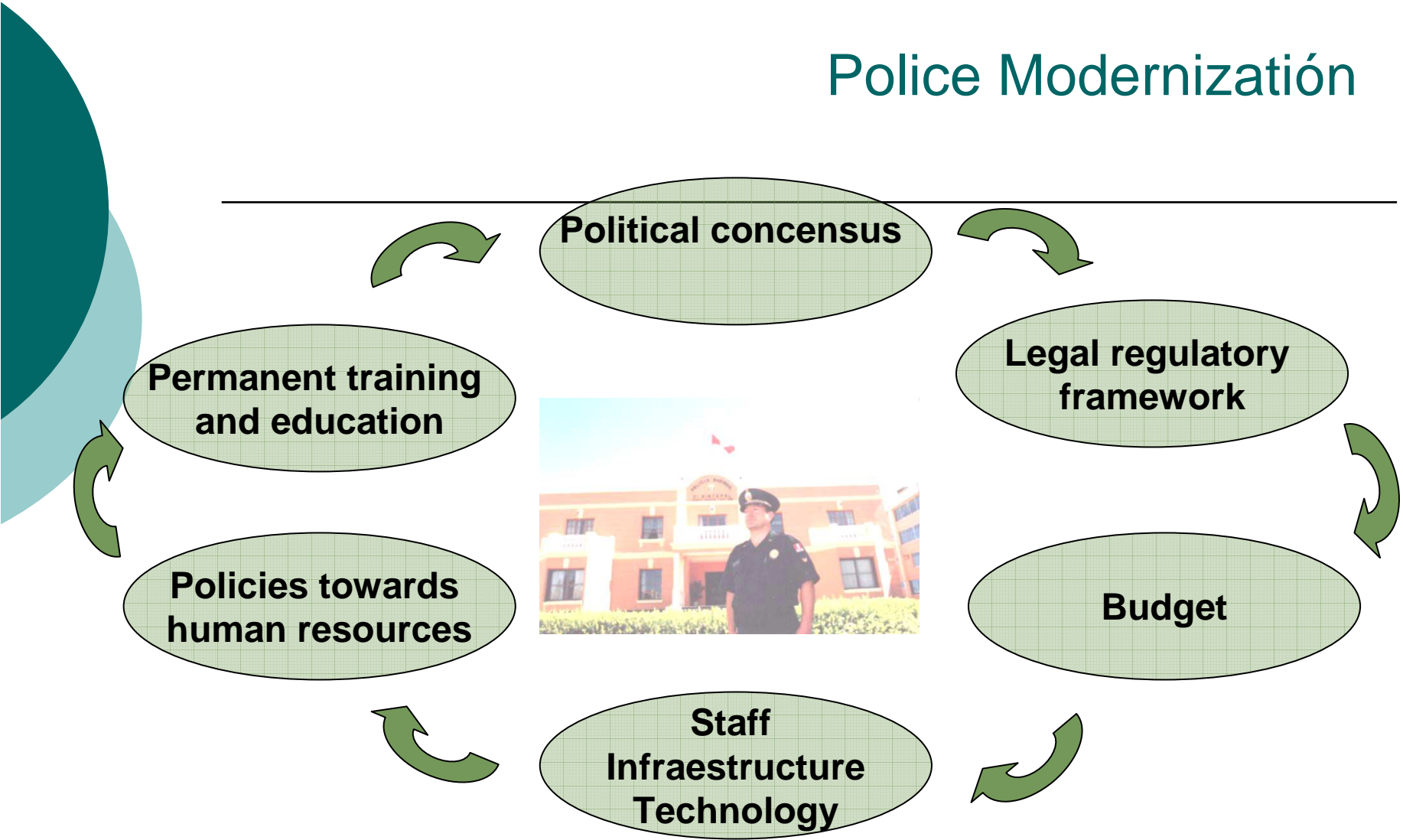
Projects aimed at improving police management

New accountability mechanisms

Community policing projects



Police Modernization



Coordination among federal and local police forces

Need to Create Incentives for Police Cooperation

The US Example:



Joint Federal and local task forces

Cooperation and collaboration Agreements

Federal training to local or regional forces

Access to national data bases



Executive Supervision and Social and Political Consensus

- The relationship of the police with the Executive branch
 - The case of Chile. Corporative autonomy and professionalization
 - The Mexican case. Political subordination and professional weakness

Recruitment and training of policemen (Colombia)

Selection Procedure: Stages



Dissemination

Información

Registering

Documents are reviewed


Physical exams

Psychological tests

Home visits

Security assessment

Results reported



¿Is it there a permanent training system?
Problems faced by the training system in Central
America

- Lack of funding for police schools.
- Most professors are former police officers

Purely theoretical training

Excessive length of the career

Absence of in service training

Interruption of training due to constant security needs

Relationships with the Citizenry

Evolution from a police force to a police service



Relationships between Police and Community

Examples of community policing Challenges and Difficulties





Does Community Policing Help Transform police

Institutions?

- ❑ Lack of desirable number of policemen
- ❑ Constant rotation of police officers
- ❑ Internal skepticism towards the strategy
- ❑ Low commitment of police agents



Positive Aspects

- ❑ Emergence of community policing creates incentives for better service to the public and more attention to police services (Delegacia legal)
- ❑ It also results in better attention to victims of crime. (Oficina de atención a víctimas de la PNC)




Continuación...

