

MORAL SCENES FROM URBAN LIFE: MORAL PERCEPTIONS OF MODERNITY IN IMPERIAL BRAZIL

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Abstrakt: In this article, I analyze moral perceptions of modernity in Rio de Janeiro between the 1850s and 1860s. Against a long theoretical tradition in the Latin American social sciences that emphasizes nineteenth-century modernity in the region as an opaque process (a mere attempt at imitating the Western European “pure” model), I would like to follow another theoretical path; that is, my analysis focuses on tangible experiences of modernity during the apogee of the Brazilian Empire. This research looks to newspapers, schoolbooks, books, and speeches delivered by the cultural elite in the public sphere. I analyze how moral perceptions of urban life in nineteenth-century Rio de Janeiro can be articulated into a structure based on processes of education. In other words, beyond the materiality in urban space (public street lighting, oil and gas companies, urban cleanliness, public gardens, etc.), there is an implicit relationship between the inner problems (political turbulence, poverty, and moral management of the urban population) and the moral content of modernity (which can be understood in terms of structural prescriptions). These processes of education, instead of an institution-centered practice concentrated only on schools, elaborate a diffuse set of prescriptions whose nexus is constituted by the content of morality. The paper reflects on the conditions of production and reproduction of modernity in a peripheral area (former colonial space) in the nineteenth century.

Słowa kluczowe: Imperial Brazil, modernity, morals, processes of education, urbanity

There is a long tradition in the Brazilian social sciences that emphasizes a disconnection between social formation and the conditions for incorporation of the region into modernity. As a matter of fact, this theoretical foundation, to some extent, is coextensive with other forms of Latin American social formation. A perceived inaptitude in relation to Western European modernity has marked Latin American social theory at least over the last six decades.

As Chilean sociologist Daniel Chernilo (2011) argues, this point is illustrated by some Latin American historical-sociological theories (modernization theories, CEPAL, etc.), which throughout the 1960s have proposed the image of modernity in the region as incomplete. Since independence in the nineteenth century, then, social formation would have been understood as an unarticulated effort to encompass the distinctive characteristics of Western European modernity.

This idea of an unarticulated modern social form in nineteenth-century Latin America, *grosso modo*, is based on two assumptions: (1) the subsistence of *traditional* elements in the transition towards a dependent economic expansion in a formless national society and the constitution of a dual society (Germani 1969); (2) the *semicolonial* situation of a society in transition from the pure heteronomy of its determinations to its complete integration into a societal structure beyond the local particularisms (Jaguaribe 1962, 148). Once the dualities (modern/traditional, development/archaisms) are converted into antithetical terms (Knöbl 2001). These traits reinforce the image of *incomplete* social formation.

I would like to challenge the classical image of immature modernity in nineteenth-century Brazil. Through this summary sketch of theoretical points, I am trying to reflect on the conditions of modernity in nineteenth-century postcolonial zones. In this case, the focus is not on the “pure” model and its imitation. Instead, this process involves important historical *mediation* of ideas and their *circuits* in elaborating experiences and *perceptions* of modernity.

Especially in the analysis of the nineteenth century (during the Imperial period, 1822–1889), the image of an incomplete modernity implies an unauthentic, rough, mimetic social form (Lynch 2013) in relation to Western European ideas and institutions (this image is due, for example, to the historical incompleteness of civil society and to the inauthentic relationship with ideas) (Couty 1881; Romero 1906; Torres 1914; Duarte 1939; Sodré 1942; Costa 1956).

A more recent version of this argument is present in the work of Renato Ortiz (2000). Modernity marks a social trajectory of frustrating attempts in nineteenth-century Brazil. The political elite dreamed of the industrial complex, which began to be achieved only after the 1920s. The construction of a school system and material progress (e.g., railway networks, navigation companies) were nothing but a vague dream of modernity.

Liberalism and the capitalist world market were misplaced ideas, since their effectiveness was blocked by slavery. Social formation thus is the formation of *social absences*, as if nineteenth-century Brazil were a wasteland. If the *imitation* of Western Europe was unconvincing in the nineteenth century, “modern institutions did not take root in Latin America”: the “traditional legacy” of colonization produced a society that was resistant to the transformations of modernity (Ortiz 2000, 253).

