

Broadening the horizons of anthropological understanding:
ethnographies with ‘uncomfortable otherness’

‘Confusion of horizons’ with unwanted Others: Frustrations, results and effects of ethnographic practices in the realm of justice and public safety.

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Abstract:

By reviewing various ethnographic experiences, we examine how inhospitality, unwanted and incongruous relationships, tensions and conflicts, inform a type of fieldwork and nevertheless allow—despite the ‘anti-manualistic’ form of this work—creating opportunities for understanding and interpreting the schemes, practices and worldviews of the subjects studied. Despite confronting tortuous paths, mediated by a ‘confusion of horizons’, anthropological research, when informed by questions and analyses with a good theoretical organization and conducted according to qualified ethnographic education, allows deducing broader aspects, related to the practices and representations of the world not only of the universe studied, but of its surroundings. By presenting the results of ethnographies and interactions with various actors in the fields of justice and public safety, we present some analytical devices developed in these two fields through different ethnographic experiences, such as the ‘inquisitorial tradition’ and ‘schismatic rationality’.

Keywords: Inquisitorialness; Schism; Justice; Public safety; Ethnography of Brazilian criminal justice system

“Confusão de horizontes” com Outros indesejados: frustrações, resultados e efeitos de práticas etnográficas no universo da justiça e segurança pública.

Resumo:

A partir do percurso de experiências etnográficas distintas, buscamos problematizar como a inospitalidade, as relações indesejadas e incongruentes, tensionadas e conflitivas, informam um tipo de trabalho de campo e permitem, ainda assim, a despeito de sua forma anti-manualística, imprimir possibilidades de compreensão e interpretação dos esquemas, das práticas e das visões de mundo dos sujeitos estudados. Mesmo diante de caminhos tortuosos, mediados por uma “confusão de horizontes”, a pesquisa antropológica, quando informada por questões e problemáticas com um bom acabamento teórico e etnográfico, permite depreender aspectos mais abrangentes, relativos às práticas e representações de mundo não apenas do universo estudado, mas de seu entorno. Apresentando os resultados de etnografias e interações com diferentes atores da justiça e da segurança pública, mostramos alguns dispositivos analíticos desenvolvidos nesses dois campos através de diferentes experiências etnográficas, tais como o da “tradição inquisitorial” e da “racionalidade cismática”.

Palavras-chave: Inquisitorialidade; Cisma; Justiça; Segurança pública; Etnografia do sistema de justiça e da polícia no Brasil.

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Introduction

Imagine you are on the campus of the Universidade Federal Fluminense (Fluminense Federal University), located on the shores of the beautiful and sumptuous Guanabara Bay, which is exalted in the poetry of Caetano Veloso, in his song ‘Estrangeiro’ (And the less I knew it, the more I loved it/ I’m blind from seeing it so much, from having it as a star / which is a beautiful thing). You also have a special view of Rio de Janeiro, and from afar you can see Corcovado and Christ the Redeemer with his arms open to the city. It is a bright, sunny day, perfect for enjoying a morning in Rio. All this idyllic beauty contrasted with the mood in the classroom...

Now imagine yourself, in this four-walled environment, in a class full of men and women, most of them from the Military Police and the Civil Police¹ of the state of Rio de Janeiro. The class also has a few other students from other professional backgrounds: journalists, lawyers, social scientists. However, the vast majority of the class are police officers.

The professor enters the room. There is the usual buzz about various topics. He organizes his things, observes the mood, and begins to make notes on the blackboard. After a few moments, the lesson begins. Some of their bodies and eyes are at attention. Most are copying what’s on the board. Others are already looking away or at their cell phones, they don’t even have a piece of paper... Some have a cynical or sarcastic look, while others seem to be thinking ‘what am I doing here?’.

The content of the lesson concerns data from a study on police stops and racial profiling². Given the characteristics of Brazil’s police forces, the study focused on police lethality and racial profiling. As the lesson progressed and the data and analysis emerged, objections began to pop up. ‘No professor, the police are not racist. Shootings aren’t chosen by color’. ‘It’s easy to talk about police violence, I want to see you go into the favela on an operation.’ ‘More Black people die because there are more Black criminals’. The debate continues to boil with other gems uttered without any embarrassment, with divergent opinions of all kinds.

The discussion is taking shape and the debate is becoming even more intense and heated, mobilized by the ‘logic of the contradictory’ It should be noted that the adversarial principle should not be confused with what is known as the logic of the contradictory process in Brazil. This ‘princípio do contraditório’, or principle of contradiction, which in other Western legal traditions is known as the ‘adversarial principle’, consists of an

¹ Brazilian states have two police organizations. The Military police is in charge of patrol; and the civil, or judiciary police, are in charge of the ‘inquérito policial’, the first written legal administrative step in a judicial procedure.

² This study (Sinhoretto, Batitucci, Mota et al. 2014) analyzes the mechanisms of racial profiling in the police selection of suspects, and was carried out in a network and by teams in different contexts in Brazil, in the states of São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, Minas Gerais and the Federal District.

accused person's right to defend themselves against accusations. In Brazil this 'logic of contradiction' requires the parties to disagree endlessly, only to be interrupted by an authoritative third party. In other countries, the adversarial principle allows for agreement and even convincing the other party.

In Brazil, as operators in the criminal justice and public safety systems, most police students share the certainty that they have a monopoly on the restricted truth and restricted knowledge about issues related to these fields. And whenever they find themselves contradicted, they react using the logic of contradiction, which does not allow for agreement or convincing by the opposing party. Only an authority recognized in their field can resolve the debate. Thus, they isolate themselves in their incontestable authority. They find themselves in the absolutist reign of certainty. And the more data and arguments they are presented, the more they challenge them and more annoyed they become. After almost an hour of intense discussion, a Black student, an officer in the Military Police, intervenes in the midst of countless statements and affirms:

Let's stop being hypocritical and trying to deceive the professor. What he's demonstrating with his data and arguments is reality. And I'll tell you something else: in one operation I was in we arrested the kids who were traffickers. Then, in the conversation about who was going to take the heat that time, a policeman said, without any mercy, 'let's get the Blackest one over there and work him over'.

This excerpt from the field notebook contributes to introducing the examination we would like to conduct in this article: how do we produce anthropological knowledge about universes for which there is no empathy, common values or convergence of points of view? How can we understand an unwanted Other? What can we learn from ethnographies conducted at the interior of the inhospitality of the Other? How can we produce recognition without recognition being granted by the Other?

The production of knowledge in the social sciences and humanities consists of a complex process of understanding, comprehending and interpreting social phenomena that often take place in worlds parallel to those of the social scientist. In anthropology in particular, we seek to understand the dimensions of other realities through the set of practices, representations and symbolic apparatuses of Others. During the discipline's history of more than 100 years, much has been produced about the epistemological, theoretical and methodological resources needed for this endeavor. We have a set of techniques, ethnographic monographs and a large accumulation of questions of an epistemological nature that have guaranteed countless inflections in the anthropological field.

