The Media Construction of the Stereotypes that form the "Stigmatizing Final Intervention"

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Abstract

The article focuses on the role of the media in aggravating institutional actions that yield to stereotypes that "naturalize" a criminal profile. The study problem refers to the role of the media in aggravating institutional actions that yield to these stereotypes and which conform to the "stigmatizing criminal intervention"? The main hypothesis is that the ways in which stereotypes condition the definition of what are the "characteristic types" of criminals, also dictate the definition of what are the threats to social security, in what they consist and, mainly, how they should be interpreted. To this end, it presents considerations on the theoretical basis of critical criminology and the idea of the body and soul as objects of punishment, the social construction of the phenomenon of criminality through the media and the implications of media criminology. Through conducting exploratory and qualitative bibliographic research, he concludes conclusively that symbolically and materially segregated, "they", the poor transit in the social territory along their banks, stripped of any and all possibility of accessing true security, understood as the full exercise of rights, which does not even appear in political-media debates.

Keywords: Criminology; Media; Crime; Stereotypes; Criminal intervention

Introduction

Insecurity, violence and crime are familiar terms in the political scene and in everyday life. The feeling of insecurity is a large part of the Brazilian population and has changed attitudes, ways of life and ways of relating to the city and people. The demand for security impacts on the political system and becomes a socio-political construction in which many actors are involved. The sense of insecurity has a decisive effect on the media, which narrate and amplify criminal acts with the clear intention of generating alarm among people. In Brazil, once this sensation is installed in public opinion, the promises of increased repression and control measures become attractive, with direct consequences in two ways: the promotion of collective fear and the naturalization of traditional stereotypes regarding the criminal's profile: black, poor, peripheral and marginal. It is undeniable that these stereotypes of the criminal profile focusses on lower social strata, and affect not only the social imagination, but, above all, police action or law enforcement, which is defined as secondary criminalization. The trend of society and of the state apparatus represented by the police forces and other legal and penal mechanisms in expecting behaviors according to the law of individuals from middle and upper social strata and deviant behaviors of individuals from lower strata is enhanced by the media's action when

it produces, circulates, reproduces and reinforces certain stereotypes.

The research problem of the present study corresponds to the following question: what is the role of the media in aggravating institutional actions that yield criminal stereotypes and which conform to the "stigmatizing criminal intervention"?. The hypothesis regarding this questioning is that the ways in which stereotypes condition the definition of what are the "characteristic types" of criminals, also dictate the definition of what are the threats to social security, in which they consist and, mainly, how they are to be interpreted. In this sense, conditioning the production of meaning around the theme of the criminal profile and social security, the media condones the development of a climate of distrust and insecurity that inevitably turns to reinforcing existing stereotypes.   Also, media can eliminate the limits between the subjective dimension (perception) and the objective/real dimension (personal, individual insecurity), achieving greater credibility than the social institutions themselves, enabling the "stigmatizing criminal intervention". The theme approach of the role of the media in aggravating institutional actions that yield to stereotypes that "naturalize" a criminal profile and lead to the formation of "stigmatizing criminal intervention" is justified, initially, by its relevance and social utility, by the need to demonstrate that the media, the way it addresses violent events, hides another kind of social risk, creating myths and paradigms related to crime that affect the community cognitively and affectively, transmitting messages of fear, identifying violence and outlining a criminal profile associated with stereotypes linked to individuals from different strata. Inferior social, black and socially segregated.

Stereotypes and Stigmatizing Criminal Intervention

Critical criminology underpins understanding of the ideas underlying the social construction of the phenomenon of criminality through the media, of the ways in which the discourses of media criminology are elaborated and how this discourse influences the formation of the "stigmatizing criminal intervention". In reviewing traditional criminological theories, critical criminology demonstrated its relativities and partialities, highlighting the inequality between primary and secondary criminalization and the impunity of most crimes. Therefore, it evidenced the weakness of people in the face of the criminal justice system, which is a source of abuse by the power. In this sense, from a sociological perspective, the object of study of traditional criminology has shifted to structural mechanisms of social control-criminal policy and criminal law. The priority focus became the criminalization processes, narrating the reality of the offending behavior and highlighting its functional or dysfunctional relationship with

the development of political and economic relations [1].