This view proposes a *tabula rasa*, because it ignores the analysis of what was effective in a particular form of social formation. If Western European modernity is the model of authentic social processes, the former colonial spaces (peripheral areas) wait in a kind of limbo until their redemption.

This is the blind spot I would like to question in this paper, because this dualism, according to Maria Sylvia de Carvalho Franco, divides the social process into two reified fields (Franco 1976): on the one hand, bourgeois reason and the authentic content of Western European modernity; on the other hand, the former colonial area, where the ideas are always misplaced like abstractions coming from a *deus ex machina*.

The theoretical challenge to be faced is, as Göran Therborn puts it, to define the conditions of modernity by analyzing their entanglements and mediation in particular, historical situations (Therborn 2003, 302; Therborn 1992, 132). The historical disjunctions, in this case, may give rise to the mediation of different “routes” to modernity in former colonial spaces in the nineteenth century.

Since this paper deals with social perceptions of modernity in nineteenth-century Brazil, I argue that we can find important social experiences of modernity already in Imperial Brazil of the 1850s and 1860s. My point is that this topic can be analyzed in light of the structural transformations after the 1850s. The main space of these experiences of modernity is found in urban areas, in a context of elaboration of urban life in Brazil (Frehse 2011; Hahner 1993) (in this article, I will analyze Rio de Janeiro, capital of the Empire, where the Imperial Family held court).

This is not merely a transplantation nor a singular movement of *influence* of modernity from Western Europe to Brazil. If this were the case, my theoretical scheme would reiterate the dualisms I criticized above (in this case, I would repeat a social logic based on a “pure” modernity and its abridged copy). My purpose is to investigate some lines of the experience of modernity in nineteenth-century Brazil within social formation and its conditions of production and reproduction through the circuit of ideas.

The problem of modernity in a peripheral area

Rio de Janeiro, the most dynamic city in nineteenth-century Brazil, is very far from the industrial and cultural dynamism (universal expositions, railroads system, industrialization, material system of objects and its technology of power, etc.) of key sites in nineteenth-century modernity such as Manchester, Paris, London, Milan, etc. (Engels 1962; Otter 2008, 16; Rancièrè 1989; Dennis 2008; Levin 2010; Geppert 2013; Sloterdijk 2013; Schivelbusch 2014; Joyce 2003; Beaumont 2015). But this does not mean that the former colonial area was a passive component of capitalist modernity.

The very presence of Imperial Brazil in the capitalist world-system is determined both by its commercial dynamism and by its agro-export formation. In 1843, Henrique de Beaurepaire-Rohan (1967, 230) expressed this dynamism perfectly: in his urban project concerning “moral and material improvements” for the city of Rio de Janeiro, he was concerned with the rise of modern masses and their circulation (deterritorialization), because increasing commercial activities attracted many foreigners and provincial inhabitants to the city.

The 1850s represent a decisive turning point in Imperial Brazil (Prado Junior 2012; Holanda 2010; Furtado 2007; Lago 2014). In the context of increasing control over the flow of commodities in the Atlantic world — a process that encompasses modes of labor control (wage labor, slavery, and so on) and their structural articulation into the capitalist world market (Tomich 2016; Marquese 2013; Ince [forthcoming]; Lavina and Zeuske 2014; Blackburn 2016; Fernandes 2010; Bentivoglio 2002; Ridings 1994) — this turning point illustrates a double movement in the Brazilian case.

On the one hand, since the resolution of political questions with Uruguay and Argentina in relation to Plata and the end of a cycle of rebellions that took place all over the Empire during the 1830s and 1840s, the political form of the Brazilian imperial state was consolidated by the beginning of the 1850s. On the other hand, the development of capitalism in nineteenth-century Brazil played an important role in the formation of urban life, although not via a large industrial complex, but through urban-based *commercial* enterprises (Fernandes 2009, 127).