It is worth mentioning that the posthumous publication in 1967 of the personal notes of Polish anthropologist Bronislaw Malinowski, in *A diary in the strict sense of the term* (1989 [1967]), sparked a major debate within the international anthropological community about the vicissitudes of ethnographic work. After all, how could the author of the idyllic *Argonaut of the Pacific* distil countless prejudices and existential discomforts? As the author himself confesses 'I tore my eyes from the book and I could hardly believe that here I was among neolithic savages' (Malinowski 1989 [1967]: 54), or 'I was fed up with the niggers' (Malinowski 1989 [1967]: 154), and other expressions of prejudice and racism that have done great damage to the anthropological dream of living and being a native, reducing to dust a mythic figure of modern anthropology.

The clashes, which were much more dominated by moral dimensions (see, for example, Raymond Firth's first introduction to the book), failed to highlight the deeper aspects of the problem, which were later tackled by the American anthropologist Clifford Geertz in his famous essay *From the native's point of view: On the Nature of Anthropological Understanding*. In it Geertz points out that the problem lies in the interpretative nature of anthropology, and therefore in the epistemological sediment of the discipline and not in the 'myth of the chameleon fieldworker, perfectly self-tuned to his exotic surroundings, a walking miracle of empathy, tact, patience, and cosmopolitanism' (Geertz 1983: 56).

To describe and interpret the point of view of the Other does not mean that the authenticity of the native soul will be surely captured. Anthropology consists of a less ambitious intellectual activity (at least from

a certain perspective), since its undertaking allies itself with other disciplines by conceding a more or less finished and organized format to spheres of human life that are disorganized for those who 'live life as it is'. As human beings, we live under constellations of ideas, representations and symbolic artifacts that we cannot ordinarily explain, understand and interpret from the perspective of the social sciences.

Anthropological research into justice and public safety, especially judicial and police institutions, and the respective ethnography of the practices and representations of their agents, necessarily presents us a set of ethical and theoretical questions and methodological choices that challenge the exercise of anthropological work. If we consider the different layers of 'uncomfortable otherness' in the production of knowledge in this field, in which it is possible to see a profusion of discomfort and antipathy on all sides (both from the research subjects and from fellow researchers from other fields), we could even speak of a universe of 'confusion of horizons'. It is important to mention here that 'confusion of horizons' is inspired by Gadamer's notion of 'fusion of horizons', which was taken up in an original way by anthropologist Roberto Cardoso de Oliveira (1995). He affirmed:

If in Gadamer's hermeneutic philosophy, dialog and, with it, understanding (*Verstehen*), is constitutive of Man (hence it is an ontological hermeneutics), for anthropology the dialogic relationship leads the parties involved to a dual understanding - which means that the Other is equally stimulated to understand us... This happens thanks to the broadening of the research horizon itself, incorporating, to some extent, the horizon of the Other. This is the well-known *fusion of horizons* spoken of by hermeneutics (Cardoso de Oliveira 1995: 223).

In our case, the idea of a confusion of horizons raises the dimension of partial understanding, of a dialogical short-circuit, of disagreement and of the utilization of a schismatic and inquisitorial rationality, which are concepts that we will elaborate on at the conclusion of the article, which is an impediment to complete *verstehen*.

Based on similar questions raised at the round table on the police at the annual meeting of the American Anthropological Association in 2015, Karpiak and Garriott (2018) problematize ways of dealing with police violence and its 'humanization' during anthropological writing. In particular, the arduous task of producing writing that, by humanizing the police, on one hand risks an incompatibility between an approach that is humanizing yet simultaneously critical and accusatory about their violent practices. On the other hand, and in opposition, it risks overlapping a humanization and an uncritical justification of police practices, which is also not the anthropologist's objective. These authors' idea for resolving the issue focuses on the act of humanizing the police in the sense of recognizing in them the traits that most define what it is to be 'human'. This includes showing their vulnerabilities and failures, in other words, making their actions (whether as an institution or as a group of individuals who compose the police forces) human. Therefore, an effort must be made to use research questions that aim to more deeply understand the relationship between the police and the meanings of being 'human' in a given time and place, and thus avoiding the opposition 'denouncing the police versus justifying the police'.

It is well known that false problems often arise in the field of anthropology when we study groups with whom we do not have a relationship of empathy, solidarity or shared ideologies and conceptions of the world.

This question becomes even more pressing when, as is the case with most of the studies carried out by Brazilian anthropologists in Brazil, the aim is to describe differences in values and moral orientations that are foreign, but no less internal to the social universe of the researchers. However, without such a perspective, for instance, how could a psychoanalyst or psychiatrist understand the motivations of a *murderer*, *serial killer* or *pedophile*? The moral impasses that arise in these circumstances are obvious, but they do not serve as measures for the analytical and interpretive work of these academic disciplines.

The issue also becomes more complex when the research subjects, the anthropologist-researcher's interlocutors, do not belong to groups or segments of the subordinate layers of social stratification, and

therefore do not see ethnographies and their publicization as a gesture of solidarity or even as a form of publicizing their identities and conditions of social, political and economic existence (Shoshan 2015). When the subjects being studied are located in the upper classes of society (Nader 1972), anthropologists' interpretations can be easily criticized and even rejected, with unpredictable consequences from a judicial point of view. In certain cases, the only guarantee of acceptance of their ethnography by the groups studied is the establishment of a consensus between researchers and their interlocutors that their ethnographic narrative corresponds, in whole or in the most part, to the practices and representations shared by the group.

On the other hand, in relation to research in the field of the anthropology of law, despite the similarities that Geertz (1983) points out as being present in the practices of these disciplines, difficulties also exist. For example, Freeman and Napier (2009) affirm that in recent generations, the concerns of legal anthropologists have been similar to those of scientists in the field of social theory and sociology (including sociologists of law). To demonstrate this affirmation, they mention Simon Roberts (1976) and, in particular, emphasize what he considered to be the peculiar contribution of the anthropology of law: which in addition to its research method, was the emphasis given to ways of managing conflicts (institutional and non-institutional), since these issues are ignored by the dominant legal approaches, and have only recently begun to arouse the interest of sociologists of law (Freeman & Napier 2009).

These questions and obstacles have also marked the development of an anthropology of law and social control institutions in Brazil, especially since the 1980s.

We would like to present a theoretical and methodological proposal, in which ethnography becomes an instrument for confronting the multiple perspectives that are presented in the world. From our point of view, it also becomes an antidote to anti-moralism insofar as anthropology is an academic and scientific discipline in which methodological and theoretical resources must be used to understand social phenomena, including those of a moral order, regardless of the nature of what is being studied. From this point of view, we share the assumption that: 'ethnography, whatever it is, has never been mere description. It is also theoretical in its mode of description. Indeed, ethnography is a theory of description' (Nader 2011: 211). And as a theory of description, ethnography cannot do without a systematic analysis and methods that give body to the ethnographic exercise. Carrying out ethnography is therefore the execution of a social relationship mediated by a theoretical or epistemological question and formulated from a good anthropological question, anchored in a solid education in the field and in ethnography.

