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**CULTURE OF URBAN VIOLENCE: THE THEORY OF RECOGNITION  
AND CREATIVE EXPANSION OF RIGHTS VERSUS BIOPOLITICAL  
PRACTICES OF SAFETY DEVICES**

***CULTURA DE VIOLÊNCIA URBANA: A TEORIA DO  
RECONHECIMENTO E EXPANSÃO CRIATIVA DE DIREITOS E AS  
PRÁTICAS BIOPOLÍTICAS DE DISPOSITIVOS DE SEGURANÇA***

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**ABSTRACT**

**Objective:** The purpose of the article is to discuss the mechanisms of urban exclusion and territorial segregation; it studies urban violence and more deeply the way to work the subjectivation technologies, capable of ghettoizing populations and submitting marked groups to security devices. The article seeks to analyze how areas of circulation and non-circulation of humans are determined. In a second perspective, the objective is to investigate what makes individuals to obey or disobey social and legal norms.



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**Methodology:** The article uses data and statistics produced by the Instituto Sangari, through the publication *Mapa da Violência no Brasil* (Map of Violence in Brazil) and from these data, using the bibliographic review method, it dedicates itself to the concept of biopolitics on Michel Foucault. Still following the literature/bibliographic review method, the article seeks to correlate Clifford Geertz's anthropological understanding with Georg Mead's Social Psychology with Wilhelm Hegel and Axel Honneth's theory of recognition. From this review of bibliography, the authors start to use the critical method to raise their own conclusions.

**Results:** It is concluded that the violence that affects a certain population and the mechanisms of public security that affect them are related to the production and consumption capacities of same population. Violence is directly related to vulnerable social groups due to their low importance to the Public Power. As an effect of their poverty, these groups are left to their own devices, thus constituting the social geography of criminality. The article sets out and justifies the reasons that make individuals fall into a normative field; what makes them submit to the fulfilment of social or legal norms.

**Contributions:** The most important contribution of this article is to denounce in a social scientific way that the public policies of repression that are usually used to fight crime are on the wrong path.

**Keywords:** culture of violence, biopolitics, reason of state, theory of recognition, pragmatism.

## RESUMO

**Objetivo:** O objetivo do artigo é discutir os mecanismos de exclusão urbana e segregação territorial; estuda a violência urbana e mais profundamente a maneira de trabalhar as tecnologias de subjetivação, capazes de guetoizar populações e submeter grupos marcados a dispositivos de segurança. O artigo procura analisar como são determinadas as áreas de circulação e não circulação de seres humanos. Numa segunda perspectiva, o objetivo é investigar o que leva os indivíduos a obedecer ou desobedecer às normas sociais e legais.

**Metodologia:** O artigo utiliza dados e estatísticas produzidos pelo Instituto Sangari, por meio da publicação *Mapa da Violência no Brasil* e, a partir desses dados, utiliza o método de revisão bibliográfica e dedica-se ao conceito de biopolítica sobre Michel Foucault. Ainda, seguindo o método de revisão literária/bibliográfica, o artigo procura correlacionar o entendimento antropológico de Clifford Geertz com a Psicologia Social de Georg Mead, com a teoria do reconhecimento de Wilhelm Hegel e Axel Honneth. A partir desta revisão da bibliografia, os autores começam a usar o método crítico para alcançar as suas próprias conclusões.



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**Resultados:** Conclui-se que a violência que afeta uma determinada população e os mecanismos de segurança pública que os afetam estão relacionados às capacidades de produção e consumo da mesma população. A violência está diretamente relacionada a grupos sociais vulneráveis devido à sua baixa importância para o Poder Público. Como efeito de sua pobreza, esses grupos são deixados por conta própria, constituindo assim a geografia social da criminalidade. O artigo expõe e justifica os motivos que levam os indivíduos a enquadrarem-se em um campo normativo; o que os faz submeterem-se ao cumprimento de normas sociais ou legais.

**Contribuições:** A contribuição mais importante deste artigo é denunciar, de maneira social-científica, que as políticas públicas de repressão que geralmente são usadas no combate ao crime estão no caminho errado.

**Palavras-chave:** cultura da violência, biopolítica, razão de estado, teoria do reconhecimento, pragmatismo.

## 1 FORMULATION OF THE PROBLEM: THE PARADOX OF BIOPOLITICAL PRACTICES

It is from the ideas of Clifford Geertz and more specifically from the book *Interpretation of Cultures* (GEERTZ, 2008), that the proposals in this text take their origin. They evolve continuously to pragmatic social psychology and the theory of recognition [George Mead and Axel Honneth], then the field of biopolitics is addressed [Michel Foucault and Giorgio Agamben]; in this immersion one can observe the mechanisms of exclusion and urban spatial segregation, urban violence, the technologies of subjectivity capable of ghettoizing populations, to submit *marked*<sup>1</sup> [2] groups to undergo treatment by security devices, determine areas of circulation and non circulation. Finally, the conclusions of this article should prove that these processes all revolving, in one way or another, around the capabilities of production

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<sup>1</sup> The term "marking" is used by Foucault to define groups that are undergoing some selection process by oppression or repression, identified to suffer some kind of restriction. "Ghettoization" is the action to exclude or discriminate on moral precepts, after which the subjects are to remain in certain physical spaces, leaving free spaces preserved without their presence. Both expressions are born of the processes of exclusion and, often, unconscious segregation, subjective, but from the existing social practices in collusion with the police.



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and consumption of the population, revealing once more the biopolitical networks of contemporary social organization.