Thus, the defense of human rights emerges as the main objective and as the limit of criminal law, and it can be said, in summary, that the main object of study that came to be addressed by critical criminology refers to social control as a political-structural problem Baratta, for example, denounces that the less favored classes are negatively selected by the criminalization mechanisms and that in the most advanced capitalist countries, the vast majority of the prison population corresponds to individuals from the poorest strata, coming from the socially marginalized areas and corresponding to an army reserve labor for the capitalist production system. Although it doesn't mean that deviations and criminal conduct are effectively concentrated in the lower social strata and in crimes against property, Baratta [1] expresses that the same liberal criminology, with its investigations on white collar crimes and political crimes, demonstrates, on the contrary, that criminal behaviors they are visible in all social groups and that the crime inherent in the ruling class is much more harmful and serious than that which is actually persecuted, but enjoys immunity. Critical criminology teaches that it is criminal laws that create crimes, with no naturally criminal or criminal human conduct.

The characterization of certain behaviors as criminal is only a characterization, which affects a criminalization process through which certain behaviors are selected to be punished. The mechanisms and devices used for selection depend on the political system and, therefore, reflect the interests of the group that exercises power in society. The selection process assigns and grants a certain penal meaning to the act and, in addition, decides what should be done about it (criminal selectivity). It is important to mention, when looking at the critical criminology view on crimes and social control by the State, the importance of analyzing several variables that affect the criminal process and its dynamics, considering variables such as society, State and institutions and the form how its power is exercised over the perpetrator of the criminal act. Alluding to these issues, Andrade [2] considers that a conduct or its author is not criminal itself, because this character depends on certain social processes of definition and selection that label the author as a delinquent. As Andrade [2] observes, social groups create deviation by dictating rules to certain people, qualifying them as marginal (strangers) and the deviation becomes a consequence of the application of rules and sanctions to the deviant, to whom you can successfully apply a tag. At the same time, crime is revealed as the process of interaction between action and social reaction that exercises highly selective and unequal social control.

This form of punishment or sanction, according to Foucault [3], reconstructs the human body as a productive force

submitted to a political and economic power exercised over it. In this idea, surveillance and correction, social control that goes beyond incarceration and its ends, which also constitute the exercise of a multiple, automatic and anonymous power, are also inserted, as an alternative to the punishment of the body, since "if it is certain that surveillance rests on individuals, its functioning is that of a system of relations from top to bottom, but also, to a certain extent, from bottom to top, and laterally". This means that the exercise of control in relation to the surveillance of one another, regardless of the hierarchical position of each one, is, as Foucault [4] calls it "vigilantes constantly watched". This vigilance is based on the principle that all means must correspond to any right, otherwise it would be useless to proclaim its existence. It is no longer a question of corporal punishment corresponding to locking up the individual in a cell so that he remains hidden, but of punishing the soul, trying to illuminate and make his visibility permanent to control his conduct even in the subtlest details. Visibility, then, as Foucault [4] says, becomes a trap; the subject's loneliness is hijacked and observed at each point. The media, in this sense, can become an imposition of ideological forms that consider that informing is equivalent to directing public opinion, exercising an increasing dominance over society. This question refers to the idea sketched by Jewkes [5] that the combination of media and delinquency produces four phenomena: 1) fear of crime; 2) hatred of the offender; 3) compassion for the victims; and, 4) the demand for revenge and the hardening of sentences. This phenomenon also produces a construction of social relations and attitudes based on the supposed information of private media that become companies that artificially create crime as a spectacle to satisfy the morbid interests of the spectators/readers and, above all, are spaces in which is a market of high economic and political value based on audience, advertising and profit.

It all moves away much of the constitutional foundation of freedom of expression and information and the free formation of public opinion. For Jewkes [5], in addition to the consequences and losses generated by the phenomenon of maximum benefit sought by the media, the panorama becomes even more obscure when crime is used as a political weapon, manipulating feelings of crime fear and the desire for revenge to intensify persecution of certain social sectors. Marília Budó also points out in the same sense: "In the most diverse regions of the western world, the media appears as a producer of conceptions about crime and the criminal that usually reflects the selectivity of the penal system" [6]. "At the same time, there is a distance between the news about crimes and the statistics of victimization, in order to strengthen the stereotype not only of the criminal, but also of the victim, which belongs to the middle, upper and white classes of the population, that coming from the classes lower, black or brown and young". From a postmodernist notion,

the public is considered to be composed of receptors and active creators of various meanings. The media lost its initial limitations, with new types, in greater quantity, and not all belong to the bourgeoisie. The result is an unprecedented pluralism that defies all previous theories.

