

Evolution of the security concept. From the local to the global

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ENG Abstract. The main organizations focused on the analysis of the concept of security, have made clear its evolutionary nature and the need to adapt it to the transformations that occurred with the growing globalization. The necessary integration, defined in the successive Security Strategies adopted at the international and national levels, requires taking into consideration the local perspective, making it a participant in the objectives set at the different levels and Strategies. Our contribution, wants to emphasize the need to deepen internal security, which, without disassociating it from global risks and threats, requires updating, in-depth reflection on the safety of people, those who live in the urban concentrations that make up the whole of the State.

Keywords: United Nations, European Union, human security, security strategies, local security.

Summary: 1. Introduction. 2. Evolution of the security concept. 3. Security strategies. 3.1. European security strategy. 3.2. Spanish security strategy. 4. Local security strategy. 5. Local security structures. 6. Conclusion. Bibliography.

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1. Introduction

One of the most notable characteristics of today's society is the phenomenon of globalization and the effects it has generated in the economic, technological and financial structures and dynamics, also affecting the security field (Ilundain, 2001).

Therefore, cities are the object of globalization processes. According to Castells (1996: 35-53), we are facing a new society, where productive roles are replaced by technological progress and information. For Castells, cultural and symbolic elaborations will determine the productive mechanisms in the new society.

Furthermore, globalization has led to a proliferation of security-related issues that have been addressed by various institutions and forums, reshaping the ways in which this area is conceptualized and managed. Across all institutions, from international bodies to local organizations, there has been a recognized need to reconsider the roles they must play concerning security.

Security is no longer conceived as something linked only to justice and law enforcement, since it involves a variety of elements that need to be dealt with from different perspectives. Similarly, it is no longer conceived as something limited to a specific geographic area, for security has no borders. It has thus acquired a new dimension that calls for innovative approaches to its management. Current approaches stress the need to integrate the multiple aspects that surround the idea of security and the need to coordinate efforts among the different stakeholders in the field of security with the aim of enhancing both effectiveness and the much-sought efficiency.

In our analysis, our approach is based on two approaches or perspectives. First, at a conceptual level, security should be understood as an evolving, transnational concept that transcends borders and directly affects individuals wherever they may be; it cannot be compartmentalized. Second, at a structural level, it is necessary to implement organizational measures to integrate security systems and structures across various institutions and administrative bodies.

In this proposal, it is intended to address many of the areas and aspects highlighted by international forums and institutions regarding the concept of security. The approach is taken from a local, city-based perspective, recognizing that this is where most of our country's population lives and conducts their daily lives. Ultimately, a comprehensive and integrative approach to security is proposed—one that strengthens local structures and their 'micro' contributions within the broader framework of global Security Strategies in a coordinated and efficient manner. To achieve this, a Local Security Strategy as well as necessary structural changes within Security Bodies should be adopted.

2. Evolution of the security concept

Various international organizations focused on security¹ analysis have highlighted its evolving nature and the need to adapt security frameworks to changes brought by increasing globalization. National boundaries are becoming less distinct, blurring the lines between national and international realms and diversifying the types of risks that security measures must address. Moving away from the traditional view of security, which centered on a country's ability to maintain its internal development without interference or threats from foreign powers, a more universal understanding has emerged, one that aligns with today's global context and emphasizes individuals as the primary focus.

The *Human Development Report* (1994: 28), under the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), introduced the concept of human security, where territorial security is replaced by human-centered security, establishing different categories of security: economic, food, health, environmental, personal, community, and political security. The Commission on Human Security Report (2003: 1-13) already warns that the security of individuals worldwide is interconnected, noting that political and economic liberalization and democratization have created both new opportunities but also new risks, such as political and economic destabilization and conflicts within States. Addressing these emerging elements of insecurity effectively requires an integrated approach. The report advocates for human security as a response to the challenges of the modern world, urging that policies and institutions respond to these challenges with greater cohesion and integration. However, States continue to hold the major responsibility for security but, as security issues become increasingly complex and new actors are taking on a role in this field, a paradigm shift is needed. The focus must broaden beyond the State domain to encompass human security.

The United Nations World Summit, held in New York in 2005, echoes the principle of responsibility to protect, as contained in the Report of the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (2001: 17-18), whereby the concept of security embodies the responsibility to prevent, to act and to rebuild, and focuses its attention on the protection of people, in line with the UNDP.

In 2008, the Center for American Progress proposed the concept of "sustainable security", referring to three dimensions of Security (Enseñat, 2009: 12): National Security, related to the traditional idea of protecting the country against external aggressions; Human Security, focused on the protection and welfare

¹ United Nations Organisation, European Council, European Commission

of people, regardless of their nationality; Collective Security, referring to the need to provide security beyond the State itself, given the global nature of many of the threats (terrorism, organized crime, failed states, climate change, environmental degradation, poverty), where the guarantee of security requires collaboration with other States and international organizations.