This paper seeks to reflect on the hidden mechanisms that define the public policies of urban land occupation, the security mechanisms, the definition or the imposition of State sovereignty, i.e., the use of devices that guarantee certain security to holders of material goods and trigger violence by means of armament, mass imprisonment and the maintenance of high murder rates, larger even than in the case of declared or recognised interstate or civil wars.

For a better indication of the gravity of the statistically calculated indices, in large Brazilian cities people are killed in civil conflict and through police intervention at the following average rates: Sao Paulo - SP, 33 people per week, Rio de Janeiro - RJ, 39 people per week, Recife - PE, 27 people per week, Belo Horizonte - MG, 21 people per week. If it is compared recent international wars which occurred in the twenty-first century, specifically, the invasion of Iraq, the invasion of Afghanistan, the Libyan civil war aimed at disposing of the dictator Gaddafi, rates of killing in Brazil are dramatically higher, exceeding even the number of fatalities in all these wars combined.<sup>2</sup>

In respect of prison, the Brazilian population currently stands at 440,000 inmates, i.e. 227 per hundred thousand inhabitants of the country, a very high rate compared with countries like Portugal, with 11,017 prisoners, or 164 per one hundred thousand inhabitants of the country; Denmark with 3448, representing 63 per hundred thousand inhabitants of the country; Finland with 3,370 inmates, resulting in 64 per hundred thousand inhabitants of the country<sup>3</sup>. Other Latin American countries like Argentina have 154 prisoners per hundred thousand inhabitants. Incarceration is, in any case, high in the western world. But in countries with a drastic economic gap (between rich and poor) the proportions reveal themselves to be much more

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<sup>2</sup> Data collected by the Instituto Sangari, through the publishing of Map of Violence in Brazil - in 2011, under the coordination of Julio Jacobo Waiselfisz, and research funded by the Ministry of Justice of the Brazilian Government ([www.mapadaviolencia.org.br](http://www.mapadaviolencia.org.br)).

<sup>3</sup> Data collected from King's College London - School of Law, by the International Centre for Prisons Studies. World Prison Population List - eighth edition - ([www.prisonstudies.org](http://www.prisonstudies.org)).



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pernicious, as also seen in the expansion of the indices according to race, gender and social class, seen in the research contained in specific references in this text.

The primary aim of this text is to investigate why it is both civil violence as well as State violence that leads to killing and imprisonment in such high proportions, to ensure public safety in urban Brazil. What is the underlying reason for such high rates? One hypothesis commonly raised by contemporary political sociology is that there is a *culture of violence* inherent in Brazilian society. If so, what are its causes? To address such questions would require firstly to speculate the concept of culture and, as a consequence, ask why the rules of criminal law have been systematically unfulfilled as to require, counterfactually, such an extreme reaction on the part of public security policy makers, that is, by the action of the State. What makes people comply or fail to comply with social norms, or more precisely criminal laws? And, finally, if the murder and incarceration rates are so high, does this mean that public policies on crime are wrong?

The strategy is, firstly, to investigate whether the concept of culture is defined as a mechanism that gives a sense of encouragement to the individual for the recognition of, and subjection to the rules. To raise such a discussion, one stride along the understanding of culture as a cognitive phenomenon, as proposed by Clifford Geertz. Secondly, it would be necessary to construct arguments capable of supporting the reasons that cause individuals to fall into their respective normative fields, that is, to conform to social norms. For this purpose it is used the *Social Psychology* of G. Mead and the *Theory of Recognition* now much in vogue in Latin and European academic debates. Our hypothesis is that the actions of a biopolitical nature to kill or incarcerate to meet public safety are ways to contribute to increased crime. Therefore, one maintain that the biopolitical position exercised by States has no effect on the processes of formation and fulfilment of social and/or criminal norms, and more than being null, it is harmful to the reduction of crime.

This is not to argue that police repression would inhibit illegal conduct. It appears that, by the simple sense of community and civil society or by the belief in the police officers themselves, the increased repression rather decreases the rate of violations and offenses. The question that is misunderstood, or purposely misheard,



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is that repression decreases crime in only a palliative and temporary sense. In the long run, conversely, repression perpetuates and aggravates the problem of crime.

Therefore, violent repression does not address the problem, it only glosses over it and intensifies long-term tension. This is because the problem of crime in an environment of drastic economic and social stratification is not a choice, but predominantly an effect of the tension between the economic poles. While there is extreme tension generated by segregation, exclusion and economic and social ghettoization, it will continue to generate people who do not recognize themselves as members of civil society and who also are effectively not recognized nor treated as such, the cycle of criminality will be reinforced, perpetually.

Here it is seen the proposal of the text. But how to lay it out in order to collect its results along with the reader? The strategy is as follows: First, in Part 2, the brief re-introduction of what came to be biopolitics and what lies within these fields to further define its implications: *governmentality* and the concept of *body type*. The two implications, of course, will be appreciated through the prism of public safety practices. In Section 2.1, efforts will be made to introduce urbanism and the consequent structure thereof: the training and knowledge of police officers. Section 2.2 contains previous conclusions about what the technologies of subjectivity are like and the functioning of safety devices. Part 3, starts investigates the reconstructive possibilities, primarily discussing the culture as a cognitive phenomenon, from Clifford Geertz (3.1) and, secondly, discussion of the causalities of compliance and noncompliance of moral and penal norms, from George Mead and Axel Honneth (3.2). The fourth and final section, presents the conclusion.

