

AFTERWORD – PUBLIC SECURITY AND INSTITUTIONAL RACISM¹

Almir de Oliveira Junior²

Verônica Couto de Araújo Lima³

The article *Public Security and Institutional Racism* (Oliveira Junior and Lima, 2013), published almost ten years ago, addresses a topic that has stood out over the years and still motivates intense debates in the mainstream media. Institutional racism is not a problem unique to the area, but it has been a crucial issue in the public safety system for a long time. Discriminatory behavior motivated by racial prejudice within the scope of public security causes insecurity for a significant portion of the Brazilian population. Research shows that the racial issue still predominates when some “suspicious elements” (Ramos and Musumeci, 2005) are preferred targets of police approaches. The race-color cut motivates this selectivity and becomes a substantial factor in determining the perception of someone as a dangerous individual or not (Barros, 2008). The profile of victims of police interventions in Brazil has not changed significantly. According to data from the *Brazilian Public Security Yearbook*, in 2021, police actions caused 6,145 deaths, corresponding to 12.9% of all intentional violent deaths (IVDs) in the country. Of this total number of victims, 84.1% were black people (FBSP, 2022). That is, when considering police interventions, blacks are disproportionately affected. Its victimization rate is 4.5 deaths per 100,000 inhabitants, while the same rate for the white population is 1.0 per 100,000. These data characterize Brazil with higher police lethality rates globally, with an exacerbated exposure of the black population to this violence cowardly justified as a legitimate use of force. Taking into account the Criminal Justice System, it is also important to mention that most people wrongfully imprisoned are black. A report published in 2021 by the National Council of Defenders and Public Defenders-General (Condege, 2021) indicates that more than 80% of arrests made unjustly for photographic recognition are of black people.

As a constitutional duty, the State must provide citizens with a broad framework of protection against the possibility of becoming victims of violence, regardless of their age, social class, sex, or race. Therefore, to improve public policies in the area of public security, it is necessary to use mechanisms that mitigate the weight of racial bias. In addition, the systematic use of lethal force due to police interventions constitutes a considerable challenge for the police in Brazil. As an example of a recent initiative to address the issue, law enforcement officers’ adoption of body cameras can have a positive effect. Research carried out with the Military Police of São Paulo, with data for the year 2021, suggests an average reduction of 0.81 deaths in police interventions per battalion in which police officers had adopted body cameras. In practice, 18 São Paulo Military Police avoided about 88 deaths in six months by implementing body cameras (Lima et al., 2022).

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2. Planning and research technician at Postgraduate and Training Coordination of the Institute for Applied Economic Research (Ipea).

3. Bachelor’s degree in communication studies from Instituto Científico de Ensino Superior e Pesquisa (Icesp); and special student in the graduate program in human rights and citizenship of the Multidisciplinary Center for Advanced Studies of the University of Brasília (Centro de Estudos Avançados Multidisciplinares da Universidade de Brasília – Ceam/UnB).

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