The *Commercial Code* and the creation of the Commercial Institute in the 1850s illustrate perfectly this scenario: according to the *Commercial Code* of 1850 (following, in this sense, the main concerns of the original version of 1834), the economic function of commerce promotes the deterritorialization of commodities and people (the “cosmopolitan genius” of modernity) to the extent that civilization increases through the moral and legal regulation of modern activities, as Salustiano Orlando de Araujo Costa (1878, 484) writes in his comments on the document.

This future-oriented perspective is important. Imperial Brazil and its material improvements were perfectly integrated as a *peripheral area* into what Marx (1966, 372) called the *couronnement de l'oeuvre* of capitalist modernity. With the opening of new zones of commodity production and the structural division of labor in the capitalist world market in the period, it was within this new complex of world production that the “second slavery” emerged based on new poles between core regions and peripheral formations in the framework of a system of commodity-form (manufactured goods, shipping, insurance, agricultural products, etc.) (Tomich 2004).

In light of material improvements such as telegraph, activities of international companies (banking system, steamboat navigation, and so on) and railways (with short sections in the provinces of Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo, Pernambuco, and Bahia), the “cosmopolitan activity” (*kosmopolitische Aktivität*) of capital produced an important dynamism in Brazil. As Brazilian sociologist Florestan Fernandes (2009, 117-119) argues, a social change underlies all those material improvements: the constitution of urban life and the formation of a national society were followed by a new cultural and moral complex under the impacts of capitalist modernity.

In other words, the impacts of social modernization on a former colonial area produced a problematic image of modernity and its moral shocks. According to Shmuel Eisenstadt (2000, 13), if the first radical transformation of modernity took place in the Americas (especially during the nineteenth century), this worldwide system of capitalist modernity and its “distinctive modernities” emerged with new forms of *collective consciousness*. These social processes, in the Brazilian case, indicate that the perceptions of modernity in urban life deal with deep moral shocks coming from modern urban experience in a former colonial area. The structure of morality, as a form of consciousness dealing with the context of new rationality in urban life, illustrates the problematic transformations of modernity in a peripheral region, since morality and religion are conceived as a form of social normativity, that is, an effort to manage the turbulences coming from the inner dynamism of modernity.

Religion and morality do not constitute a colonial heritage, that is, a traditional *determination* into social formation that obliterates large-scale transformations. It is worth noting that this is not the case of a traditional society nor any kind of ethical religiosity of a *Gemeinschaft*-like order (Tönnies 1909; Tönnies 1922) for two reasons: (1) religion and morality are not marks of a “traditional society,” because this is not the case of the historical routes into a linear change from a traditional to a modern society (Halperin-Donghi 1982, 118); (2) morality is integrated into the dynamic unity of the circuit of capitalist modernity to the extent that moral values and their religious references mark the strong shocks of

modernizing moves (Domingues 2009) in a peripheral area and its structural relationship with modernity under the abrupt impacts of capitalist expansion.

This peripheral condition of modernization, thus, provides a moral framework of modernity as a problematic *Weltanschauung*: this *collective consciousness* emerges from the increasing dynamism of urban activities in light of the deep transformations of spheres of circulation and subjectivities (citizenship, multitude, the people, etc.) in nineteenth-century modernity.

The perceptions of modernity as a problematic image form a circuit of values and knowledge. In this sense, instead of a mimetic relation to ideas and their incorporation from Western Europe, this perspective connects the circuit of values and ideas to the tangibility of civil activities in the historical conditions of nineteenth-century Brazil, providing a framework for challenging the theoretical perspectives that outline modernity as a misplaced idea in the region (Marson and Oliveira 2013).

According to Marshall Berman (1999, 100), the massive dynamism of modernity lies in a tension between solid and melting visions. To the extent that Berman points to the dialectical core of Marxian analysis of capitalist modernity as a world dynamic, this problem leads my research to a double movement: (1) the autonomization of modernization evolves from the world market (Berman 2011) and implies the constitution of what Marx and Engels (1977, 466) identified as the dialectical sublation of local self-sufficiency (*Selbstgenügsamkeit*) towards the rise of world connection of spheres of exchanges and intercourses (*Verkehr*); (2) if “the solid social formations around us have melted away” (Berman 1999, 102), this movement, in the context of frantic rhythm of social transformations, illustrates the very problematic core of modernity through the impacts on the structure of morality in a former colonial area like Brazil.