Security is thus presented as a non-closed concept, subject to evolution, focused on the protection of people, on aspects related to their survival, sustenance and dignity, which institutions are obliged to provide. As Manuel Mesa (2006: 119-130) points out, the emergence of the ideas that gave rise to the new concept of human security is not the result of academic speculation, but rather a response to the emergence of collective problems on the international relations agenda, such as environmental deterioration, poverty and economic insecurity, or the AIDS pandemic, which threaten individuals and communities. Mesa warns that not only have new conflicts arisen, but there have been changes in their nature, opening the door for political agendas aimed at their prevention. Concern for human security entails addressing the threats posed to individuals by human rights abuses, poverty, hunger, and war.

Some authors adopt a relativistic view of security, considering that it is a concept that acquires its meaning when dealing with issues related to individuals, groups, organizations, societies or nations (Clements, 1990). In other words, it depends on for whom and under what circumstances or conditions security is provided. From this perspective, security can be defined as a social process aimed at achieving a relative level of social, political and economic security. Giovanni Manunta (2002) considers that most arguments on security contain subjectivity, which makes their analysis difficult. Security and risk are presented to us as two subjective concepts that are associated with other problems related to life, property, health and safety. Security thus attains a different meaning depending on who is being considered and when it is being considered. This situation produces perspectives of risk that increase the differences, so that the security of some may imply the insecurity of others. According to Jesús M. de Miguel (2000: 223), the State tends to lose control over issues and problems of public order and crime, partly due to the processes of globalization and decentralization. Everything seems to indicate that the State will change substantially in the coming years or decades, although it is not yet clear how.

Nowadays, the idea of security is associated with the security of people as rights holders, going beyond the strictly law enforcement and criminal domain to include civil, social and political rights. This results in the inclusion of other aspects related to economic and political problems (social exclusion, poverty, lack of social cohesion, loss of confidence in institutions, etc.), in addition to the more traditional ones - crime, victimization, fear, etc.) within the field of security. We are, therefore, facing a new paradigm in which, influenced by globalization, the evolutionary nature of the concept of security is emphasized. It is worth highlighting two distinct aspects of the paradigm: territorial aspect, which means overcoming state borders, and on the other hand, the multitude and diversity of aspects covered by the concept itself, going beyond the traditional tendency to understand security as solely linked to justice and law enforcement, to include other aspects related to the human being, such as freedom, personal dignity, quality of life and well-being.

3. Security strategies

3.1 European security strategy

Alongside the evolution of the concept of security, some countries have developed security strategies in which, based on an analysis of the international context, they describe the possible risks that may face and how to deal with them in order to protect national security. Similarly, the European Union (EU) has drawn up its own strategy in an attempt to offer a global and shared vision of the risks faced by its member states within a globalized context that requires a common approach and positioning before the rest of the world.

The European Security Strategy (ESS), adopted in Brussels on December 13, 2003 under the title *A secure Europe in a better world*, marked the beginning of a new era in the development of a common European and security policy by promoting an overall vision of the challenges and strategic objectives of the EU, strengthening the internal unity to show it to the rest of the world. The ESS' strategic objectives are, on the one hand, to address threats, using a combination of civilian and military instruments, and, on the other hand, to promote well-being in its surroundings and developing a stronger international society. Emphasis is placed on the security of our EU's neighbourhood while recognizing the need to develop multilateral cooperation on international security issues.

In 2008, given the comparatively outdated nature of the 2003 ESS, there was a need to broaden the range of threats, with the aim of redesigning the policy that would allow for the adoption of a new Strategy or, at least, an updating and deepening of the existing one. Finally, the Council completed the 2003 Strategy by adopting the Internal Security Strategy (ISS), which was approved by the European Council in March 2010 under the title *Towards a European Security Model*.

The ISS establishes ten lines of action to guarantee the internal security of the EU, of which we point out the following (European Council 2010: 21-24):

- **Broad and Integrated Approach to Internal Security:** Internal security encompasses a wide array of measures with a double dimension: horizontal and vertical. The horizontal dimension necessitates the participation of law enforcement and border management authorities, supported by judicial cooperation, civil protection agencies, and the political, economic, financial, social, and private sectors, including non-governmental organizations. The vertical dimension considers international cooperation, the security policies and initiatives of the EU, regional cooperation among member states, as well as the national, regional, and local policies of the member states themselves.
- **Prevention and Anticipation: A Proactive and Information-Based Approach.** One of the primary objectives of the ISS is to prevent and anticipate crime, as well as natural or man-made disasters, and to mitigate their potential impact. The ISS emphasizes that security policies, particularly those focused on prevention, should adopt a broad approach that includes not only law enforcement agencies but also institutions and professionals at both the national and local levels. In this latter context, cooperation with other sectors is crucial, including educational institutions (such as universities and schools) to prevent juvenile delinquency, financial sectors to combat fraudulent activities or money laundering, and civil society in managing public awareness campaigns.
- **Development of a Comprehensive Information Exchange Model:** Internal security policy must be grounded in information exchange and mutual trust, fostering the principle of information availability. Security authorities should have access to as much data as possible regarding criminal activities and their perpetrators, including the *modus operandi*, the types of victims, etc., enabling them to undertake preventive and anticipatory actions.