In this way, the realization of ethnography is supported by the different formats that the social can present, the problems and questions raised by the worlds in which it takes shape, producing necessary adjustments to the methodological and analytical apparatus. We start from the assumption that although there is only one anthropology, it is elaborated from different versions that grant the anthropological field the status of an anthropology in the plural (Peirano 1992). For anthropologies such as the English, North American and French, to mention three versions of an anthropology that has been historically constituted from the relationship with the 'exotic', issues such as being affected can play a prominent role in ethnographic practice in terms of its methodological and analytical content. After all, this is a research condition in which the dilemma of participation and observation is effectively unsettling (Favret-Saada 2005: 157). Or, as the author points out:

When an ethnographer accepts being affected, this does not imply identifying with the native point of view or taking advantage of the field experience to exercise their narcissism. Accepting to be affected supposes, however, taking the risk of seeing one's project of knowledge undone. Because if the project of knowledge is omnipresent, nothing happens. But if something happens and if the project of knowledge is not lost in the midst of an adventure, then ethnography is possible. (Favret-Saada 2005: 160).

In a research project in which the conditions for producing knowledge underlie a relationship in which the 'Indians are us' (Kant de Lima 2011), it is also necessary to work on becoming disaffected from our moral terrain to produce an exercise in transforming what is familiar, close and commonplace into something that can be relativized from a methodological and analytical point of view. As an integral part of the common universe in which we are immersing ourselves ethnographically, the dilemma of affectation requires another intellectual and cognitive operation, which is: to become disaffected from judgments and previous evaluations to be able to undertake the ethnographic exercise itself. For in this case, the anthropologist-citizen (Peirano 1992) finds themselves entangled in a set of representations, even though he or she starts from antagonistic positions, which are often irreconcilable, and yet are not exotic to our culture³.

Hence our intention to start this article with an excerpt from a field note that takes us, on the one hand, to a distant, idyllic place like 'imagine you are looking out over Guanabara Bay', and then, a moment later, we try to take the reader to another universe, a known, familiar one, of a classroom in which other situations and formats of social relations are imposed. After all, much of the ethnography that we will examine is the result of research in environments that are familiar and known to people (anthropologists-citizens and police officers). We are dealing with dimensions that are part of our repertoires, categories, things we see and read about in newspapers, things we observe as passers-by. These conditions bring us to other challenges in the comprehensive work of analyzing and interpreting the social phenomena we are dealing with.

As Viveiros de Castro points out:

the problem that defines anthropology consists less in determining which social relations constitute its object, and much more in asking what its object constitutes as a social relation. [...] To put it concisely, doing anthropology means comparing anthropologies, nothing more - but nothing less. Comparison is not only our primary analytical tool. It is also our raw material and our supreme foundation (Viveiros de Castro 2018: 249).

In this sense, we will try to discuss, based on different ethnographic experiences, how inhospitality, unwanted and incongruous relationships, tense and conflictive relationships, inform a type of fieldwork and still allow us, recognizing this fieldwork's resistance to any 'manualistic' formula, to establish opportunities for understanding and interpreting the schemes, practices and worldviews of the subjects with whom we interact. Even facing tortuous paths, like that we mentioned in the excerpt from the field notes at the beginning of this article, anthropological research, when informed by questions and problems with a good theoretical organization and carried out through qualified ethnographic preparation, allows deducing more comprehensive aspects relating to the practices and representations of the world, not just of the universe studied, but of its surroundings. As we will examine at the end of this text, these experiences have enabled us to design original analyses of what we define as the inquisitorial tradition (Kant de Lima 2009, 2010, 2019, 2023; Kant de Lima & Mouzinhos 2016) and schismatic rationality (Mota 2018, 2021, 2023a, 2023b; Mota & Velásquez Peláez 2021; Mota & Kant de Lima 2022; Mota & Toscano 2023). These analytical dimensions will be dealt with at the conclusion of the article. Let's first follow the ethnographic routes.

'There was a stone in the path' (or many stones?)

The authors' first ethnographic experience with the police and criminal justice systems dates back to the 1980s. At the time, one of us was studying for a doctorate in the United States and was deeply affected by the conception and functioning of the mechanisms of social control and the production of academic and judicial

³ This was notorious under the previous federal government, elected through free and democratic elections, during the campaign and while in office, the nation's highest leader, the President of Brazil, repeatedly appropriated the well-known slogan 'a good bandit is a dead bandit' to affirm his vision of public safety, demonstrating the capillarity in society of the values and representations we described at the beginning of the text.

truths that were dominant in that region. These differed greatly from his previous experience with the academia and criminal justice, the latter as a result of his experience as a law student and legal intern in Brazil (Kant de Lima 2011). For this reason, he decided to dedicate his thesis to comparing the formats of the US 'jury trial' and the Brazilian 'Tribunal do Júri' (Kant de Lima 1986). However, since dating back to 1871, jury trials in Brazil, like the vast majority of other criminal cases, begin with a single administrative procedure called a 'police inquiry', it would be necessary to follow them in the field from the outset, in the police stations. Through Brazilian colleagues, who were also doing their doctorates in the US, helped provide access to important figures in the criminal law profession in Rio de Janeiro, who were willing to collaborate with the research which, at the time, even received funding from the *Ordem dos Advogados do Brasil* [Brazilian Bar Association] of the state of Rio de Janeiro.

Relationships in the field, therefore, were based on introductions that constituted a veritable 'web' of successive presentations, involving judges, prosecutors, police officials, and criminal lawyers. These relationships made the research possible. The study lasted three years (1982-1984), covering the entire criminal justice and public security system in the city of Rio de Janeiro (police stations, criminal courts, penitentiaries). This web that made the research possible reproduced, in a way, the structure of the social relations of this group of professionals who establish inter-professional personal ties throughout the system, forming groups that are often in opposition to each other, or even in outright dispute.

These were the only limitations imposed by the context. The researcher would go through all the stages of the patchwork system, within this group of highly valued professionals. What enabled the research was always an introduction, by one acquaintance, to another acquaintance who was a member of this web. This was very clear because, when there was any friction—caused by the inevitable gaffes that the ethnographer would make during research—it was necessary, in this often very fragile environment between researcher and interlocutors due to the prevalence of 'schisms'⁴ that informed the relationships, for the researcher to re-establish trust by reinforcing the introductions, with the appropriate apologies.

This was the case, for example, when the research focused on the *Tribunal do Júri* [criminal courts, with juries, for intentional crimes against human life], where it was possible to observe that, despite all the legislation that made it impossible for there to be prior agreements among the parties, and which determined the randomness of jury selection, that jurors exercise the logic of the contradictory process, and the sovereignty of a jury's decisions, there were entries on the Court's agenda that contradicted these rules. At times two trials were scheduled for the same day, while at others a single trial was scheduled for a whole week, as if their length was determined beforehand.

Intrigued by this scheduling—which occurred frequently—the researcher asked the presiding judge of the court if this circumstance involved some kind of agreement between lawyers, prosecutors and the judge himself, who was responsible for setting the schedule (although this was not allowed by law). The judge's reaction was vehement and violently indignant: 'There are no agreements in my court!!! And if you think so, please leave and don't come back!!!'. Only with the subsequent intervention of his 'godfather', a famous criminal attorney from Rio de Janeiro, who again assured the judge that the researcher was 'trustworthy', was it possible to appease the judge's indignation, who then began to tolerate the researcher's presence once again, certain that he would not denounce or harm the judge in any way (Cf. Nuñez 2021).