The Perception of Legal Insecurity and Media Stigmatization

With the vast selection of images that are transmitted daily from all over the world, the value that universally entertains the most is violence. Focused on the perception and interpretation of content, postmodernism shares the same concerns about crime and victimization expressed by realism. On the other hand, there is no doubt that the media offers the viewer/reader the feeling that what is reported is the truth, that the facts occur exactly as they are reported. Thus, even recognizing the impossibility of separating the truth from the power system, since "the truth itself is power", Foucault [7] proclaims the need to disconnect the power from the truth and from the ways in which socially, economically and culturally the truth is manipulated. The power of the media can be understood as being exercised in the name of this "truth" and Foucault's considerations are fundamental for understanding the effective practice of power and control in contemporary societies. Assuming that power relations are structured within each discourse that determine which individuals are allowed to speak and which are not, which establish "regimes of truth", Foucault [7] argues that the truth is linked in a circular relationship with the systems of power that produce and maintain it and with the effects of power that induce and extend it.

People who have a view of the criminal issue constructed through the media or, to put it another way, nourish themselves or suffer from what Zaffaroni calls it "media criminology". The reason why people accept or are defenseless in the face of the construction of reality dictated by the media can be explained as follows: "Media criminology always calls for the creation of reality through information, sub-information and disinformation, in convergence with prejudices and beliefs and based on a simplistic criminal etiology, based on "magical causality". For Zaffaroni [8], this characteristic does not change, but the communication technology of the media is varied, ranging from the pulpit and the square to television and electronic media, just as the scapegoats vary. The central aspect of the current version of media criminology comes from the medium used: television or other "imagetic" Medias. Communication through images impacts the emotional sphere, does not need sound and does not inform much, because it does not need context-it is as if several pieces of reality were presented isolated from the whole, which refers to an interpretation that uses an impoverished language and implicit content.

In this case, the image insinuates a lot, giving the impression that something can be interviewed by the recipient, which feeds his illusion that he is intelligent, because he "deduces" the implicit content when, in reality, he is the victim of a "communicational falsehood". "Media criminology creates the reality of a world of decent people in the face of a mass of criminals identified through stereotypes. Thus, it constitutes a "them" separate from the rest of society, as it is a set of different and bad people". Media criminology, for Zaffaroni [8] is not undertaken against murderers, rapists and psychopaths, as they have always been sentenced to long terms around the world: the objective is the "them" of those who are similar, involving a young, adolescent, black, poor. The implicit and sometimes explicit discourse is death. A clear example of the death discourse is explained by Mbembe [9], when referring to the limitations of foucaultian concept of biopower and the way in which the state of exception and the relationship of enmity are established in societies to enable necropolitics: the biopower divides bodies into groups that can live and into groups that must die by delimiting biological differences that would allow them to distance themselves ethically from each other. This means that racism would be one of the conditions for acceptability of death and would justify the social outcry for the State to exercise the function of killing those who "justifiably must die". Media criminology, for Zaffaroni [8], expresses his necrophilia in a bellicose vocabulary, instigating annihilation - which often takes the form of executions by police officers. When these shootings occur, they are automatically covered up by supposed data of the stereotype of the one who was killed: extensive criminal record, diverse background, drug addict, etc. Furthermore, stereotypes justify not only executions by the police, but also the action of death squads, militias, paramilitary groups. Statistics in several countries confirm that the number of black youths killed by the police is far greater than the number of victims of homicides committed by this group.

Addressing this theme regarding the existence of a selective distribution of criminality (immunization of the upper classes and criminalization of the lower classes), which translates into a disproportionate predominance of the poor in prisons and official crime statistics, Andrade [10] states that selectivity reveals the central importance of the stereotypes of authors and victims, associated with "everyday theories", in which it can be said that media coverage fits perfectly. Zaffaroni [8], also considers that media criminology naturalizes these deaths and even disguises executions as if they were the result of confrontations between police and bandits. The deaths are presented as a result of episodes of the war against crime, in which the corpse of the one who was killed is exposed as a sign of police efficiency, in the same way that the corpses of enemies killed in wars are displayed. The discourse of media criminology, therefore, is socially hygienist: "they" are the waste of the social body and their death or imprisonment would be natural products of the disposal of the "dirt" that they represent, an immediate response to society's desire for security.