Since the adoption of the European Security Strategy (ESS) in 2003 and its subsequent revision, the strategic landscape has undergone a series of significant changes that have led to the updating of the Security Strategy (Bordonado, 2016: 3-11): the landscape and nature of conflicts, internal and external threats, the importance of religion as a polemological factor, and the decline of the West in relation to the rest of the world. Additionally, there is a crisis of self-confidence within the European Union itself, along with a diminished capacity to influence its neighbourhood.

The High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Federica Mogherini, in her capacity as Vice President of the European Commission and Director of the European Defence Agency, presented the EU Global Strategy, titled *A Common Vision, A Joint Action: A Stronger Europe*, to the European Council on June 28, 2016. This strategy aims to guide the EU's foreign and security policy in the coming years. In the Foreword of the document, Mogherini emphasizes the need for the EU to play a leading role as a global security provider, stating, "We will deliver on our citizens' needs and make our partnerships work only if we act together, united. This is exactly the aim of the Global Strategy for European Foreign and Security Policy. "Global" is not just intended in a geographical sense: it also refers to the wide array of policies and instruments the Strategy promotes. It focuses on military capabilities and anti-terrorism as much as on job opportunities, inclusive societies and human rights. [...] This is no time for global policemen and lone warriors. Our foreign and security policy has to handle global pressures and local dynamics, it has to cope with super-powers as well as with increasingly fractured identities." (European External Action Service, 2016: 2-3).

Among the priorities of external action, the Strategy highlights the necessity of establishing global norms that promote global governance in the 21st century. "Without global norms and the means to enforce them, peace and security, prosperity and democracy – our vital interests – are at risk. Guided by the values on which it is founded, the EU is committed to a global order based on international law, including the principles of the UN Charter, which ensure peace, human rights, sustainable development and lasting access to the global commons. [...] The EU will strive for a strong UN as the bedrock of the multilateral rules-based order, and develop globally coordinated responses with international and regional organisations, states and non-state actors." To subsequently assert that "We must become more joined-up across internal and external policies. [...] In security terms, terrorism, hybrid threats and organised crime know no borders. This calls for tighter institutional links between our external action and the internal area of freedom, security and justice. [...] Member State efforts should also be more joined-up: cooperation between our law enforcement, judicial and intelligence services must be strengthened." (European External Action Service, 2016: 31, 39-40).

3.2 Spanish security strategy

Titled "A shared responsibility" (*"Una responsabilidad de todos"*) the Spanish Council of Ministers approved the Spanish Security Strategy (*Estrategia Española de Seguridad, EES*) on June 24, 2011. This document analyzes Spain's positioning in light of new challenges it faces within the framework established in the European context and calls for the involvement of various stakeholders in security matters, including different levels of public administration, private organizations, and society at large. According to the document, "the boundaries between internal and external security have blurred. Traditional national security policies are no longer sufficient to safeguard security in the 21st century. Only an integrated approach, one that conceives of security in a broad and interdisciplinary manner at the national, European, and international levels, can

address the complex challenges we face” (Government of Spain 2011: 9).

The EES establishes security policy based on a series of foundational concepts, including: an integrated approach to the multiple dimensions of security, coordination among public administrations and with society, efficient use of resources, and the anticipation and prevention of threats and risks (Government of Spain 2011: 10).

On May 31, 2013, the Council of Ministers approved a new strategy titled “National Security Strategy: A Shared Project” (*Estrategia de Seguridad Nacional, ESN*) and simultaneously established the National Security Council. In its executive summary, the concept of National Security is defined as follows: “The actions of the State aimed at protecting the freedom and well-being of its citizens, ensuring the defense of Spain and its constitutional principles and values, and contributing alongside our partners and allies to international security in fulfilling our commitments.” Furthermore, the document specifies that “National Security is a public service under State Policy, overseen by the President of the Government, is the responsibility of the Government, involves all public administrations, and requires the collaboration of society as a whole” (Government of Spain 2013: 1).

This definition of National Security reflects a comprehensive understanding of security as it is currently conceived. Declaring National Security as a public service under State Policy, which integrates all levels of public administration, is intended to represent a significant advancement in this area. It aims to go beyond a mere statement of principles, establishing a genuine strategy that encompasses all institutions, beginning at the national level but extending to the local level as well.

On December 1, 2017, the Council of Ministers approved a new “National Security Strategy: A Shared Project for All,” which replaces the 2013 strategy. This updated document addresses 15 areas of National Security: national defence, counter-terrorism, combating organized crime, non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, counterintelligence, cybersecurity, maritime security, security of flight and outer space, critical infrastructure protection, economic and financial security, energy security, regulation of migratory flows, protection in emergencies and disasters, security against pandemics and epidemics, and environmental preservation.