These webs should not be confused with the notion of 'networks', because unlike networks, which do not transfer the dyadic relationships of their individual components to other individuals outside the primary relationship, here they can be extended almost infinitely, increasing their scope, by successive referrals from third parties, 'acquaintances of acquaintances' (Kant de Lima 2011, 2019). Another characteristic is that the webs often incorporate agents who are at different points in their careers and also agents from different institutions (civil and military police, the judiciary, the public prosecutor's office, criminal lawyers, penitentiary

⁴ It should be noted that most contemporary Latin languages have the category 'the' schism [as a male noun], defining it as a rupture, but only in Brazil is the category 'the schism' [a female noun] used in this sense that we are using and that will be discussed in greater detail and depth in this article.

agents—now prison police—etc.). The webs also extend *intra corporis*, characterizing each police station, or each court, for example, as composed by its own 'team', which would shift if its 'leader' was transferred or promoted, especially in the police (Kant de Lima 2019).

This form of organization also results in forms of political struggle in these corporations that are characteristic of factionalism, an object of sociological study, which led to the occupation of police leadership positions by a successive of often antagonistic groups. As the work was carried out at the state level, the weight of the governor, who chooses court judges, police chiefs, military police commanders, state secretaries for public safety and prison administration, was very important, as these factions succeeded each other in power according to electoral results, thus producing interruptions and even opposition to the public policies of previous governments, in order to implement their own initiatives.

The research environment could be perceived as clearly segmented. On one hand there was the law (ordinary and constitutional) and the legal-doctrinal, abstract, and normative discourses which—due to the aforementioned logic of the contradictory process—vehemently clashed, claiming constitutional rights and procedural filigree, before the magistrates and/or jurors who had the final decision in the trials. On the other hand, police practices, especially the extraction of confessions and the inhumane treatment of prisoners in custody and penitentiaries, created situations in which these rights did not seem to exist. Although the ethnography covered the entire criminal justice and public security system, the thesis, due to the time constraints of the CAPES doctoral scholarship, only dealt with the practices of the judiciary police and some aspects of the special criminal court [known as the Jury Court] in the city of Rio de Janeiro (Kant de Lima 1986, 2019).

What seemed strange to the researcher, however, was that this paradox—the contradiction between the stated liberal rights and the repressive inquisitorial practices that shaped the determination of guilt in the judiciary police investigation and interacted in the same process—was completely naturalized and caused no surprise, unless, of course, it went beyond the unwritten limits of assumed convenience. Torture to obtain a confession, for example, should not lead to the death of the tortured person. If it did, the agent responsible would certainly suffer informal punishments—such as transfers to undesirable places—in order to 'learn how to do the job'. On the other hand, obtaining a confession was such a naturalized procedure that the agents would call the researcher to watch it, so that he could see how 'the job was done'. For them, it was therefore a necessary stage in discovering the judicial truth, without which police work would not be complete. Of course, this was possible because the researcher was 'recommended', as a 'trusted' person.

It should be noted that we are not talking here about the trust that exists in market relations, which requires agents to comply with impersonal rules in order to continue trading. The trust that sustains these webs is a personal trust, attributed by the endorser to an individual whose attitudes, if identified as a violation of this trust, will have consequences for the entire segment and will affect those who recommended them (Sampaio 2023).

Over time, it was concluded that both legal discourse and police practice were articulated, implicitly and/or explicitly, around 'inquisitorialness', the prior 'establishment of guilt' of the accused by the police and the need for confession to confirm the judge's certainty, assuage any doubts and ensure 'fair' convictions; although contaminating the constitutional principle of the 'presumption of innocence' in the process.⁵ Among other characteristics, this inquisitorial orientation of the process presumes the guilt of the accused person who is being prosecuted and seeks the so-called 'real truth', a single truth that must be 'discovered' by the judge, or by the jurors, at the end of the process, after the contradictory versions of the parties have been exposed. As a

⁵ Michel Lobo, using quantitative and qualitative data, provides an excellent discussion of the different criteria - used by the police and the Public Prosecutor's Office—for pursuing cases and bringing them to trial (2021). For a more recent approach to police investigation practices in Rio de Janeiro and other states, see Michel Misse (2023) and Vidal (2013).

result, unlike the system of judicial evidence in the accusatory models introduced in Western law, there is no distinction between what is known and what can be proved in court, with the confession being the confirming element of this presumed guilt, the bearer of the so-called '*real* procedural truth'⁶.

Thus, penal confession, inspired by ecclesiastical confession, juridically attenuates criminal responsibility because it signifies an external sign of repentance and confirms the justice of the punitive sentence. This means that, regardless of what was proposed at the time, or what federal and constitutional law currently proposes, by classifying torture as a 'heinous crime', the use of torture will continue to be an effective, although clandestine and illegal means to obtain confession⁷.

This creates a veil, invisible to the majority of society, that covers up the violent practices of the police which, although formally illegal, are considered by the majority of magistrates and prosecutors to be necessary for a case to run smoothly (Alves 2022). It is no wonder that 40 years later, in ethnographies carried out by InEAC researchers⁸ in custody hearings, complaints by detainees about torture are at most registered, but have no practical effect, either on the investigation or on the penal consequences, which results in the silent reaffirmation of the legitimacy of their practice (Brandão 2020, 2021).

There is no need to emphasize the importance of this legal form of legitimizing illegal procedures as part of the procedural routine. In the course of our research, this apparent schizophrenia—strict laws that are not enforced versus everyday practices that are naturalized as institutionally legitimate—was revealed on many other occasions, even giving rise to a saying that is learned in law school: 'theory is different in practice!'. In this case, it's not a *theory* stricto sensu, but a 'doctrine', which expresses a 'becoming', but is not interested in what 'is'; except, of course, to define the exception that confirms the rule, punishing any exaggerations by agents as if they were isolated cases and not the generally exaggerated expression of routines consensually accepted by these institutions.⁹

Following this dive into this universe—that is hidden but always glimpsed—of the practices of the criminal justice and public security system, the researcher also had the opportunity to do fieldwork in the United States in 1990. On this occasion, he was at a university in the southern US, where he did fieldwork with the local police, and later, in the state of California, in the court system, with the public defender's office¹⁰.

These two stages of the work were quite enlightening because of contrasts with the ethnography in Brazil, although they were difficult to carry out. Working with the police was especially difficult. In Birmingham, Alabama the force was composed entirely of Baptists, including pastors, who brought the full force of their beliefs to the exercise of their work and a certain religious proselytizing towards the researcher.

What was different was that Birmingham had formal protocols that did not exist in Rio. If they did exist, they were not mandatory guides to practices in the criminal justice and public security system. While in Birmingham these protocols were seen as protections for those served by the police, and for the police themselves, in Rio they were repudiated as obstacles to the efficiency of police practice.

6 See Kant de Lima (2010) and Kant de Lima and Mouzinho (2016). Through its dogmatic principles, Brazilian criminal procedure aims to discover the 'real truth'. This implies not limiting a procedure to what the parties bring to the process, but allowing a judge to conduct investigations in an evidentiary initiative, as well as not distinguishing between what is known and what can be proved judicially.