Moral perceptions of modernity in nineteenth-century Brazil

How is it possible to think about social formation, in a former colonial area, through the prism of morality and its structural prescription? First, it should be noted that social normativity is not a top-down process. This is not the case of disciplinary practices coming from the Imperial State, since the Brazilian Empire and its constitutional monarchy were not properly a law-and-order regime. This normativity concerns the realm of morality as a socially diffuse perception.

In this sense, the processes of education articulated the moral demands for a “good society” and the duality between the *house* and the *streets* into a pedagogical effort to regulate social interactions (Narita 2017b; Narita 2014). The good social organization demands a new

rationality, in which the “gendering of the public sphere” produces new images of the roles and tasks within the distinction process between public and private spheres (Wallerstein 2011, 196). Thus, the moral recognition of citizenship (children, women, men, and so on) reiterates an ideology based on the rhetoric of an ordered progress for the nation.

Morality in urban life constitutes both the very problematic core of modernity and the specters of its inner problems (urban multitude, social labor, citizenship, etc.). I think that this *démarche* can be understood in a double sense, in terms of the structural prescriptions over social conduct and the making of a form of public reason that rules the social order. Both these views are integrated into the production and reproduction of modernity according to the historical and particular conditions of nineteenth-century Brazil.

When I speak of a circuit of ideas in Imperial Brazil, I argue that there is no misplaced set of modern ideas in a traditional or semicolonial society nor an *immediate influence* coming from Western Europe (in this case, the former colonial area would be conceived as a mere product of bourgeois reason, that is, a *passive effect* of capitalist expansion).

This kind of ideology of influence, as if the expressions of a “pure” modernity coming from Western Europe did not take root in nineteenth-century Brazil, leads the social formation into a formless reproduction of ideas and reduces the constitution of the capitalist world-system into reified, antithetical fields. Instead, I think that the ideas are converted into perceptions and are coherently articulated into social processes of production and reproduction of modernity, which mark the particular determination of a peripheral area in nineteenth-century modernity.

It is not fortuitous that those perceptions took shape under the conditions of urban life. The constitution of urban life in nineteenth-century Brazil represents a subterranean revolution in a former colonial space. Florestan Fernandes (2008, 98) shows that the deep connections between Imperial Brazil and Western values underlies a difference regarding the structural position of nineteenth-century Brazil in the capitalist world-system. In an agro-export social formation, this process promoted deep transformations and structural shocks in social conduct.

The structure of morality deals with this scenario marked by important changes in the old colony with the emergence of the profit-making entrepreneur and the structural transformations in Brazil from the 1850s onwards. Morality, in light of all these modernizing moves, carries in its core both the liberal agenda and a new configuration of religious and moral perceptions.

In other words, the structural prescriptions of morality constitute the *respectability* of bourgeois life-style (Hobsbawm 1996, 232; Romero 1999, 43) in a peripheral region. This

is the very ideal of the *juste milieu* that underlies the images of social order and its problematic confrontation with social modernization.

This “urban revolution” (Fernandes 2010, 91) encompasses a public sphere based on typographies, newspapers, circuits of ideas, and a more intense interaction among individuals than in rural areas. The afflux of people coming from provinces and from other countries and the creation of institutes, typographies (publishing houses), philanthropic institutions, libraries, and a myriad of government bureaus gave a new form “to the civic, commercial, and residential domains of the city” (Holston 1989, 111).

As part of a modern urban *infrastructure* (Larkin 2013), this materiality also illustrates new spheres of circulation of people and ideas in the framework of a new rationality concerning the structuration of urbanity and civil activities in relation to their aspirations and abjections, which is to say, by encoding social perceptions and images of material improvements, moral progress, political order and moral suasion. Regarding this topic, my point is different from Jorge Larrain’s (1997, 328) approach, which emphasizes a lack of autonomy in civil society in nineteenth-century Latin America.

For him, this scenario expresses the non-existence of a bourgeois class that could be capable both of constituting itself as an effective class and developing a system of commodity exchange outside the realm of state action. I think that Larrain limits civil society to its expression according to the categories of classical political economy. The alternative to this model can be found in another perspective.