The new Strategy highlights the robustness of Spain’s integrated security model in areas such as counter-terrorism, managing migratory flows, economic recovery, and advancing leadership within European integration efforts. In its introductory remarks, the Strategy states that “the Strategy defines a common position for all bodies with security competencies... Only united and coordinated can we analyze, influence, and improve our security environment” (Government of Spain 2017: 5). In reference to the complexity and uncertainty of the current security landscape, the Strategy advocates a holistic, non-compartmentalized approach to security. It outlines five overarching objectives applicable across all areas of National Security, each accompanied by specific action lines. Among these objectives, the Strategy emphasizes “developing the comprehensive crisis management model,” specifying that crisis response must include mechanisms enabling appropriate participation from all levels of public administration and the private sector (Government of Spain 2017: 84). In relation to the action lines linked to these general objectives, the Strategy stresses the need for an integrated and coordinated approach across various administrations, targeting goals such as maritime security, air navigation, risks associated with irregular migration, and the implementation of the National Civil Protection System. Lastly, the Strategy envisions the participation of Local Administration authorities in the National Security Council whenever their contribution is deemed necessary and, in any case, when the matters to be discussed affect their respective competencies (Government of Spain 2017: 127).

4. Local security strategy

The necessary integration, reiterated in the successive Strategies, requires taking into account the local perspective, involving it in the objectives set at the different levels.

In this regard, Chapter 5 of the 2011 ESS already referred to the integration of the institutional model, underscoring the need to adapt security structures to advance this aim. Relevant to our discussion here, the EES highlighted the following priorities (Government of Spain 2011: 81-82): overcoming compartmentalization, redundancies, and overlaps in existing policies and institutional frameworks; strengthening collaboration and cooperation among all actors involved in the EES formulation (including public administrations, private companies, and civil society); and fostering security cooperation with the Autonomous Communities. Similar priorities were expressed in the 2013 National Security Strategy (ESN) and remain emphasized in the current 2017 ESN.

The steps taken toward establishing a National Security Strategy and creating a National Security Council should represent an initial phase in managing a field as broad, complex, and dynamic as security. Alongside statements like “a shared responsibility” or “a project for all and by all”, it is necessary to adopt and put into practice an integrated vision of all the elements related to this issue.

This is where the local perspective gains particular relevance, as it is often overlooked beyond strictly local contexts—whether due to lack of awareness, distrust, or the complexities inherent in atomised structures. Perhaps this is partly a result of all this, and it is important not to ignore the complex regulatory

and administrative framework that has given rise to the current situation in which the Security Forces dependent on Local Governments find themselves, with the intervention - at least theoretically - of the Coordination Bodies of the respective Autonomous Communities.

It is hoped that the progressive reorganization of the National Security System, grounded in the structures and agencies already responsible for security functions, will, through appropriate legislative modifications, enable the much-discussed integration of all security actors, facilitating a more agile and efficient management as often proclaimed.

At the same time, the Strategies developed so far lack a clear and dynamic reference to the local sphere and its structures, which contribute to security within the environments most directly experienced by society.

There is a need for a firm and decisive awareness that takes into account the 'micro' aspects, which are undoubtedly related to the 'macro' field of security. It is worth noting, as will be discussed further below, that 87.27% of the population resides in the 16% of municipalities with populations whose census exceeds 5,000 and the local police force - estimated at 70,000 to 80,000 officials—is distributed across these same municipalities.

According to some authors (Jaime and Díaz, 2010: 69), the activities and objectives of police forces must extend well beyond traditional functions, anticipating current and future demands. This requires not only a deep understanding of their direct professional responsibilities but also a thorough comprehension of society's perceptions and attitudes. This argument reflects the growing significance of urban centers, which calls for corresponding resource allocation to ensure security. Among the proposals for enhancing and adapting the Police to today's global context, the following stand out (Jaime and Díaz, 2010: 70-72):

- Encourage the development of a collective identity awareness in security matters, strengthening existing coordination bodies and promoting the creation of shared bodies, commands and structures.
- Update police legislation to regulate and rationalise the current law enforcement framework, fostering a Public Security System that allows for effective coordination between the State, the Autonomous Communities and the Municipalities, based on the criterion of subsidiarity.
- Develop a Local Security model, in line with the competencies assumed, favouring the high specialisation of local police forces in citizen security, developing the community policing model and refining the preventive function.

The complexity of contemporary societies necessitates that governments decentralize power and share social control responsibilities with local organizations and communities (Garland, 2005: 330-331). Top-down, universal solutions are insufficient. Crime control efforts must also engage the capacities and resources of civil society organizations, associations, and local authorities. In this regard, a bidirectional approach is even more justified—one that considers the micro-level, local perspective specific to these communities and organizations while connecting it to the macro-level dimensions of broader security spheres.

The main strategy undertaken by our law enforcement system is the decentralisation of the different administrative and political spheres, which has led to the police being structured under a 'proximity' approach. This enables the development of "proactive" services aimed at reducing environmental complexity and uncertainty, with local police forces gaining expanded roles and responsibilities within a framework of mutual cooperation and collaboration through coordination bodies, such as Security Boards.

Alongside this overarching approach, specific strategies address challenges. For example, "proximity policing" or "community policing" initiatives focus on bringing the police closer to society, shifting from a surveillance-based model to a "service model".

Cities are the spaces where security-related tensions are most visibly manifested. At the same time, it can be argued that local government is the most accessible public institution for citizens and the most flexible in responding to their concerns, enabling it to take on new roles in the field of security, particularly through the development of a preventive approach.