## 2 A FORAY INTO THE BIOPOLITICAL FIELD: GOVERNMENTALITY, TOWN PLANNING AND USE OF SAFETY DEVICES

Formed between the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries in the West, biopolitics was the notion of internal sovereignty and the fundamental right of the sovereign to decide life and death so that people could live successfully and



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productively. The population preserved and secured would own the wealth of the kingdom, because people able to work would ensure the formation and accumulation of wealth. This power to kill to live is the genesis of the biopolitical assumptions that from there branch out into ways of increasing control over life.

In the middle of the eighteenth century, the knowledgeable state realized what Foucault called "body-type", which introduced a whole network of mechanisms and practices of power, such as the use of statistics, demographic counts, all types of regulations that intervene or control life, health and longevity from multifarious ways and disciplinary, normalizing mechanisms.

The exercise of governmentality<sup>4</sup> was perfected over the course of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the exercises of biopower, multiple procedures, interventions and disciplines. This is because, from the eighteenth century on, came the success of the political economy, the triumph of "body kind" preserved, healthily, the concept of doing what it's up to the government to do: develop the market, and produce wealth. Economic prosperity is the true balance to judge governments.

One can see that the main tension between rulers and the ruled is installed in terms of public safety, because the market only thrives if there is security for the circulation of wealth, and movement of trades-people, hence the need to kill in order to live securely. Political theory has in this way been justified since the fourteenth century, but the more the trade increased, the more intensely the prerogative of biopolitics was seen. Killing became a requirement of subjects to their sovereign. It could be synthesized these political ideals in the following terms, one has to kill to live.

With the perception of *body type*, in the eighteenth century and above all with the evolution of demographic knowledge, incarceration was a way to kill 'temporarily'. 'Temporary' killing ensures that subjects remain able to work for the production of wealth. This explains the enormous growth of the penitentiary during

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<sup>4</sup> Governmentality is a neologism introduced by Foucault to address the practices of government founded in the reason of state. Or, again roughly, deals with economy of knowledge that informs the practices of government, to protect and ensure the smooth functioning of the market.





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the era of mass industrialisation. Today, in the post-industrial era, the preservation of the *body type* can no longer be justified. Incarceration is a product of ethical reasons since bloodshed has been challenged - challenging the death penalty; incarceration in the post-industrial age is just a method of exclusion, segregation of those who put the market in danger.

To imprison is not so much a corrective technique as a punitive one. Arrest is an attenuated method - or politically excusable - to remove or segregate people to reduce stress on goods of production and trade. But it also kills, either by security policies which make use of extermination practices as by exposure to *bare life*, in Agambenian terms. In the latter case it would not be proper to term it 'kill', but 'allowed to die'.

Finally, what is required to understand about the design of biopolitics for this text in particular is that the state, from the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries began to exert a measure of maintenance, preservation and control of life; this came from knowledge that if they organized and corroborated with each other to build the great edifice of governmentality, governance practices would arise from the requirement of the need for market protection. Governmentality is a combination of practices, methods and knowledge capable of providing selective enrichment to serve capitalism. Among these practices is the duty of security and policing techniques. The population has become the object of police care, although this "care" will be translated as "created care" as humans exercise "care" over animals<sup>5</sup>, ensuring their lives, to work but not to receive the riches they create.

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<sup>5</sup> In my examples from the classroom, the construction of a chicken coop, the owner of which raises chickens and eggs. We assume that there are external dangers, like the appearance of a fox, which should be eliminated for the security and peace of the henhouse. Once, some chickens get sick and needed to be treated, isolated or even destroyed. Once, investment was needed in the quality of feed, veterinary service, but that all benefits are calculated with a single purpose, the production of eggs. The population of the chicken coop does not live for themselves but for the owner of the henhouse [life in the Greek sense explained by Agamben: *zoe*].





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## 2.1 THE POLICE AND URBANIZATION

Now the challenge is to understand the phenomenon of urbanization, a movement that led to major transformation of human life, increasingly from the fourteenth century in such a strong manner that it became responsible for steering the liberal restructuring of the Western political order three centuries on from the late eighteenth century, forming the cultural revolution of the "citizens" – using the neologism to accentuate the idea that remains implicit, because they are properly called bourgeois, the population of the boroughs -. This new order comes as a counterpart to the pillar of logic, aptly named feudal logic. Police, trade and urban development, it is assumed, produce concatenating effects as this passage of Foucault's *Sécurité, Territoire, Population* clearly shows:

Police and commerce, police and urban development, and police and the development of all the activities of the market in the broad sense, constitute an essential unity in the seventeenth century and until the beginning of the eighteenth century. Apparently, the development of the market economy, the multiplication and intensification of exchanges in the sixteenth century, and the activation of monetary circulation, all introduced human existence into the abstract and purely representative world of the commodity exchange value. (Foucault, TSP, 2008, p. 455).

Foucault provides for the formation of urban spaces and assigns to their constitution the conditional support of the police. For him, the dense social life is driven by the market and is reliant on the police; there is a close relationship between the city, its police and the market. He states directly: "In short, the police are mainly urban and mercantile, or, to put it more brutally, that they are an established market in the broad sense" (Foucault, 2008 - STP - p. 451).

Second, it should be noted that the problems that occupy the police are also the city's, i.e. the market's problems of buying and selling and exchange. (Foucault, STP, 2008, p. 451). The police function is, among others, the exclusion of the poor, to allow the circulation of wealth.



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When we look at the different objects thus defined as relevant to the practice, intervention, and also reflection of police, and on police, the first thing we can note is that they are all essentially what could be called urban objects. They are urban in the sense that some only exist in the town and because there is a town. These are roads, squares, buildings, the market, commerce, manufacture, the mechanical arts, and so on. Others are objects that are problems falling under police inasmuch as they are especially significant in towns. Health, for example, subsistence, the means for preventing scarcity, [the] presence of beggars, [the] circulation of vagrants – vagrants only become a problem in the countryside at the end of the eighteenth century. Let's say that all of these are therefore problems of the town. More generally they are problems of coexistence, and of dense coexistence (Foucault, STP, 2008, p. 451).