7 In this sense, see the differences between 'judicial torture' and 'police brutality', explored during fieldwork in the USA (Kant de Lima 1995a). See also Kant de Lima (2010) and Kant de Lima and Mouzinho (2016)

8 InEAC is one of the Institutes of the National Institutes of Science and Technology/CNPq Program (<http://inct.cnpq.br/sobre>), which since 2009 has aimed to continue the research excellence of these Institutes, strengthen the qualified education of human resources, internationalize research results and transfer these results to society. InEAC is a consolidated national and international multidisciplinary network (with researchers from the fields of sociology, anthropology, law, history, social communication, and psychology) and aims to promote dialogue between the social sciences and the applied social sciences, especially between law and anthropology (www.ineac.uff.br).

9 Legislation is often adjusted to contemporary, Enlightenment values, such as protecting human rights. However, the theory that informs the practices remains unaffected, as it is traditionally identified with medieval, secular and ecclesiastical forms of punishment, all implicit.

10 The research was funded by the Fulbright Foundation and took place in Birmingham, Alabama and San Francisco, California in 1990.

At the San Francisco Public Defender's Office, what was most striking was the social division between prosecutors and police, and the public defenders. While in Rio, coexistence was vertically interspersed by the previously mentioned 'webs', in San Francisco there was a clear separation and relations were strictly formal between the prosecution and defense. This difference had already been noted in the field research with the police in the USA when, after a chance meeting with a criminal lawyer who invited the researcher to his office, he was warned by his local police 'sponsor' that he would have to choose: either do research with the police or with the criminal lawyers, because he could inadvertently leak information about cases. In Rio, this warning would have been incomprehensible given the formation of the webs described above¹¹.

In addition to this experience with the institutional side of public safety enforcement, however, there is another aspect to this issue, which we will describe below. This is when the object of research involves alterities that, in addition to being uncomfortable, also produce various types of violence in the public space, as is the case with the militias¹² in Rio de Janeiro. In this case, there are a series of ethical and methodological precautions that need to be taken by the researcher, whether the interlocutors are militia members or simply residents of a given region that is under the control of these groups. This second case represents the experience that one of our authors/researchers¹³ had to deal with, in which building close relationships based on reciprocal trust also proved to be fundamental.

Institutional tensions with the 'unwanted Others'

Another stage of conviviality with this 'other' in Brazil was built in an entirely inverse way, as it was produced from the curiosity of police officers and their institutions about academia, which eventually resulted in the building of trust between members of the police forces and university professors, which as will be seen, led to a unique experience in Brazil of academic interaction between anthropologists and other social scientists.

When the Postgraduate Program in Anthropology and Political Science was created at UFF in the mid-1990s, two colonels from the Rio de Janeiro Military Police (PMERJ) reserve applied, were accepted and enrolled in the Program, taking a course taught by the researcher who wrote the thesis mentioned above, which dealt with police practices in Rio (Kant de Lima 1995b). At the end of the course, they invited the professor to give a lecture at the Escola Superior da Polícia Militar do Rio de Janeiro [the Rio de Janeiro Military Police College], which administered the Superior Police Department and the PMERJ Officers' Training Course. The professor refused to go to the police compound, but invited the police to come to the university, which they did. After some time, these negotiations resulted in the creation of a non-degree specialization course in 'Public Policies in Criminal Justice and Public Security' (JCSP), initially funded by the Ford Foundation and a commitment for continued funding by the newly created Public Security Institute of the Rio de Janeiro State Security Secretariat (ISP/SSEG/RJ). One of the colonels who had completed our master's degree became president of this Institute and from then on, from 2000 to 2006, in a period of continuity of elected governments, more than 750 Military Police officers, as well as Civil Police officials, attended the course. Their promotion was conditioned on them *passing the subjects offered*, and many of them completed their monographs, receiving the title of specialists. The best papers were selected and published by Editora da UFF (Miranda & Lima 2008; Pires & Eilbaum 2009; Miranda & Mota 2010; Guedes & Silva 2016).

¹¹ Other consequences of these ethnographies have been published. See especially Kant de Lima (1995a) and 2009.

¹² Since the mid-2000s in the state of Rio de Janeiro the category 'militia' has included diverse and heterogeneous practices and forms of organized criminal groups. What are currently known as militias, may operate in a variety of ways. For example, the term can cover everything from groups of public safety officers and/or civilians who strive to 'impose order' in a region; as well as groups that practice various forms of extortion and armed control in a given territory, or even groups organized into articulated political-economic networks that reach deep into the administration of the state machine. For more information on what militias are and how they got their name, see Brama (2019, 2022).

¹³ This is the master's thesis research carried out by Brama (2022) in the period 2017-19.

The course curriculum, drawn up by professors from the Fluminense Federal University in consultation with representatives of the Military Police and the Civil Police, represented a consensus between what the police wanted and what the university could offer in terms of empirical research, and was taught in collaboration with colleagues from other universities in Rio de Janeiro and other states, with guest lecturers from France, Argentina and Canada. Methodological issues were introduced concerning quantitative and qualitative empirical research, and work by social scientists associated with the issue of public safety and criminal justice in Brazil and abroad was also discussed, such as those whose contents were described at the beginning of this article, taken from excerpts from the field notes.

However, during this period the course suffered a number of complications, as its implementation depended on the commander of the Military Police at the time. Some of them were in favor of the course, others indifferent and others outright against it. One of the most common incidents during the change of command at the ESPM was the university's demand that police officers attend the course in plain clothes. This was because they claimed that, in uniform, they had to carry their weapons ostentatiously, which was extremely uncomfortable for teachers and civilian students who also attended the course, especially during the heated discussions that took place during and after classes, such as the one we described in the introduction to the article¹⁴.

One commander, after refusing to send the students without uniforms, finally gave in, convinced by his colleague, the aforementioned President of the Public Security Institute, as long as he could give the course's inaugural lecture. That agreed, during his talk he told the future students that nothing they would learn during the course would be useful for their work in the police. Nevertheless, the agreement was maintained and the students returned to the course without their uniforms.

In addition to police officers, 20% of the course students were non-police, including students of social sciences, law, social communication, social service, and others. The most important thing to note in this relatively long period of university life was the lack of academic socialization for most of the students, whether they were civilian or military police officers. Socialized in instrumental military education and/or legal dogmatism, in which the argument of authority prevails, there was no space in their academic experiences for them to discuss issues resulting from empirical research, without making use of the logic of contradiction that only admits apology or denunciation.

Here again is the distinction between scientific argumentation, driven by the authority of the argument, and an argument based on authority, which relies on the authority and status of the person who enunciates it. In this regard, it is important to note the difference between *arguing* to convince a universal audience and *persuading*, which is aimed at a particular recipient. In the first case, we are dealing with a scientific argument that aims to convince the opposing parties; in the second, persuasion, for example, of the authority who will decide the dispute, without necessarily considering the arguments of the opposing party. (Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca 2014).

For this reason, constructively critical academic discussion was foreign to law students and those from the military, who considered the texts that they read and discussed as nothing more than the opinions of their authors, who they did not regard as authorities in the field, since they were neither lawyers, nor military personnel, nor police officers. Furthermore, they did not see empirics as a basis for formulating generalizing theories, because for them 'theory in practice is different', as mentioned. In other words, for these students a radical separation truly existed between doctrine and practice, where the repressive theories that guided their knowledge and daily practices were camouflaged by the informality of their traditional, unwritten production and reproduction.