According to Jordi Borja (2010: 6-8), the right to security is a fundamental human right, especially sensitive in urban societies. Borja emphasizes that security policies should aim at the ongoing establishment of shared social norms, prioritizing prevention, reparation, and sanction—where sanction is viewed as rehabilitative rather than purely punitive or vindictive, as the latter is ineffective for creating a protective civic environment.

Local administrations are aware of security issues and their development. City councils have at their disposal different instruments or programmes that are related to this issue. In addition to the specific services and plans implemented by the local police, city councils have intervention tools such as local security plans, civil protection plans, agenda 21, road safety programmes, youth plans, plans or programmes in the field of social services, etc., thus creating an indicator of their involvement in the "micro" aspects of security.

The set of tools used by the Local Administration are directly related to the objectives defined in all spheres of security. Citizen safety, civil protection, the protection of natural assets, sustainable consumption, the management of safe and sustainable mobility, urban planning, the promotion of citizen health and well-being, equality and social justice, among others, are areas that must be influenced and taken into consideration with the aim of achieving a safe environment, that is, a safe city.

Local security must encompass the necessary breadth to address new challenges and trends required by a globalized society. It should incorporate strategies defined at various levels and be organized across

different areas to provide a comprehensive and cross-sectional response to local public security. This approach contributes directly to the overall objective of any security strategy: ensuring, as outlined in the report of the Commission on Human Security (2003), that citizens can live and develop in peace, with dignity and freedom, without fear, and with full capacities for personal growth and for the well-being of future generations.

From this perspective, local security must address a range of areas or challenges that are especially prominent in urban environments, forming what we propose as a **Local Security Strategy**:

- **Citizen Security**, recognizing that crime prevention is a priority within the criminal justice system, encapsulated by the principle "better to prevent than repress", its objective is to provide security and physical protection to people and their property, establishing mechanisms for collaboration and coordination between the different police bodies.
- **Gender-Based Violence**, aimed at preventing and detecting gender-based violence, supporting and protecting victims, contributing to the restoration of harm caused, and improving mechanisms to prevent secondary victimization.
- **Sustainable and Safe Mobility**, focused on enhancing urban mobility in line with the parameters and commitments set forth in the European Road Safety Charter and Sustainability Plans (Agenda 21), as well as implementing traffic management and planning techniques to this end.
- **School Safety**, with the aim of improving the safety of schoolchildren by influencing their most direct environment and contributing pedagogically to the shaping of attitudes favourable to safety, both on the roads and in terms of civic coexistence. It will include actions aimed at road safety education, the configuration of safe school roads, school protection through traffic control at rush hour, monitoring of school absenteeism, prevention of addictions, bullying, etc.
- **Municipal Civil Protection**, focused on implementing, monitoring, and updating Municipal Civil Protection Plans.
- **Safety in Activities, Facilities, Centers, and Dependencies**: Aimed at overseeing and monitoring the self-protection plans of establishments
- **Public Health**, with the aim of guaranteeing people's safety and health in relation to different aspects of daily life, such as the possession of domestic and exotic animals, food safety, pest control, hygienic and sanitary conditions of dwellings and facilities, etc.
- **Social Risks**, providing support to individuals in situations of vulnerability and/or social exclusion, or who, due to an emergency, are at risk and can be assisted by public authorities. Mechanisms will also be established to offer initial psychological support to the families of victims of disasters and serious accidents.
- **Coexistence and Civic Responsibility**, with the aim of contributing to the improvement of citizen coexistence, giving priority to certain contents of the coexistence and civic responsibility ordinances, which have a direct impact on interpersonal relations and the citizens' quality of life. This also involves implementing specialized mediation services for conflict resolution.
- **Environmentally Impactful Activities**, supporting the proper conduct of these activities, especially those regulated by the law on public entertainment, so that they comply with the conditions stipulated in the respective licenses, safeguarding the safety of both individuals and the surrounding environment.
- **Urban safety**, with the aim of supporting good practices in the field related to housing construction and population centres, guaranteeing compliance with urban planning regulations and the specific conditions of the respective licences. It will also ensure compliance with the local council's resolutions to maintain urban planning standards and safety.
- **Security in Special Interest Areas**, overseeing the security of certain areas that, due to their unique characteristics, require special attention. This includes historical districts, where much of the archaeological and monumental heritage is located, as well as nightlife zones that present particular challenges directly impacting city safety. Given the distinctive nature and significance of coastal cities, it is also essential to address security along the coastal strip of the municipal territory to ensure beach safety and the proper functioning of their services and facilities.

The defined security domains share a series of elements that reinforce the overall approach:

- They form part of the city's daily agenda.
- They are fully involved in the relational sphere, encompassing interactions both among individuals and between individuals and their environment, whether urban or peri-urban, where they conduct their daily lives.
- The administrative decentralization of recent decades has granted local governments normative authority to develop these competencies.
- They acquire relevance in the realm of prevention, representing an initial level of public intervention.

These attributes align with the statements contained in the various national and international Strategies addressing security issues.