By the action of the police that cities are made, as Foucault states, "the police are the condition of urbanity" (Foucault, 2008, p. 453). The police are the safety device capable of carrying out the exclusion, the territorial delimitation and the demarcation of the pockets of poverty, by which he means slums. The poor, those who pose a potential risk to the circulation of wealth within the logic of the market, are identified and segregated. There is seen, therefore, from the practices of the police, the success of the exercise of biopolitical exclusion.

The art of governing the city, the reasoning of the State applied to cities, leads to the search for a technology to allow the State forces to develop one way or another a myriad of safety devices, such as controlling the movement of population, production of reports, registration of citizens, filing prisons and to choose forms of action within a policy budget. Policies that define how to combat crime, or militia practices, be that by research, by segregation, or by blatant intimidation<sup>6</sup>.

Policing is only one of the devices of safety and growth that make up the vast universe of the responsibilities of government. But it was from the cities that the specific need for safety devices arose. The emergence of the market town, with all the effects of dense cohabitation, and the need for free movement within it, creates a

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<sup>6</sup> Safety devices are all the mechanisms of various nature that comprise the network of knowledge that relate to crime. There are militia practices, such as patrols, there are investigations with a high degree of professionalism and equipment, as used to combat kidnappings, since the hostages are generally very wealthy. There is, finally, an economy of public safety, a calculating and even a permissivity, which is composed from a cost from a control of efforts and cost of employees. This subject will be dealt with again in topic 4



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need for vigilance to minimize the potential threat that the poor represent to holders of material goods, producers and consumers.

Under a broader spectrum of the government, there is the exchange of goods, movement of people, enrichment and consequent taxation of the populace; in addition to, but including the police, is the governance of the State applied to urban problems such as health - combating contagion - policing the streets and markets, concerns about supply, with building roads, stratified urban living spaces, places for the poor, places for the rich, the delimitation of the exclusion area (the slum), the ghetto. And then, as a result, the strength of trade as a condition for measuring the success of the government.

Politics is not justice because it is not critical, it does not impose justice. It is linked to the executive. The police are a regulatory power<sup>7</sup>. Foucault describes as the "permanent coup":

The police consist therefore in the sovereign exercise of royal power over individuals who are subjects. In other words, police is the direct governmentality of the sovereign qua sovereign. Or again, let's say that police is the permanent coup d'État. It is the permanent coup d'État that is exercised and functions in the name of and in terms of the principles of its own rationality, without having to mould or model itself on the otherwise given rules of justice (Foucault, 2008, TSP, p. 457).

The police act in a regulatory manner. The police act, they exercise a rule. Their primary mission is to exercise protection of the process of trade and to protect the city, there is a regulation, a discipline. "The state has a burden to its civil society, and it is the management of civil society that the state should ensure". (Foucault, STP, 2008, p. 470). Foucault has the unique ability to describe the power within in its concreteness and in its rule. His definition of how the police act has something very real and disturbing in it. Subjectivities are created, but are able to conform to extremely violent mechanisms of action and the formation of very positive views and social beliefs. The police itself is a technology of subjectivity in action. Or, as

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<sup>7</sup> See the quote from Foucault: The police are not, at this time, thought of as a kind of instrument in the hands of the judiciary, a sort of way to apply effectively regulated justice, not an extension of justice, it is not king acting through its apparatus of justice, the king is acting directly on his subjects, but in a non-judicial way. (Foucault, 2008, STP, p. 457).



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Foucault states: A general strategy of power. And the question is how this practice is constituted, or "it is simply to know where it goes, how it goes, between which people it goes, between which points it passes, according to which procedures and with what effects." (Foucault, STP, 2008, p. 3 / 4).

From this shift of interpretation outlined above, it is necessary to rethink the roots of urban violence. It seems as though there are exactly the markings of space, territory and free movement to stimulate economic disparities, differences in subjective multifarious subjective plexuses, but which in one way or another gravitate to the market. There are these barriers, and even if they are concealed behind techniques of subjectivity, they constitute and feed tension. It would not be, by obvious conclusion, the non-recognition of citizenship [the radical etymological liberal word *citizenship*, *citizen* - "citoyen, citoyenneté" originally those who live in the city - "cité"] that establishes a zone of conflict that tries to resolve through an external, palliative, action which is the use of police force? In the next segment it will be investigated relationships of power that underlie the powers of the police so as to bring out the inefficiency of the mechanisms and safety devices usually called the solution to the problem of violence, surveillance, segregation, exclusion by means of imprisonment, the show of force by such practices as patrols, searches, so called policing in the field, finally, the use of weapons and their possible fatal actions.

## 2.2 TECHNOLOGIES OF SUBJECTIVITY AND SAFETY DEVICES:

If "the power is not based on itself and does not take from itself" (Foucault, STP, 2008, p. 4) and as it is seen here that the police power is founded in market practices, one needs to readdress the problem of urban violence from the processes of exclusion that the market causes. At the beginning of *Sécurité, Territoire, Population*, Foucault discusses how the mechanisms of power function. Nothing is worth knowing more than the police, urban planning and the market are coupled with the guts to not denounce the power relations in that structure:



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Mechanisms of power are an intrinsic part of all these relations and, in a circular way, are both their effect and cause. What's more, in the different mechanisms of power intrinsic to relations of production, family relations, and sexual relations, it is possible, of course, to find lateral co-ordinations, hierarchical subordinations, isomorphic correspondences, technical identities or analogies, and chain effects. This allows us to undertake a logical, coherent, and valid investigation of the set of these mechanisms of power and to identify what is specific about them at a given moment, for a given period, in a given field. (Foucault, 2008, TSP, p. 4 / 5).