As this response must be intolerant, it would be unacceptable to reflect, since any attempt in this direction would be rejected, stigmatized as weakness or as an action unrelated to the reality that benefits the bandits and penalizes the victims. The idea of "legal certainty" is the point of convergence that best synthesizes the declared function of Criminal Dogmatic. Around this idea there are several speeches whose guiding thread must be reconstituted, asking where dogmatic discourse roots the promise of legal certainty. Andrade [10] goes on to distinguish the promise of criminal dogmatic from criminology, emphasizing that the first circumscribes the scope of the human rights of criminal citizens, establishing limits to the institutional violence of punishment in response to the individual violence of the crime. "It is, therefore, about the security of not being punished arbitrarily and unequally or, in other words, of maximizing the guarantees of the accused and minimizing the punitive will". Untying penal dogmatic from social reality it is one of the points explored by the media to feed the idea of social insecurity and establish the perception that this insecurity requires a break with scientific criminology, which, in turn, gives rise to media criminology. Regarding the idea of the perception of social insecurity, the analysis of media criminology makes it necessary to consider three issues that are explored by the media: the fear of crime, the factors that fuel the feeling of insecurity and the social, cultural and political utility of control through insecurity. As to the first, one can evoke the Wacquant's [11] analysis of the formula developed by the United States to normalize social insecurity, which brought a new meaning to the notion of helping the poor: punitive restraint offers help not to the poor, but intends to make the less submissive among the beneficiaries of social programs "disappear" by force. However, for this formula to lead to the normalization of social insecurity, it is necessary to awake the fear of the crime, described by Boldt [12] as an experience of an emotional nature, raised by the possibility of the individual becoming a victim of a crime. This experience results from a certain way of processing information and interpreting reality from elements provided by the environment through news, political speeches, etc. that, ultimately, will give rise to different responses from citizens. Fear is an objective interpretation of reality, not necessarily proportional to subjective reality. Daily information about criminal facts is received and people build forms of relationship with the world on this information. The greater the media coverage of the crime, the greater the level of fear in society, which is profitable and functional for the media, as there will be a demand for new information on violence, and also for the

State, as it will be a useful strategy for social control.

As to the second and third issue, Boldt [12] offers two explanations: (a) the evolution of the number of victims, which increases exponentially the feeling of insecurity depending to the media coverage; and, (b) the level of importance attributed to other problems, because when there is a general precariousness regarding issues such as work, education and health, delinquency will not be the focus of interest for citizens. Also, Boldt [12] recalls that Foucault wrote that when the plagues occurred in the middle Ages, for fear of contagion, people believed what the king determined-quarantine, with the death penalty in case of disobedience. Soldiers were watching the streets, you couldn't go out the window, among other security measures. The state exercised control for fear of contagion. Population censuses emerged from this situation. Foucault [3] points out that the more offenders there are, the more crimes there will be; the more crimes there are, the more fear the population will have and the more fear there is in the population, the more acceptable and desirable the police control system becomes. This would explain why in newspapers, radio and television, in all countries of the world, without exception, crime is given as much space as if it were a novelty every day. Continuing, says Foucault [3] that since 1830, in all countries of the world, campaigns have been developed on the theme of the growth of delinquency, a fact that has never been proven, but this supposed presence, this threat, this growth of delinquency is a factor in the acceptance of controls. This power is exercised by controlling the freedom of individuals, creating a need for protection against others, the bad ones through the use of various technologies, primitive and sophisticated, under the claim that they serve to offer security. Wermuth [13] says the "stigmatizing penal intervention" starts from the control theories, which view the human condition in a pessimistic way, assuming that individuals are attracted by selfish, antisocial or criminal behaviors, "unless they are inhibited by solid and effective controls". In the same sense, Ferrajoli [14] emphasizes the control of criminality through Criminal Law and refers to the so-called criminality of power, which classifies as: a) organized criminality openly inserted in the world order; b) the criminality of economic powers; and c) the political criminality of public authorities. They all intertwine and interact. It can be said, based on these definitions that behind the media there are great economic and political powers that are part of the social structure. For this reason, it seems difficult for Criminal Law to move against this power of large corporations, although it is necessary to make society reflect on the fact that the State can also commit crimes, motivated by fear and the idea of insecurity. It is also important to consider, as Molina and Gomes [15] suggests, that the idea of incarceration as a solution for the notion that prison removes the offender from social life and, at the same time as it provided his rehabilitation, is proved to be inoperative. In particular, the crisis generated in relation to the expected resocialization of the prisoner stands out, since the possibilities of reaching the goal of resocialization have become increasingly scarce, in the absence of interest in developing mechanisms capable of acting on the sentenced positively, guaranteeing him conditions for social reintegration.