- ❑ Mejor evaluación de la policía por parte de quienes conocen el programa comunitario. (Sao Paulo)
- ❑ Quienes están cerca de las bases de policía comunitaria piensan que ésta mejora su seguridad (Sao Paulo)
- ❑ Apoyo mayoritario a la continuidad del Programa
- ❑ Variable mayor nivel de seguridad subjetiva en barrios donde existen bases comunitaria
- ❑ Los policías reconocen el patrullaje comunitario como un elemento favorable ante la opinión pública.

Accountability Mechanisms

**Internal Affairs and Monitoring of
Police Behaviour**

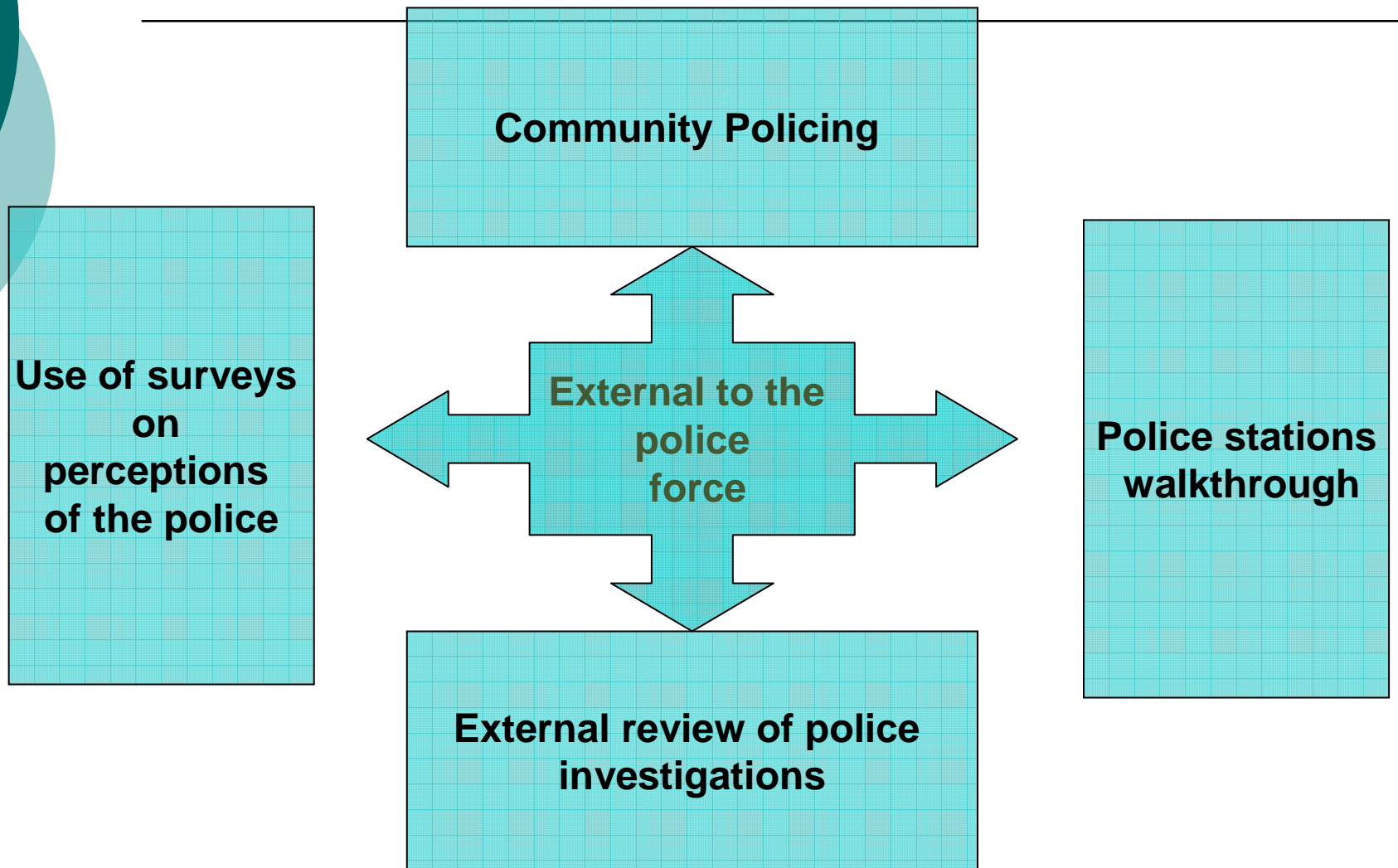
A downward-pointing arrow with a teal gradient, connecting the top box to the middle box.

Within the Police

An upward-pointing arrow with a teal gradient, connecting the bottom box to the middle box.

Compstad and other similar systems

Accountability Mechanisms





Police Reform and Innovation. An Assessment

- Processes of police modernization are taking place in a few countries. However, progress is unequal and at times is very slow.
- The architecture of police forces remains essentially the same as before.
- There are a number of pending issues that demand political decisions: setting up a balance between operational autonomy and accountability to the Executive officer. Deciding on police powers for local governments. Creating incentives for cooperation between central, state and local police forces.
- Present accountability mechanisms are openly insufficient