Moreover, it is important to consider that cities host the majority of the state's population. According to

the population census of January 2010, out of a total of 8,114 municipalities, approximately 90 percent of the population resides in the 1,315 municipalities with over 5,000 inhabitants. Furthermore, nearly 70 percent of the population resides in the 397 municipalities with more than 20,000 inhabitants.

Table 1. Population distribution by municipality size

Inhabitants	Municipalities	Municipal population register of 2010	% Municipalities	% Population
>20,000	397	32,076,478	4.89	68.22
5,000 to 20,000	918	8,959,730	11.31	19.05
<5,000	6,799	5,984,823	83.79	12.73
TOTAL	8,114	47,021,031	100.00	100.00

Source: Own elaboration based on data from the Spanish NSI (National Statistics Institute), January 2010

5. Local security structures

The Spanish Constitution, in Article 148.1.22, grants Autonomous Communities authority over coordination and other related powers concerning Local Police forces, as defined by an Organic Law.

Similarly, all Statutes of Autonomy reflect this constitutional mandate, conferring upon each respective Community the authority to coordinate and manage aspects related to Local Police, within the framework established by an Organic Law.

Organic Law 2/1986, on the Security Forces and Corps (LOFCS, Ley Orgánica de Fuerzas y Cuerpos de Seguridad), regulates this matter by establishing, in Article 39, that Autonomous Communities are responsible for coordinating the operations of Local Police within their territorial jurisdiction through the following functions:

- a) Establishing framework regulations to guide Local Police Regulations.
- b) Enacting or promoting, as appropriate, the standardization of various Local Police Corps, particularly regarding technical resources to enhance efficiency and cooperation, uniforms, and remuneration.
- c) Setting criteria for the selection, training, promotion, and mobility of Local Police officers, defining the educational requirements for each category, with no level below Secondary School.
- d) Coordinating professional training for Local Police officers by creating Schools for Command Training and Basic Training.

Under this constitutional mandate and the provisions of LOFCS, Autonomous Communities have enacted Local Police Coordination Laws and additional regulations, in the form of decrees or orders. Variations among these regulations have resulted in a diversity of standards on this subject (including the composition and operation of coordination commissions, framework rules for municipal police regulations, selection and training criteria, uniforms, rewards, etc.).

The following two tables reference the legislative developments, highlighting the diversity and structural complexity that has emerged within this sector.

Table 2. Autonomous Community Laws on the Coordination of Local Police Forces

Autonomous Communities	Local Police Coordination Laws
ANDALUSIA	Law 13/2001, of December 11, on the Coordination of Local Police Forces
ARAGON	Law 8/2013, of September 12, on the Coordination of Local Police Forces of the Parliament of Aragon
ASTURIAS	Law 2/2007, of March 23, on the Coordination of Local Police Forces of the Principality of Asturias
BALEARIC ISLANDS	Law 6/2005, of June 3, on the Coordination of Local Police Forces of the Balearic Islands, as amended by Law 7/2008, of June 5
CANARY ISLANDS	Law 6/1997, of July 4, on the Coordination of Local Police Forces of the Canary Islands, as amended by Law 2/1999, of February 4; Law 2/2000, of July 17; Law 9/2007, of April 13; and Law 9/2009, of July 16
CANTABRIA	Law 5/2000, of December 15, on the Coordination of Local Police Forces
CASTILLA-LA MANCHA	Law 8/2002, of May 23, on the Coordination of Local Police Forces of Castilla-La Mancha
CASTILE AND LEON	Law 9/2003, of April 8, on the Coordination of Local Police Forces of Castilla and Leon
CATALONIA	Law 16/1991, of July 10, on Local Police Forces, from the Parliament of Catalonia, as amended by Law 25/1998, of December 31; Law 51/2000, of June 5; and Law 4/2003, of April 7
VALENCIA	Law 6/1999, of April 19, on Local Police and Coordination of Local Police Forces of the Community of Valencia, as amended by Law 11/2000, of December 28; Law 10/2006, of December 26; and Law 16/2010, of December 27
EXTREMADURA	Law 1/1990, of April 26, on the Coordination of Local Police Forces of Extremadura, as amended by Law 4/2002, of May 23; with Article 3, Section 1, partially declared unconstitutional by Constitutional Court Ruling 51/1993, of February 11
	Decree 218/2009, of October 9, approving the Framework Regulations for Local Police Forces of Extremadura
GALICIA	Law 4/2007, of April 20, on the Coordination of Local Police Forces
RIOJA	Law 5/2010, of May 14, on the Coordination of Local Police Forces of La Rioja
MADRID	Law 1/2018, of February 22, on the Coordination of Local Police Forces of the Community of Madrid
MURICA	Law 4/1998, of July 22, on the Coordination of Local Police Forces of the Region of Murcia (Ley 4/1998, de 22 de julio, de Coordinación de las Policías Locales de la Región de Murcia)
NAVARRRE	Foral Law ² 8/2007, of March 23, on the Police Forces of Navarre, as amended by Foral Law 1/2008, of January 24; Foral Law 5/2009, of May 29; Foral Law 15/2010, of October 25; and Foral Law 22/2010, of December 28
BASQUE COUNTRY	Law 4/1992, of July 17, on the Police of the Basque Country

Source: Own elaboration in accordance with the laws passed by each Autonomous Community.