Indeed, the historical evolution the prison model, with its constant readjustment to advances and setbacks in relation to human rights and the ideal of resocialization, has proved that it is essentially marked by contradictions that underscore the inability to improve the condemned and remove them from the configuration of their lives. Also, the stigmas that remain for their stay in prison are contexts that support the stereotyped constructions of criminals by the media and the most conservative sectors of society.

Prison is a privileged place of degradation, a place where the prisoner must be the passive object of humiliating suffering. As well as prison model doesn't fulfill resocialization, it doesn´t fulfill its special-preventive purpose. In fact, according to Pavarin [16], if punishment is socially based, them these "social wastes" are incarcerated with the sole purpose of being disabled. That's why, for Pavarini, security in the face of crime is directly linked to the processes of social exclusion: while we sought to remove the obstacles that prevented everyone from having access to their rights, neoliberal policies are required to access the protection of rights, that is, only those who deserve it will be protected. In this context, criminalization presents itself as the "ideal" mechanism for identifying subjects who "will not be worthy" of rights and in such a condition will be excluded from the benefits of social status.

This is what Pavarini [16] calls for a replacement of paradigms: "to deserve exclusion" will replace "to deserve help". It is precisely in this context, according to Wacquant [11], that the "enemies" elected by the media arise from the exclusion processes generated by the market economy, which expels with high probability of non-return those who do not meet the minimum conditions to be considered labor or consumers. Marginalized and excluded are the target of the media daily to outline a "profile" of the preferred targets of the State's criminal action, since the phenomenon of exclusion becomes a security problem. The question of class that is imposed when society is led to believe that the black, the poor, the marginalized, the excluded are dangerous in everything refers to the differences created between citizens, the good, and the bandits, the bad. Additionally, according to Wacquant [10,17], linear poverty-drug-crime assimilation is also a trend that increasingly leads States to exchange social strategies for criminal measures, driven by a social consensus manufactured by the media, with strong pressure on governments, regardless of the political orientation of the

parties in power.

Conclusion

The article sought to present the role of the media in aggravating institutional actions that yield to stereotypes that "naturalize" a criminal profile and lead to the formation of "stigmatizing criminal intervention". Initially, it dealt with the theoretical basis of critical criminology and the idea of the body and soul as objects of punishment, than it was perceived that within all social discourses power relations are structured that determine which individuals are authorized to have rights and which are not, which establish "regimes of truth" that are linked in a circular relationship with the power systems that produce it and maintains and with the effects of power that induce and extend it. The second approach of the study referred to the social construction of the phenomenon of crime through the media. On this point it is also possible to conclude that the media can lie and falsify the truth, just like any other power system, but the difference The main thing is that the strength of the truth inherent in the image makes the lie more effective and, therefore, more dangerous, because it directly influences the ways in which problems are considered and, mainly, how individuals are seen and the considerations according to which they are evaluated conducts.

Finally, the implications of media criminology were addressed, leading to the conclusion that media criminology creates the notion of a war between "us" and "them". Regarding the perception of social insecurity, it is possible to conclude that the perception of insecurity perpetrated by the media makes the individuals demand the state action of surveillance or surveillance against "them", with more police on the streets, surveillance cameras, military devices, among others. In reality, what is sought is the authorized control of society through the fear of being the victim of a crime, created by media criminology. On the conformation of the "stigmatizing criminal intervention", finally, it is concluded that in the city models dictated by the media, the feeling of insecurity has spread, deepened and exalted daily and insistently. This explains - although it does not justify - a series of policies and security action on the part of the government in turn, based on criminalization, eradication and control of the sectors that threaten society - the poor. Institutional practices and brutal and discriminatory police actions are sustained and legitimized in processes of social stigmatization that the media feeds, which demonize not only the other, the different, but also the other who have difficulties to survive.

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