This time, with much more subtlety, and more perniciously, the society has been able to build invisible concentration camps. There are those who are left to *bare life*: the left for dead, the worthless. These, submitted to subtle symbolic violence, segregated by professional inadequacy, form the pockets of the invisible until they commit a crime and become therefore visible, but only in the eyes of tabloid journalism, in the eyes of the police, judicial and penal system.

Others are still the figure of the contemporary *homo sacer*, life that should be killed (Agamben, 2010). Drug dealers killed in combat with the police. There remains only one murder. The dead boy with gun in hand is not a public enemy, he is a co-citizen. One must examine the causes of combat, the reason for violence. The violence has to be treated, not fought with weapons of lethal, irreversible power.

Every form of armed intervention is in the long term demonstrating a pathological social process, in which the State is, by direct assumption of the conditions of possibility, the entity with primary responsibility for not creating conditions for dialogue, integration and recognition. It is responsible, especially because of not having created the means of justice, and has served, surely, to intensify or perpetuate the conflict, as it uses police power, through the safety devices.



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### 3 THE REVERSAL OF VIOLENCE: AN ANTHROPOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION OF COMPLIANCE WITH STANDARDS: A CULTURAL ACTIVITY

#### 3.1 CULTURE AND COGNITION

Clifford Geertz ranks two definitions for culture. The first and least important comprises the concrete behavioral patterns - customs, usages, traditions, clusters of habits - but its emphasis is devoted to the second: cultures are control mechanisms - plans, recipes, rules, instructions - anything that makes up the human regulation.

Geertzian understands that man is among the animals, the more dependent on control mechanisms to bring order to his behaviour, precisely because he brings in his genetic baggage almost any possible definition, being "par excellence" a being of learning, of building significant meanings that will guide his behaviour, define what is in excess and what is missing.

What Mead has called *significant symbols* hold the key to processes like human thought: men make their own way, by overestimating, distancing themselves from simple realities and giving them value, meaning, and importance. They are, after all, their own creators, because they make up the network of meaning that is self-positioning as a condition of human life.

The human purpose, according to Geertz, would be just "make a construction of events through which he lives, for self-guidance in on the 'current course of things experienced'". (GEERTZ, 2008, p. 33). Soon, humans no longer have a natural regulation and can, therefore, be very different because the goal of human behaviour will depend on the attribution of meanings to the issues surrounding them. The human behaviour is deeply linked to the inter-subjectivity and understanding which make up the world and this depends on processes of perception and interpretation of the significance of the world. Human behaviour without culture is, as Geertz says, "virtually ungovernable, a mere chaos of pointless acts and emotional outbursts, and its experience would almost not have any form. The culture, the accumulated total of such patterns is not just an ornament of human existence, the more a precondition to it - the main basis of its specificity." (GEERTZ, 2008, p. 33). The evolution of



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humans was not the liberation of the hands, the theoretical concept of "homo faber", but "the ever growing support on the systems of significant symbols (language, art, myth, ritual) for guidance, communication and self control, all of this created for man a new environment to which he was forced to adapt"(Geertz, 2008, p. 35).

This is the first step to understanding human behaviour and from this it will be able to reach an understanding of the reasons why it complies with or violates law, or rules of behaviour in general. It is important, for the moment, to understand that human action is through a kind of inter-subjective feedback, in which each shapes the other's progress. Mankind, therefore, is self-creating, building symbolically mediated programs, as Geertz and all who see culture as a cognitive process advisor assert. The learning ability of man, his plasticity, is his main characteristic and specificity. Humans are highly dependent on learning and are influenced by the apprehension and application of specific systems of meaning.

Violence is a cultural phenomenon, it is not innate. Jean Laplanche, in his chapter *Résponsabilité et Réponse*, talks about the production of a culture of violence. For him, violence, evil, is not something innate, natural, but something created through our cultural cognitive ability. There would not be a man like the wolf man, the feral wolf, existing as an animal within us, as something natural. Humans have no nature, only culture. Laplanche:

My axis of thought is that human violence - while human and not animal - is sexual. What we call the sexual instinct of death is not biological or instinctive, contrary to what Freud thought. But it is linked to the sexual ghosts that inhabit our unconscious and which can be witnessed each day in our dreams, which are a reminder of Freud and Nietzsche. I do not see how these cruel ghosts, and the imagination of this suffering could be a creation of nature and the innate.

But Laplanche, in the continuity of his language of metonyms, goes further. He identifies that violence is a result of misunderstanding, of a lack of connection, of the impossibility of a common, unique, consciousness. The fraction of consciences is, by chance, the cause of the death drive. Consider this as Laplanche continues:





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What is important in the term "unconscious" is to break it down into three, i.e., *in-com-scire*: What is not known combined, which is not symbolized in a coherent set. It is what is heterogeneous to a consciousness in the sense that this term implies a unity: we refer here to the part of the consciousness that Hegel calls, the "unhappy consciousness," for example. Well, this *in-com-sciente*, this turned off state, this non-connectedness, is what continues to attack us in the element of surprise (*étrangèreté*). There is this "pure culture" of the death drive, of non-connectedness, of estrangement, to which we continue to be taken to respond as though we were taken to respond to parental adult. The big question is to ask how these non linked residues gyrate, we might say, in vinegar, as is the case in the shutdown of the significant dislocation of tortured bodies.