²Territorial laws of some Spanish Autonomous Communities.

Table 3. Ranks and Occupational Status of Local Police Forces

Autonomou s Communitie s	A1			A2			C1		C2	
Andalusia	Technical			Executive			Basic			
	Superinte ndent	Major Intende n t	Intenden t	Inspector	Sub-inspector		Sergeant	Officer		
Aragon	Superior			Technical			Executive			
	Superinte ndent	Main Intendent		Intendent	Inspector	Sub-inspe ctor	Sergeant	Officer		
ASTURIAS	Command			Technical			Basic			
	Main Chief Inspector	Chief Inspector		Intendent	Inspector		Sub-inspect or	Agent		
BALEARIC ISLANDS	Technical			Executive			Basic			
	Intendent	Chief Inspect or	Major	Inspector	Sub- inspector		Sergeant	Officer		
CANARY ISLANDS	Superior			Executive			Basic			
	Superinte ndent t	Chief Inspect or	Subcommi ssi oner	Inspector	Sub-inspector		Sergeant	Officer		
CANTABRI A	Superior			Superior	Executive		Executiv e	Basic		
	Inspector	Officer		Intendent	Sub- inspector		Lieutenant	Corporal/ Officer		
CASTILLA- LA MANCHA	Technical			Executive			Executive			
	Superinte ndent	Intendent		Inspector	Sub-inspector		Sergeant	Agent		
CASTILE AND LEON	Superior			Technical			Executive			
	Superinte ndent	Major intendent		Inspector	Sub-inspector		Sergeant	Agent		
CATALONI A	Superior			Executive			Intermedia		Basic	
	Superinte ndent	Major Intende nt	Intendent	Inspector			Sub-inspect or	Sergeant	Corpora 1	Agent
VALENCIA	Superior			Technical			Basic			
	General Intendent	Main Intendent		Intendent	Inspector		Sergeant	Agent		
EXTREMA DURA	Superior			Technical			Basic			
	Superinte ndent	Intendent		Inspector	Sub-inspector		Sergeant	Agent		
GALICIA	Superior	Technical		Executive			Basic			
	Superinte	Main	Intendent	Main	Inspector		Sergeant	Agent		

	ndent	Intende nt		inspector					
LA RIOJA	Superio r	Technical		Executive		Basic			
	Chief inspector	Inspector		Sub-inspector		Sergeant	Officer		
MADRID	Technical			Executive		Basic			
	Main Chief inspector	Chief inspect or	Intendent	Inspector	Sub-inspector	Sergeant	Officer		
MURCIA	Technical			Executive		Basic			
	Inspecto r	Sub-inspector		Officer	Sergeant	Corporal	Agent		
NAVARRÉ	Technical			Executive		Basic			
	Main Chief Inspector	Chief Inspector		Inspector	Sub-inspector	Corporal	Officer		
BASQUE COUNTRY	Technical			Technical		Inspection		Basic	
	Intendent			Chief Inspector	Sub-Chief Inspector	Sergeant	Sub- Officer	Agent P.	Agent

Source: Own elaboration based on the Laws on the Coordination of Local Police Forces.

One of the most significant aspects of the regulation carried out, as reflected in the previous table, is the structure of the various Local Police bodies, which exhibit a wide variety of ranks, professional categories, and access requirements for each Autonomous Community. This represents a clear indicator of the atomization and diversity that has been achieved within the collective. At the same time, the personnel framed within the more than 2,000 existing local police bodies, estimated to number between 70,000 and 80,000 members, highlights their importance as well as the necessity of proposing alternatives to overcome the very atomization existing in the group.

Table 4. Personnel of the Security Forces and Bodies

Security Forces and Bodies	2010	%
Local Police	85,500	33.73
Civil Guard	79,401	31.32
National Police	64,045	25.27
Mossos d'Esquadra	15,882	6.27
Ertzaintza	7,650	3.02
Foral Police of Navarre	999	0.39
TOTAL	253,477	100.00

Source: APROSER Report (2010:28), based on data provided by the respective official bodies in the last quarter of 2010: Local Police (UNIJEPOL), Civil Guard, National Police, Mossos d'Esquadra, Ertzaintza, and Foral Police of Navarra.

The report highlights the magnitude of the Local Police collective, which, with 85,500 personnel, constitutes the largest police force. This figure, provided by the UNIJEPOL association, which brings together various Associations of Chiefs and Commanders of Local Police from the different Autonomous Communities, contrasts with data from other official bodies, such as those obtained through the Coordination Area of Local Police in the Community of Madrid or the report from the Generalitat of Catalonia regarding those within its territorial scope, which will be discussed next.