Another noteworthy issue in relation to this separation concerned the monographs completed and approved in the course, which had to be registered at UFF, but also filed in the ESPM/RJ library. It was common for the

¹⁴ Note that the description of the class that begins this article refers to one of these courses.

coordinator to be summoned every time a new commander took over, both to justify the course and to present the monographs that had been submitted. They were systematically sent to ESPM/RJ every year, after the classes had finished, but for some reason they couldn't be found in the library. This 'mystery' was later solved. When the best monographs were selected for publication in EDUFF's *Anthropology and Political Science* collection, several of their authors refused to do so. We then learned that their monographs were also not available in the ESPM/RJ library. In other words, they were writing something for the UFF course, but they didn't want the police to know about their academic work. Once again, a veil was drawn between the formality of academic work and the informal routines of police practice.

This experience has had a number of consequences, one was to partially break down the traditional hostility between police institutions and public universities, especially in the humanities and social sciences in Brazil. These hostilities are the result of a history of fierce police repression of university institutions, not only during the military dictatorship (Baptista *et al.* 2021), but also during previous authoritarian governments in Brazil. In addition to this consequence, we would like to discuss two others: the creation of undergraduate courses in public safety (classroom bachelor's degree) and a distance learning course to train technologists in public and social security.

With regard to the creation of a bachelor's degree course in public security at a federal university, the UFF¹⁵, the initiative was initially the result of evidence that the 18-month specialization course was not capable of deconstructing the effects of military teaching and legal dogma, during its 10 months of classes and eight months to prepare and defend a monograph. Thus, the expected socialization of students in the discussion of production methods did not take place, but also in the forms of consumption of scientific knowledge resulting from social science research, which was always challenged by their sources of dogmatic knowledge and dismissed as mere opinions unauthorized by the military, law and public security fields in general, as mentioned.

To help build a field of knowledge that discussed the sociological characteristics of public security, it therefore seemed necessary to create a longer bachelor's degree course that would introduce and develop the discussion of public security not just as a repressive facet of the state, but as a complex field of social relations and conflict management processes, from society's point of view. The aim was to educate professionals who could compete effectively in the job market with the soldiers and jurists who had exclusive access to this market.

The process of creating a bachelor's degree in public security at UFF took place during the expansion program for federal universities in 2007¹⁶ and showed another side to these unwanted relations, prejudice and schism, since its proposal at the Institute of Human Sciences and Philosophy (ICHP/UFF) generated a strong reaction from its members, professors and students, who affirmed that 'the public university is not a place for the police!'. After intense discussions lasting four months in 2008, the proposal was not approved by the ICHP collegiate council, reflecting the historical antagonism between police forces and their instrumentalization against progressive or leftist thinking, present in most Brazilian social sciences, and the university community's reactions to them. Further negotiations finally resulted in the creation of the course at UFF's Faculty of Law, which initially received the project, creating the course and the Department of Public Safety in 2012.

A year after the classroom course was created, the Rio de Janeiro Security Department approached the coordinator of the aforementioned bachelor's degree course in public safety, requesting that a project be drawn up for the creation of a distance learning course for technologists, to be taught exclusively to security professionals, the latter restriction due to determinations made by the Ministry of Education¹⁷. This request

15 There were courses for police officers at state universities and even at federal universities, both concurrently and after the one we are discussing here. But whenever they were compulsory, they were controlled by the state police and not by the university administration.

16 This was the REUNI Program for the expansion of federal educational institutions. For more details see <https://reuni.mec.gov.br>

17 The course was set up through an agreement between UFF and CEDERJ, the latter a state institution that brings together RJ's public universities and institutes of higher education for distance learning.

stemmed from the initiative of the Military Police of Rio de Janeiro, which at that time was led by some of the students from the first class of the UFF specialization course in 2000 (JCSP).

At the same time as these institutional achievements at UFF, there was a consolidation of comparative research by contrast on conflict management processes in other regions of Brazil and abroad. An example of their results are numerous publications¹⁸, including a dossier recently published simultaneously in Brazil and France (Cardoso de Oliveira & Kant de Lima 2023a, 2023b).

In the case of the police forces, while the various INCT-InEAC courses attracted the attention of professionals from the field of public security, who first enrolled in undergraduate courses (the distance learning course for Technologists in Public Security) and from 2019 in the academic master's degree in Justice and Security at UFF, the contacts and dialogues between these two distant worlds (academia and the institutional and professional contexts of public security) multiplied.

Thus, in the same way that anthropologists, when entering ethnographic fields with police officers, need to go through a process of adapting to the sensitivities, habits and norms of these contexts in order to succeed in their research, public security professionals who wish to succeed in one of the INCT-InEAC courses must go through the academic socialization (or anthropological socialization in the case of those who already had an academic degree in law) necessary to complete the various requirements for an academic degree.

In this socialization process, because the course involves public safety issues that the police officer-student believes to know deeply from his practice, it is not uncommon for conflicts and disputes to occur between civilians and military personnel, especially when the latter want to assert their authority in pedagogical matters over which they have no decision-making power (Kant de Lima & Geraldo 2022). Veríssimo (2024) and Grandin (2024) have discussed this so-called 'culture shock', a native category adopted by the public security agents enrolled in the Technologist in Public Security Course to designate this process.

On this issue, Ramos (forthcoming), who is not only a sergeant in the Military Police of the State of Rio de Janeiro, but also has a bachelor's degree in public and social security from UFF and a master's degree from the Graduate Program in Justice and Security from the same university, states that each of these two universes (the academy and the police forces) produces its own reality and conception of public security, through its own values, signs and representations, which legitimize these distinct and antagonistic conceptions in dispute. The author, based on his own professional experience, believes that the knowledge of the police universe, both from training courses and practical knowledge acquired 'on the beat', is:

an experience that, because it is immersed in dogmas, tends to resist alternative views that aim to deconstruct the truths of this field. This 'truth' about what it is to be a police officer, about what 'public order' is, about what 'Public Security' is and how to do it, is part of a cultural pattern made up of 'signifiers and meanings' which, in addition to giving meaning to the identity of this group, constructs events that harmonize with their own way of life' (Ramos, forthcoming).

In addition to the relevance and originality that the point of view of a native of public safety talking about his own work can represent (and this considering that the state of the art on this issue is, for the most part, produced by researchers who have never worked professionally as police officers), both the Public Security Technologist course and the master's degree in Justice and Security have also provided research opportunities for these native researchers.

As for the master's program, which held its first class in 2019, with openings for 20 students per year, 43 dissertations have been produced by the student body. Some of these¹⁹ are ethnographies carried out by

¹⁸ Take, for example, the collection from Editora Autografia *Conflitos, Direitos e Sociedade* (Available at <https://www.autografia.com.br/categoria-produto/direito/colecao-conflitos-direitos-e-sociedade/>)

¹⁹ Until the time this part of the text was written, of the 43 dissertations defended in the Postgraduate Program in Justice and Security at UFF, 9 were produced by security professionals, or more than 20% of the total.

professionals in public safety. An example of this is Ítalo do Couto Ferreira's dissertation, published in 2022 as a book with the title *Entre mercadorias políticas e atos de resistência. Memórias etnográficas de um Oficial do extinto 1º BPM da PMERJ* [Between political goods and acts of resistance. Ethnographic memories of an Officer of the extinct 1st Military Police Battalion] (Ferreira 2022). In this study, the author presents detailed ethnographic descriptions that highlight the power relations in the professional context during his time as a police officer, emphasizing how in most cases private interests define the actions on the public security agenda defined by the corporation, which often end with a lethal outcome.