In sociological terms, Gilberto Freyre analyzes the structuration of “Brazilian society” as an integration of a national society through urban activities in the period (Freyre 2012, 125–126). Besides the modernization of the technique (urban flooring, transport, urban services), this urban-based dynamic implies the urbanization of life-styles (Freyre 2012, 461). Freyre emphasizes the cultural process, this kind of *ethos* of living together, derived from the structural transformations that took place in the Brazilian Empire during the period (Freyre 2012, 684–686). In this sense, the ideas of urbanity and civility, for instance, encompassed public reason and moral rule over urban dynamic.

My paper is focused on how this turning point (the 1850s and 1860s) constitutes the very basis for the construction of urban life in nineteenth-century Brazil (Morse 1975; Romero 2010). What interests me most at this moment is to analyze the moral perceptions of urban modernity in nineteenth-century Rio de Janeiro according to what Richard Morse (1978) calls “the historic role of cities in Latin America.”

To the degree that he emphasizes how urban life played an important role as “an instrument for appropriating territory and for ordering society” (Morse 1978), I would like to discuss this effort to order society through the lenses of moral perceptions on urban interactions. I make no attempt to discuss the city and its spatial development. My emphasis,

then, lies strictly in the moral perceptions of urban modernity in nineteenth-century Rio de Janeiro.

The former colonial area constitutes a particular historical situation determined within a differentiation *internal* to the capitalist world-system in at least two senses (Franco 1976). First, with the circuit of ideas, urban life and its modern *ethos* illustrate the experience of modernity through the lenses of urban interactions and activities in Imperial Brazil.

Second, the very constitution of society set the inner conditions of production and reproduction of those perceptions. This sociological and historical articulation of a peripheral area into the circuit of the capitalist world-system in the nineteenth century offers the very interpretative context that allows us to see — as it was stated in an article signed only by L. in 1863 — the imagery of modernity (railways, steamboats, electricity, machines, cities, etc.) interwoven with its social foundations: “modern societies, inspired both by Christianity and by economic science, provide to each the means to live” (L. 1863).

This article, thus, is an attempt at analyzing the structuration of urban life through the prism of morality in light of the peripheral disjunction (Devés-Valdés 2014), that is, the emergence of this system of differences in the framework of the modern world-system.

Towards a pedagogy of urban experiences

Ilmar Rohloff de Mattos promotes an insightful analysis of the mechanisms of sociability in the formation of the imperial order in the 1850s. He stresses that civil society must be understood within the context of moral control over urban areas (Mattos 2011, 274). To the extent that he emphasizes the role of public instruction in nineteenth-century Rio de Janeiro, state action constitutes the very basis for maintaining public order. With a curriculum composed of the Christian religion, morals, history, and geography (in the case of primary schools), public instruction thus represents the main imperial efforts at social moralization. This is what he calls the “primacy of reason” (Mattos 2011, 276), that is, a top-down process that comprehends imperial order and civil society. Since he emphasizes a state-centered perspective, which stresses the dependence of civil society on state actions, I propose a slightly different point of view. My focus moves to analyzing the diffuse prescriptions of morality rather than the institution-centered perspective.

As for the problem of social order, Eusébio de Queirós Mattoso Camara, an important imperial authority of the period, stated that the main purpose of educating the people was “to promote the moral emancipation among the peoples, which are guided by the process of enlightened wills in a crusade for civilization and progress” (Camara 1859, 3).

In another report, the same Eusébio de Queirós Camara argued that this “moral emancipation” was the condition for both moral and material improvements (Camara 1856).

This argument is crossed by a double reference: (1) the reflexive position of the present in relation to history composes a regime of historicity (Hartog 2012), that is, a way of relating to the experience of temporality based both on a projective dynamics of modernity and a new horizon of expectation, since the concept of *progress* combined (*bündelte*) the form of expectation with a temporal coefficient of change (*Veränderungskoeffizient*) towards an active transformation of worldly (*weltlich*) occurrences (Koselleck 1979, 362-364); (2) if modernity entails a new awareness of temporality, Eusébio de Queirós’ vision emphasizes a specific content of this consciousness, that is, a moral-oriented action towards future. And here lies the very ideological determination of this view.