Within Brazilian society there is a paradox: on the one hand, the media; people are bombarded with a massive and continuous network of advertisements that drive consumption. To live in Brazil is to live subject to heavy capitalism, especially consumer capitalism. However, the purchasing power of a large part of the population, namely those restricted to living within the pockets of segregation, is minimal. Added to this the blatant disregard seen through the technologies of subjectivity with the complicity of security devices, in Brazil the violence is a predictable effect.

### 3.2 THEORY OF RECOGNITION, FORMULATION AND ENFORCEMENT OF NORMS

Upon completion of this introductory stage that man is from a cognitive culture and that violence is a cultural phenomenon, one move on to the second phase of this argumentation which aims to explain why rules are met or not. For much of this, it will be used the work of two authors. G. H. Mead and Axel Honneth, both of whom structured their theoretical works from Hegel's Theory of Recognition.

Hegel was interested, above all, in the conditions of inter-subjective of the practical auto-relation of man. Or, he engaged, in his Jena phase, with the formation of practical-moral identity of the subject. As of here he takes the lead from the theory sustained by Mead, who sought to justify the human moral relationship with demonstrable arguments, i.e. arguments that have empirical support. According to Honneth, Hegel failed to prove his case, constituting merely the theoretical argument



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- as much as a metaphysical one - in contrast to Mead's, which were made through the pretensions of social psychology.

Mead exposes the dialectic of "Me" and "I" as a mechanism for revealing the human psychic constitution in his classic *Mind, Self and Society* (Mead, 2010). All humans in their elaborations of psychic self-referential consideration would have a split personality which they believe themselves to be, that is, an image of themselves through the eyes of another. That is to say an image made of past impressions that they believe they have created in others, what about if the eye of the other was a mirror where the person could see themselves. The "Me" Finally would be the image that he would make of himself, a self-image, but created from the belief that it is captured by the eyes of another. This would be the first dimension of the identity, captured in the past, apprehended and formed from the idea of what one thinks of, and how one sees, him or herself. The second dimension does not belong to the past but the present and is therefore invisible to the subject. It is, indeed, what Mead describes as "I". The "I" is, therefore, unpredictable, present and innovative. It does not submit the rules of the past because it is creative.

However, it lives within what the "Me" conforms to. The "Me" of the slave, makes him submit to slavery, the "Me" of the poor makes him conform to capitalism and submit to it, the "Me" of a macho woman, causes her to underestimate and subdue the virile power and so on. But the "I" does not submit or conform to because it is innovative and there can be revolutionary to its own "Me". An "I" is innovative, and redefines its own "Me", for example, in the case of a slave who decides not to submit to his master, like a woman who fails to submit unconditionally to domestic obligations. All would expect her, and even she would expect, to meet her domestic obligations, but she, revolutionizing her profile, would rise up against her original position, the effect of the action of her "I" (Mead, 2010).

Now, why is this theory of interest in the context of this article? The "Me" is infectious, i.e., the same mirroring that one has in the eyes of others, also has the "Me" as a collective phenomenon. The "Me" when modified, renewed, implies the same insight into their peers. The "I" is strong and in redefining its own "Me" has an effect on the collective close collective "Mes" and that's where it forms a collective



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expansion of the rights claimed by the "Mes". George Mead even gives historical examples of re-creative "I's", as in Jesus Christ, to create universal brotherhood, and as in the Enlightenment, utterly destroying the idea of social stratification by birth, etc.

The most interesting thing is that Mead believes that this process occurs from cognitive expectations. The rules of behaviour that submit people to their normative niches are formed cognitively, their own self-image is formed cognitively, so the "Me" only obeys what he has as normative expectations for himself, what his identity would be, in their cognitive understanding, subject to.

The interactive moral processes of which Mead talks, it is assumed that the self-image is created from the construction of the "Me". This perspective starts from the partners of interaction and these are the cognitive demands that generate normative expectations. Honneth had noticed that Mead, in his social psychology, came to the conclusion that in an inter-subjective conception of human self-consciousness, "a person can only acquire a consciousness of himself as he learns to perceive his own action from the perspective, symbolically represented, by a second person." (Honneth, 2009, p. 131).

The excluded do not create mutual recognition processes, do not recognize themselves as partners of interaction, and see no sense in meeting standards. The whole process is a cognitive process of learning and perception of the self and others and, finally, the collective. People grow according to the normative expectations of their personal environment. At an early age, one learns according to the words of one's parents and educators. But the child's progress will launch in the world so that it will incorporate the moral inter-subjective solution of conflict. To learn to respect rules is to enter into a category of practical life, it is to accept the rules and moral values of the community to which it belongs, and then be recognized as a party. Therefore, Honneth thus manifests himself:

With the expansion of social reactive behaviour to the nexus of regulatory action, "Me" becomes a self-image of a cognitive self-image: from a normative perspective from their interaction partner, the other subject takes his axiological moral references, applying them in practical relationship with himself. (Honneth, 2009, p. 133).



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The formation of a social identity is revealed by the gradual broadening of the "Me". That is, to understand he himself from the normative perspective of the next confrontation. The dichotomy proposed by Mead is very suggestive to the utilization of the aporia "play/game" to explain a child's mental development. At the stage of "play" between 2 and 5 years, it reproduces by imitation and rehearsal the language games that surround it. In the phase of "game", after 6 years, the developing child requires that "it represents in itself, simultaneously, the behavioural expectations of all his fellow players in order to realize its own role in the context of functionally organized action."(Honneth, 2009, p. 134).