In this sense, the experience of one of our authors, who has never worked as a public security professional and has never even had close contact with these professionals, exemplifies how he was able to build his field of research for his doctoral thesis with the help of the rapprochement that these courses brought about between police officers and academia.

However, even though he explained to his potential interlocutors all the precautions he would take to preserve their identities, not all of his contacts were clearly open with the researcher. Or as one police officer put it: 'A policeman can't tell the truth... He can tell some truths, but he can't tell the truth'.

These circumstances, while helping to make the police-students more comfortable with sharing their knowledge in the doctoral thesis, also help to solve, as mentioned previously by Karpiak and Garriot (2018), the problem of the anthropologist who studies the police in the dilemma of 'writing and denouncing their practices *versus* writing and justifying them', facilitating that consensus (even if partial or incomplete) between the researcher and her interlocutors about her ethnographic narrative and its eventual correspondence with her own practices and representations.

Conclusion

Throughout the article, we have tried to explore various ethnographic journeys, experienced at different times and in different circumstances, which would allow us to explain the pitfalls of the ethnographic exercise. Unlike the idyllic and romantic representation that marks the origin myth of modern ethnography, beginning with the aforementioned Malinowski (considered simultaneously as a hero and anti-hero), we propose that there are research conditions in the field of anthropology that give rise to occasional misadventures; disagreements and tensions; conflicts and disagreements and the possibility of a 'confusion of horizons'.

Clifford Geertz's importance and influence on the understanding of modern ethnography is well known, as is his hermeneutic presupposition based on the idea that:

Culture is public because meaning is. You can't wink (or burlesque one) without knowing what counts as winking or how, physically, to contract your eyelids, and you can't conduct a sheep raid (or mimic one) without knowing what it is to steal a sheep and how practically to go about it (Geertz 1973: 12).

Despite the common ground of meaning, the sharing of a common culture and language, between police officers, magistrates, lawyers, and other operators in the public safety and criminal justice system and anthropologist-researchers, there are, as we have tried to show, tortuous paths that are based on communicative short circuits that present other methodological and ethical challenges to the analytical and comprehensive exercise of the discipline²⁰.

If, according to Geertz, the meaning of a practice can be interpreted by the anthropologist through its public characteristic, how can we approach a universe in which meanings are always particularized and even encapsulated in the absolutes of the actors' certainties, as we described above in some of the ethnographic

²⁰ See for example Shoshan (2015).

situations we experienced? After all, if, as Gadamer advocates, in the exercise of *verstehen* 'it is true in every case that a person who comprehends, comprehends himself (*sich versteht*), projecting himself upon his possibilities' (Gadamer 2004: 251), how do we deal with comprehension in a universe of 'confusion of horizons'?

It is not new that anthropologists have had to deal with what we call a 'confusion of horizons'. Evans-Pritchard among the Nuer (1940) and the Azande (1937), Berreman in the Himalayas (1963), Foote Whyte on the street corners of Boston (1943), and so on. Well-known anthropologists, such as the American anthropologist Margaret Mead, have been accused of dressing up the *truth* about some aspects of the practices and representations of young women in Samoa with previously constructed questions.

The fundamental point is that anthropological work often finds itself in the interpretative labyrinth in which actors-researchers-anthropologists find themselves, producing dissonances and tensions that enrich the analytical and interpretative exercise. Instead of understanding the 'confusion of horizons' as something that is pernicious, we interpret it as a fruitful path of compositions that are elaborated in these tortuous journeys in the production of knowledge by both parties. And the confusion of horizons is understood to be significantly different than a misunderstanding in translation. As we have shown throughout the text, the relationship between anthropologists and civil and military police was shaped by a series of controversies, disagreements and confusions. However, these dimensions have not prevented the construction of a theoretical-analytical corpus, even if through tortuous paths, through incongruous ones, it has opened up ground for the institutionalization of research, publications and courses in the field of anthropological studies on public safety and justice. In this sense, we distance ourselves from the issues raised by Viveiro de Castro about the commensurability of perspectives (of natives/anthropologists). He affirms:

perspectivism projects an image of translation as a process of controlled equivocation—'controlled' in the sense that walking can be described as a controlled way of falling. Indigenous perspectivism is a theory of equivocation, that is, of referential alterity between homonymous concepts. Equivocation appears here as the mode of communication par excellence between different perspectival positions - and therefore as both the condition of possibility and the limit of the anthropological endeavor (Viveiros de Castro 2018: 251).

This implies, according to the author, that

To translate is to emphasize or enhance equivocation, that is, to open up and widen the space imagined as not existing between the conceptual languages in contact, a space that equivocation precisely concealed. Equivocation is not what prevents a relationship, but what founds and drives it: a difference in perspective. To translate is to assume that an equivocation already exists; it is to communicate through differences, instead of silencing the Other by assuming a univocity—the essential similarity—between what the Other and We are saying (Viveiros de Castro 2018: 254-255).

In the case of legal anthropology carried out with and about police and judicial institutions, the issue is steered precisely to the processes of confusions caused by fieldwork relationships and the interpretations produced through this labyrinthine experience, which is strained by different ethical and moral armors. In this case, we are dealing with groups that seek, often explicitly and publicly, as described above, to delegitimize anthropological knowledge, giving it meanings such as 'theory without practice', 'every society has the police and justice it deserves', 'you've never held a gun and exchanged fire with a bandit', among other discursive formulas that tend to reinforce the incommensurability of comprehension and understanding of what we are trying to understand together.

It's not a question of the classic and important issue of translation, but of the legitimacy or delegitimacy translation can achieve in the field of study we are discussing. As we have seen, it is a veritable field of confusion, conflicts, disagreements and threats in a process of mutual ignorance of the other. This is because we as social scientists/anthropologists do not share the principles of the police and court officials (or a part of their components

if we consider their differences and internal heterogeneity), nor do officials of the courts or police recognize the legitimacy of the social and human sciences, which is expressed by disqualifying their professionals.

This rejection, however, turned out to show itself, during the research that preceded and succeeded it in this initially troubled environment, to be focused on understanding and identifying the categories that supported the naturalization of contemporary practices. These made explicit categories belonging to dogmatic frameworks that in the past had established practices informed by punitive legal and police perspectives, typical of ecclesiastical systems of legal-ecclesiastical control of society, present in societies of the *Ancien Régime*. They were thus opposed to the principles that underpin liberal legal-political systems, as described philosophically and historically by contemporary authors such as Foucault (1977) and Berman (1983, 2003). In other words, defending 'practices' as the best because they are based on police experience, only means that they are reproducing old ways of repressing and maintaining monarchical order, which should be anachronistic, but are not (Kant de Lima 2010).