Table 5. Municipalities with Local Police Bodies

Autonomous Community	Municipalities	Local Police Bodies	Personnel	Population	Ratio per 1.000 inhabitants	Date of data
Andalusia	770	515	11,861	8,202,220	1.45	JUNE-08
Aragon	730	22	1,708	1,326,918	1.29	Sept-08
Asturias	78	44	1,126	1,080,138	1.04	Jun-08
BALEARIC ISLANDS	67	45	2,680	1,072,844	2.5	Mar-08
CANARY ISLANDS	88	87	3,311	2,075,968	1.59	Jun-08
CANTABRIA	102	32	634	582,138	1.09	Jan-08
CASTILLA-LA MANCHA	919	197	2,073	2,043,100	1.01	Apr-08
CASTILLA AND LEON	2.248	73	2,378	2,557,330	0.93	Apr-08
CATALONIA	946	212	11,378	7,504,881	1.48	Dec-10
CEUTA	1	1	302	77,389	3.9	May-08
VALENCIA	542	276	10,213	5,029,601	2.03	Sept-08
EXTREMADURA	383	100	1,407	1,097,744	1.28	Jun-08
GALICIA	315	131	2,605	2,784,169	0.94	Apr-08
LA RIOJA	174	8	374	317,501	1.18	Jun-08
MADRID	179	135	12,546	6,243,680	1.94	Dec-10
MELILLA	1	1	257	71,448	3.6	Jun-08
MURCIA	45	45	2,824	1,426,109	1.98	Jun-08
NAVARRRE	272	20	706	620,377	1.14	Apr-08
BASQUE COUNTRY	250	78	3,250	2,157,112	1.51	Jun-08
19	8.110	2.022	71,633	46,270,667	1.53	

Source: Data provided by the Local Police Coordination Department of the Community of Madrid and by the Statistical Institute of Catalonia (IDESCAT).

A force of 70,000 and 80,000 police officers should not remain subject to a diverse array of regulations for addressing the same reality, especially in a time when the boundaries of security have become blurred, and there is a demand for effectiveness and efficiency in public administration. Mechanisms to achieve standardization within this sector require both a conceptual and cross-sectional perspective, but these must be integrated within a strategy that concretizes and actualizes what is already an underlying reality, apparent with even minimal observation.

6. Conclusion

Local governments have traditionally played a role in security functions, responsibilities that have expanded in parallel with administrative and institutional developments over recent decades. This has been done with a strong emphasis on people, their well-being, and their quality of life—elements that are integral to the modern concept of security. The long-standing history of local police forces, spanning over 150 years, underscores their importance they have had and the increasingly crucial role they play within the security framework, adapting their services in response to the demands emerging at the city council's offices or encountered in their constant, primarily preventive, patrolling.

Moreover, the considerable size of the local police force suggests the need to explore alternatives to address the atomization among the many local police departments. However, alongside this “atomization”, there are common elements within the collective that should be identified and considered:

- *Functional dependence on Local Governments*, which enables proximity to the life of the city and to the issues faced by citizens and society as a whole.
- *Territorial deployment*, allowing for in-depth knowledge of the region and its population, fostering mutual trust and relationships between the administration and the public.
- *Preventive action*, stemming from their territorial presence and familiarity with existing issues, which serves as a fundamental element in their strategy as a local security force.
- *Problem-solving action*, directed toward addressing issues identified within their jurisdiction as an extension of local administration and authorities.
- *Flexibility*, enabling adaptation to new citizen demands, which represents a valuable asset within the scope of local security.

Given this reality, it is worth reflecting on the possibility of reorganising public security in such a way that, based on the initiatives carried out to date, a police map is designed in which coordination and collaboration between bodies is the dominant trend, favouring permeability and joint work on such a broad and global issue as security, which has both local and global facets.

We have relied on global forums and organizations to gather insights and apply them locally. All relevant organizations stress the need for a comprehensive, multidisciplinary, and multi-departmental approach to security. The strategies analysed, including Spain's, already emphasize the importance of enhancing interdepartmental coordination for an integrated approach to security management. However, thus far, these ideals have remained largely theoretical.

The configuration of Executive Structures that encompass and integrate the multitude of bodies that make up the Local Police is an option that is of particular value in our security system. In addition to an adjusted distribution of powers between the different police forces, the possibility of sharing structures, information systems and, in short, the results in each and every one of the defined areas, will contribute to a substantial improvement in the levels of security offered and perceived by today's society.

The proposal underlying this work advocates for the integration of various local police bodies into a Single Local Police Force, an approach that complements existing ideas on security management. Integrating local police forces into one unified Local Police Force aligns with new demands, positioning this collective as a primary level of security and facilitating the standardization of urban security practices through a Local Strategy.

The ideas presented here respond to the need to implement, at the local level, the criteria and priorities established across all areas of security, aiming to bring coherence to these policies and actualize the frequently mentioned integration. This approach also seeks to broadly address specific needs within the municipal sphere. The opportunity to advance a new order in public security suggests that this should be pursued with a perspective as broad and ambitious as possible, where innovation serves not as a limitation but as a contribution.

We conclude with a statement from the 2003 European Strategy: “We live in a world that holds brighter prospects but also greater threats than we have known. The future will depend partly on our actions. We need both to think globally and to act locally.” (Council of Europe, 2003: 6).

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