Thereafter, from the phase of "game", the aim is to acquire normative understanding of himself as being in a certain genre of people. Self-consciousness depends on the existence of a second subject, without the experience of an interaction partner that will respond, in the mode that "Mead reverses the relationship of "I" and the social world and affirms a precedence of perception of others on the development of the self" (Honneth, 2009, p. 131). The attitude of an individual influences the attitude of other individuals. Successful social behaviour exemplifies and helps to control the behaviour of others. Therefore, in this stage of "game" one can provide that:

The ability to guide their own behavior by a rule obtained by the systematization of the perspectives of all partners, the socialization process generally takes place in the form of an internalization of norms of action, from the generalization of behavioral expectations of all members of society. By learning to generalize in oneself the normative expectations of an increasing number of interaction partners, to the point of the representation of the social norms of action, the subject acquires the ability to participate in the abstract interactions normatively regulated by their environment. (Honneth, 2009, p. 135).

It should be noted that external and repressive enforcement of police power carried out in a dimension of state sovereignty requires an understanding of something much more intimate, captured within the human psyche, which is the individual's identity. If the police or society in general recognizes this individual as an



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excluded person, as they say, roughly speaking, a marginal, the police will not do other than to take their assumed marginality.

The recognition of the other as an active and reciprocal subject of a social and legal relationship is a condition of their subjection to the rules to which he, duly recognized as a member and co-responsible person, assumes. Thus, it can be said, as does Honneth, that "if the subject, by the fact of learning to assume social norms of action of a 'generalized other', must reach the identity of a socially acceptable member of his community, so it makes sense to introduce to this inter-subjective relationship the concept of 'recognition' "[...]" (Honneth, 2009, p. 136)

The acceptance of, and subjection, to the rules depends on the success of co-operation and mutual recognition. As Honneth emphasizes, "rights are, in some way, individual claims of which we can be sure that will satisfy the generalized other. In this sense, by the granting of social rights, you can measure whether a subject can be conceived of as a fully accepted member of his community "(Honneth, 2009, p. 137). Dignity comes from a practice of self- respect because to " recognize, reciprocally, each other as a person of law means that both subjects include in their own action, with effective control, the community desire embodied in the inter-subjectively recognized norms of a society" (Honneth, 2009, p. 138).

Mead presents a thesis that explains the moral development of societies. The "I" can redefine the "Me" through new and growing forms of social recognition. It is precisely the dialectical engine between the 'I' and 'Me' that gives the expansion of the 'Me', to meet the requirements of 'I'. That is, one can only fight for the rights one believes in. In this sense, the practical purpose of greater freedom of action is already connected to the counterfactual assumption of an expanded recognition of rights.

Humans move in their normative field by imposing new legal challenges because of their creative faculty. It is possible to invent the future, to reinvent lives, literally dreaming and making dreams come true, by claiming them as reality. The requirement for more rights is increasing as long as you want to rationally overcome a narrow and limited society and move toward a broader, more comprehensive one, in the sense that it has more rights.



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The 'Me' is verifiable and perfect, without this there is a performative contradiction in this assumption. There is certainly a normative idealization of the future, that which is not yet, but should be. This is the way society continues to develop. The future is something achievable, provided it is believed, required, and conquered. Otherwise society would not continue to develop. In exercising the dialectic between idealization and reality, an act performed between members of a society for mutual influence, man is constantly changing direction and evolving in an upward spiral, by way of the simple fact that man has intelligence.

There is a possible gradual expansion of the contents of legal recognition, the recognition of rights, being able to generate more complex, more discerning and more demanding societies. To broaden the scope of the rights guaranteed to them inter-subjectively is, in this sense, raising the level of personal autonomy, enriching the community as a whole, through the effect of interactive social praxis.

Existing rights in a given community are transmitted to a widening circle of people, that is the expansion of the "Me" collective, and can reform the world, as predicted by Mead.

#### **4 RETURNING TO THE INEFFICIENCY OF REPRESSIVE SYSTEMS OF SOVEREIGNTY: BIOPOLITICS AS A CLEAN SWEEP OF POLICE PRACTICES. FINAL CONSIDERATIONS**

The dominant perspective in which it is seen public safety is the state sovereignty. How the high crime rates have not been extinguished, as this remains cumbersome to sovereignty, created the idea that there are people on the margins of the order of law who are outlaws, public enemies. This fits very well with what Agamben insists: that contemporary biopolitics is just a matter of exclusion to include or inclusion to exclude. (Agamben, 2010, p. 55). The inclusive society wants to assert its hegemonic power to regulate, without the effective dissemination of rights. This is the paradox that inhabits the naive pretense of public safety in Brazil.



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Modernity constitutes solid systems of surveillance, discipline and standards in terms of public security mechanisms to respond to violence. This knowledge of police, prisons, and justice has been engineered in order to protect the market, the circulation of wealth, and has become one of the main missions of the Modern State, the practice of governmentality. However, all this accumulated knowledge is somewhat paradoxical and relatively inefficient because it doesn't affect the driving force of violence, becoming palliative, inconclusive and even counterproductive if one observes that it turns out to stir up tension, since it uses violence and that is precisely why it encourages its own cyclic violence.

The police intelligence systems of today create sophisticated tabulation and studies about the incidence of crime. There is control over where, how and how often the crime occurs. For example, if you ask the intelligence of the Metropolitan Police of the city of Belo Horizonte how many armed robberies occurred in Tupinambás Street between January and March 2011, it would be answered. The police create multicolored maps, graphs, charts, statistics, determining areas of conflict, typicality and severity of crime, etc. Well, how can one know if there is much indolence and neglect to address the reasons for the crime?