This ideological image of temporality suggests what Rancière (2013, 64) defined as a shock between heterogeneous temporalities in the modern world. If the *contemporary* affirms itself as a gap (in this case, the progressive impetus that leaves past experiences behind), the collective motion of civilization and progress is based on the very ambivalence of this progressive march in a former colonial space, which is to say, an attempt to unify the collective experience into a projective effort concerning the suppression of the old colony. This crisscross of the *contemporary* is the key element for the regulative ideal of social modernization in Brazil during the period running from 1850 to the 1860s. Of what is this argument supposed to consist? This idea is based on an ideological assertion concerning the public order: openness to the future, as is suggested by the images of *emancipation* and *progress*, is only conceivable in its interdependence with the constitution of “good society,” which is to say, a moralized social form oriented towards an ordered future.

This moral twist is the conceptual core of the problem. Morality is not merely the prescription of “good customs,” but the management of the urban population and public order. The newspaper *O Cidadão (The Citizen)*, in the same spirit, emphasized the need for “the dissemination of education through social classes to establish public morality.” Education and religion, then, were the instruments for avoiding “criminal facts in society” (“A instrução publica,” July 19, 1868).

An article published by the newspaper *A Patria (The Homeland)* in 1856 stated that “the character of this century is individualism,” adding “the skepticism we have inherited from the last century and a corrupted dialectic” were mainly responsible for the “fury of civil hordes” and for creating “turbulent societies which have no faith in morals.” Against this image of an irrational multitude that could destroy the realizations of “modern civilization,” the text claims the need for “public morality,” which disappears in houses and streets once “virtue is only dependent on public opinion” (“O christianismo,” March 26, 1856).

The Christian religion and its moral system, then, constitute the very core of morality to manage modernity in the streets of nineteenth-century Rio de Janeiro.

Besides religion and the content of morality in urban areas, the practical life required regular conduct based on some codes of moral distinction. It is important to mention here that the structural differentiation between the city and the country is remarkable in this context. José Bernardino Pereira de Almeida (1823, 56) in his foundational work on Brazilian social formation (Leme 2017 [forthcoming]) states that, in contrast to the poorly educated (*pouco iluminados*) inhabitants of the countryside, “in big cities, the variety of objects and civil manners (*trato*) is an excellent school,” because “human activities cultivate reason.”

That is why, for him, processes of education should spread civil manners and morality to the country. The city is conceived as the condition for progress and marks the rise of a new image of social order. Civil manners, based on politeness, religion and morality, promote a moral context to maintain private property, liberty and individual security (*socego*) (Almeida 1823, 58): Almeida’s project, once it was grounded to suppress the *rusticitas* (rude manners and barbarism of countryside) by spreading the enlightened reason of social modernization (cities), constitute the liberal conscience of Brazilian backwardness.

The increasing importance of city in a former colonial area illustrates the autonomization of social modernization in relation to the old countryside (Naxara 2004, 103) – in Portuguese, the backlands or the hinterland (*sertões/interior*). This ideological effort to extract from the old colonial area a new social space is the core of the problem of social modernization in nineteenth-century Brazil. If cities are supposed to promote a dynamic material exchange, the capitalist modernization offers a problematic situation: urban activities grounded in market and larger spheres of sociability could also promote more volubility and insecurity (Williams 2011, 245).