Although these conflicts exist in this environment of opposition and even rejection of horizons, in our case they have reverted into a contemporary 'confusion of horizons', in which labyrinthine paths have culminated, as we mentioned, in the institutionalization of various academic and scientific research ventures, for research production and teaching of social technologies. These have opened up interpretative doors of high impact anthropological relevance for understanding not only the contrasting universes we are referring to, but also, to a certain extent, the gateway to cosmologies and practices that flow into and inform other universes. Above all, this confusion of horizons has allowed us to shape ethnographic interpretative content of great anthropological relevance. In other words, the confusion of horizons is not an analytical/interpretative impropriety. On the contrary, as long as it is mediated by anthropological and ethnographic education and guided by theoretical questions, it offers us countless ways of analyzing sociological and anthropological problems.

The tortuous paths of ethnography allowed Author II to develop some questions about what he called 'inquisitorialness'. This is a multivocal category, which has legal significance, but is also present, although often without this name, in the daily practices of some social groups. The understanding we have here is that it basically presupposes a prior systematic suspicion of the 'other' with whom we are interacting. The origin of this suspicion is not explicitly shared. And its practice consists of being certain of certain facts and practices that the possible interlocutor has committed and, by approaching them in some way, getting them to acknowledge their guilt, thus confirming our suspicions that we want to turn into facts and certainties. The practice of inquisitorialism establishes an asymmetry between the interlocutor who knows and accuses and the interlocutor who denies and defends himself. Confidential knowledge, obtained without the participation of the other party, establishes a power that the accuser manipulates in the relationship. Therefore, the only way to overcome it is to create transparency about the often diverse, albeit homonymous, meanings of native categories. And this transparency can only be created in a universe that favors respectful communication between the interlocutors, as was the case here, which is conducive to successful ethnographies.

Some examples were presented in the ethnographic part of the article, but other examples of these practices are common in love relationships, where jealousy fantasizes, often unfoundedly, about non-existent betrayals, but which nevertheless have an effect on the dynamics of violence and conflict that they provoke. But inquisitorialness also manifests itself with those who occupy subaltern positions in society, often accused, rightly or wrongly, of practices incompatible with the personalized trust placed in them. This is the case with accusations against housemaids, or against children and spouses in reference to their behavior, which is more or less suitable to the environment of family trust. For example, in the expression: 'Who moved my wallet?', in which it is assumed that someone has moved an object improperly, without there being any evidence to prove anyone did, while it is often the accuser who forgot to put it back in its usual place.

On the other hand, we have another analytical dimension stemming from ethnographic experiences that led to the construction of the category 'schismatic reason' (Mota 2018, 2021, 2023a, 2023b; Mota & Velásquez Peláez 2021; Mota & Kant de Lima 2022; Mota & Toscano 2023). This is a polysemic category, as it can have several meanings in different contexts as it does in a dictionary. *Cisma* [schism, as a masculine noun in Portuguese], can refer to a rupture or split, while *schism* [as a feminine noun in Portuguese] refers to an act that consists of producing an evaluation and judgment about things, people and facts supported by a fixed and unswerving preconception, as commonly occurs on social networks these days and in the case of relations with agents of public security and criminal justice systems, as we have described throughout the article.

This latter form of schism differs from an act of substantive distrust, in that in distrust the communicative bridges enable interlocution and the production of provisional consensus about the elements that are part of the interaction, the social relationship and the controversy that arises, and can undo the initial certainties. The notion of *cisma* [schism] we are using produces a communicative schism, breaking the circuits of recognizing the other as an interlocutor. Mistrust (and trust) has a liberal matrix, in which it is assumed that there are individuals capable of using 'logic', 'rationality' and valid assertions for a specific audience, to make it possible to share arguments and rules. The 'schism' in this case, on the other hand, like inquisitorialness, has a medieval, pre-scientific matrix, since it only recognizes what is already known, diluting the critical nature of human interactions in the name of the absolutism of certainty, as we have discussed²¹.

This *cisma* is expressed in the meanders of entering the field, as we discussed in the case of our ethnographies, but also in other ethnographic situations. Situations in which arguments mobilize the logic of contradiction, which are also wrapped in schismatic conceptions, gain strength in the conformation of a truth about a given theme or issue without recognizing the reasons of the interlocutor. It doesn't matter what other arguments are mobilized, what other data is provided in the course of the debate, because the opposing parties will be deeply rooted in their convictions, as in the case described in the field note at the beginning of the article.

These were some of the results we chose to illustrate our arguments, but we could point to dozens of other analyses, interpretations and theoretical and methodological contributions made by other colleagues who are part of the INCT-InEAC network based at the Fluminense Federal University.

Finally, it was possible to problematize that in Brazilian law and public safety there are huge barriers to dialogue with the knowledge produced by the empirical perspective because it is based on the scientific method, which produces knowledge through the construction of 'provisional consensus about facts' by peers, based on the authority of arguments (and continuous distrust of the facts and theories), which is not possible to develop under the logic of contradiction and schismatic rationality, supported by the argument of authority.

This lack of reflexive critical mass about the effects of judicial and police practices on society is the main reason why there is still denial about the inquisitorial and schismatic characteristics of the Brazilian process - which are implicit in federal legislation and explicit in judicial and police practices. The lack of reflection produces impediments, which to this day have not been overcome, to constrain or limit these practices by regulatory policies for the police and judiciary, as happens in other countries with the same traditions. Thus, Brazilian law does not create a reflective space for knowing and interpreting how it acts and, therefore, for a possible knowledge and theoretical interpretation of the effects that institutional legal - and police - practices effectively have on society (Kant de Lima 2019, 2023).

This epistemological obstacle, packaged in a communicative deficit, allows 'post-colonial' institutional, bureaucratic structures and organizations to remain responsible for the structure and functioning of the police and courts in our society, reproducing old prejudices from a slave society made up of segments with

²¹ On the category of trust in different contexts, see Sampaio (2023).

unequal rights, which leads to the permanent criminal subjection (Misse 2022) of some of them, especially the Afro-descendant population and many of its religious practices, the main targets of this schismatic rationality.

A justice system like this operates unpredictably and without legal certainty, based on a pre-Weberian bureaucracy that does not arouse the confidence of either the market and its agents or of ordinary citizens. Furthermore, as the system also gives the courts a monopoly on jurisdiction, the number of cases that depend on the logic of contradiction, which encourages an endless number of appeals, is unmanageable, resulting in an equally significant number of unfinished cases and latent impunity.

As long as this legal-political context and the institutional practices that stem from it are not ethnographically and critically described and become recognized and made explicit as such by the legal field, no reform of the police, or of the judiciary itself, will be effective, because it will not act on what these institutions do driven by their traditional values and origins, real or imagined, but on what they doctrinally 'should be' doing. As DaMatta has already explained, traditions are mostly unconscious and can only change when they are made explicit, which can prompt reflection and, eventually, the conscious choice to change them (DaMatta 1987). Concluding with Clifford Geertz:

Looking into dragons, not domesticating or abominating them, nor drowning them in vats of theory, is what anthropology has been all about. [...] We have, with no little success, sought to keep the world off balance; pulling out rugs, upsetting tea tables, setting off firecrackers. It has been the office of others to reassure; ours to unsettle. Australopithecenes, Tricksters, Clicks, Megaliths—we hawk the anomalous, peddle the strange. Merchants of astonishment (Geertz 2000: 63-64).

'If we wanted home truths, we should have stayed at home' (Geertz 2000: 65).

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