It is proposed here, in a minimum number of words, three goals to be implemented by the government previously to policing and crime prevention measures and cooling medium for social violence.

The first would be a bolder program of income redistribution. This program was in some way experienced in Brazil over the past eight years and produced an incalculable positive effect. But redistribution performed so far has been very small and still the country is stigmatized by the criminalization of the poor, and it is continued to build the whole time the technologies of subjectivity of segregation, exclusion, ghettoization arising from both civil society and the state itself. Considering that the Brazilian prison system is basically composed of poor, illiterate and semi-illiterate and racial minorities<sup>8</sup>. A visceral and well structured program of wealth

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<sup>8</sup> According to a search through the Government's own Brazilian Department of Corrections - the IDPEB, of 496,000 prisoners in the country, 25,000 are illiterate, 55,000 are functionally illiterate and





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distribution, land reform, education reform is needed. That is, if you want to end the violence, far reaching and serious will be social policy reforms<sup>9</sup>.

Secondly, it is necessary to review the use which has been made of public media from public discussion on the ethics of information. The constructive use of public communication is capable of carrying out a national campaign against the culture of violence.

The media gives life to the myth of the werewolf, because as its vocation is commercial, the sensationalism of human terata is one of the most valuable baits for the consumer news population. By the effect of their own media hype, it can be said that the media is one of the most influential creators of the culture of violence. Returning to Geertz and his conception of culture as a cognitive phenomenon, one sees that it is possible to shape the human set of rules from an overvaluation of selected practices. The world is a cognitive creation where one overestimates or underestimates the rules of behaviour, it is a social teaching process based on the recognition of each other, and in respect of renunciation of violence is perfectly achievable if the political will exists to do so.

Yes, the *culture of violence* is ingrained in contemporary Brazilian society. As is recorded historically, it was part of pre-European indigenous culture, it was a characteristic factor of African culture and also an accentuated factor in Iberian culture. The process of land occupation in Brazil is revealed as one of the most unscrupulous and bloody in the history of humanity: genocide, slavery, indiscriminate killing of innocents. But today one can make a choice, either allowing a new wave of violence in the North American culture of gun worship to hit Brazil, or opting for a social learning process of reworking social peace.

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250,000 did not finish elementary school. Of these 496,000, only 1,800 have completed some higher education.

<sup>9</sup> Income distribution is not a measure of Communist orthodoxy that takes what would be right to someone. To distribute income enriches us all. Recently it was proven the strength of the Brazilian economy before the last world economic crisis (collapse of the North American economy, 2010). The Brazilian economy was seen to fulfil the prediction of President Lula "the global crisis will arrive here only as a ripple." This was a single explanation: the distribution of income in Brazil filtered through to all sectors, our economy has become consolidated and is no longer so dependent on foreign economics.



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The media can and should provoke thought on violence. It can develop educational programs and public debates about the causes and consequences of the bloodshed. However, to date, under its capitalist bias, it merely makes for sensational publicity, because violence sells. It is noticeable that the owners of the media in Brazil are, in general, open to abuse sensationalism, heighten the sense of insecurity, judge the criminals without regard to constitutional principles of adversarial proceedings, legal defense, and the presumption of innocence. The media depends on an ethical overhaul of its action. It is not right to create new laws. There is no legislation regulating the media *a priori*. Because the law is the starting point and there are many injustices in cases condemning newspapers and offending without criteria. The field of combat of the culture of violence in Brazil is the discussion of media ethics and morals.

The third goal and, that which this text aims to effectively contribute towards in the sense of permeating its complexity, would be the reformulation of public security policies.

If one believes, from Honneth, that the process of socialization takes place through an internalization of norms of actions, from the generalization of behavioural expectations of the members of a society, one should aim for a program of socialization and inclusion and not a punitive, ostentatious system. In punishment, there is little point.

The ability to guide one's own moral and legal behavior is through the ability to capture, or rather to absorb, the rules extracted from the systematic perspective of the community as a whole. Now, able to learn to generalize their own behaviour in the normative expectations of the wider social environment, the subject is able to participate in normatively regulated interactions within their community. This is only possible if there is mutual recognition and it is important to say that this should be the goal of the programs of social defense departments of the state and the federal government: to promote mutual recognition of political, social and economic development, combating segregation, exclusion and ghettoization in all its forms.

If acceptance of, and subjection to, the rules depends on the success of co-operation and mutual recognition, it will be a truly democratic society, holder of rights.



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Rights, in a profound sense, are not the rules positivized by the state, but the acceptance of individual claims that have general, community, effect. In this sense, by the social acceptance of these rights, one can measure whether a subject can be conceived as a fully accepted member of one's community and therefore responsible for it. The offender is, first of all, someone who does not feel integrated into the society they live in and therefore they disrespect it.

Therefore, dignity is the main motivation for someone to submit to social and legal norms. In a society where people feel unworthy there is no pact for compliance, because the normativity comes from the practice of self respect. Therefore, the conclusion of Honneth, from which he derives Mead's social psychology, is precisely that to recognize each other as a person of law means that both subjects include in their own action, in effect control, and society will be incorporated into the inter-subjectively recognized norms of a society.

As written at the beginning of this paper, the prime reason for this research is inclined to wonder why killing and imprisonment in such high proportions are prevalent to ensure urban public safety in Brazil. If the murder and incarceration rates are so high, it means that public policies on crime, and the way in which they are to be taken, need to be reinvented.

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