That is why the structure of morality is based on some codes of moral distinction in urban areas: this very problematic perception of modernity shows the impact of social modernization on a former colonial area where, throughout the 1850s and the 1860s, the expansion of capitalist world-system promoted important social changes. In 1850, a newspaper article entitled “The good citizen” summarized this question perfectly:

The so-called good citizen is a well-educated and irreproachable man, a person who offers good examples to society according to regular conduct [...] In short, being a good citizen, besides probity, implies being prudent, affable, and committed to work (“O bom cidadão,” June 18, 1850)

This attempt at regulating public conduct presents what the moral and social duties of a good citizen consists of. The “good society” can be promoted only if the moralization of urban interactions is consonant with customs and politeness. In the same newspaper, which was

published twice a week in Rio de Janeiro by a renowned typographer (Paula Brito), an article entitled “Civility/Politeness” stated that the two words express a need “to treat and to have a conversation with other people in society in an honest way” (“Civildade-Polidez,” August 30, 1850). Actually, this article reproduces a famous French text written by Nicolas Beauzée for the *Universal dictionary of synonyms in the French language*. For Beauzée,

Civility stands to men as public worship does to God, an external and perceptible indication (*testemunho*) of hidden inward feelings. That is why civility is precious: since it affects exterior conduct, civility confesses that benevolence exists within the soul. Politeness adds to civility what devotion adds to public worship: politeness shows a more affectionate humanity, more concerned with others, more careful (Beauzée 1850).

In French, Beauzée uses the expression “*plus recherchée*” (Beauzée 1845, 166), which is translated in the Brazilian publication as “*mais cuidadosa*” (literally, “more careful”). This concept of care is interpreted not only in terms of a refined, well-mannered person, but also in terms of moral responsibility towards others. In this sense, the author argues that “civility is not incompatible with a bad education; politeness, in contrast, implies a good education” (Beauzée 1850). This statement only in part represents a “moral superiority of politeness over civility” (Starobinski 1993).

As social practices, the two concepts could be used as a mask. Beauzée states that civility and politeness can either take the form of expression or imitation. In the first case, as individual expression, the two words express external conduct based on true moral feelings. In the second case, as imitation, civility and politeness represent an attempt at imitating absent virtues. That is why a preoccupation with the education of children (the future citizens) in the cities occurred *pari passu* with the constitution of urban life in nineteenth-century Brazil (Mattos 2011; Narita 2017a).

Many schoolbooks tried to correct this moral gap between civility/morality and their masks. *The treasure of children*, a famous schoolbook written by Pierre Blanchard (originally published in French with the title *Le trésor des enfants*) and translated into Portuguese by Matheus José da Costa, offers a study of social duties. For Blanchard, the education of children must begin as soon as they “feel enough strength to reason on their actions,” because “to wait longer would imply a risk of finding the place occupied by bad principles or some vicious inclination” (Blanchard 1851, VIII).

To the extent that Blanchard based his schoolbook on notions such as morality (a kind of necessity we are under of not doing wrong), virtue (the necessity of doing good gratuitously), and civility (the exterior forms in society), he tries to teach the moral basis of sociability by explaining the importance of values like obedience, respect, affability, religion,

and so on. Blanchard's moral universalism holds that "mankind is one big family" (Blanchard 1851, 51). This argument encompasses the very image of social order: if "man is depraved," the author states that "a restraint should be put upon him," because "only rogues find advantage in overturning the laws" (Blanchard 1851, 59).

Morality, according to Blanchard's humanism, is conditioned by the image of a social life divided into two poles, the *house* and the *streets* (or the *citizens*) (Blanchard 1851, 60). I will return to this point later in this article. Here what interests me most is that, as mediation between private individuals and their public conduct, morality deals with a particular liberal content that "gave autonomy and legitimized aspirations of ordinary men, particularly those skilled in commerce or letters" (Barman 2012). "How can we be sure of tranquility and the possession of our property (*fazenda*)," Blanchard writes, "if we shake off the laws?" (Blanchard 1851, 59).

Public tranquility constitutes the very basis for a social order grounded in moral perceptions of sociability. In this sense, two forms of moral conduct towards society evolve: commerce and property. Blanchard, then, argues as follows: "remember, my children, these two principles are the standard by which we judge all human actions" (Blanchard 1851, 19). These two principles of sociability are supposed to ensure social procedures that guarantee both the material production and the moral reproduction of urban activities.

Blanchard's schoolbook teaches the moral benefits of property to the extent that the author himself echoes the liberal agenda derived from the eighteenth-century bourgeois revolutions. In this case, besides social formation grounded in capital and law (Hardt and Negri 2009, 9), the primacy of private property also means that security and inviolability of singular individuals can be interpreted in light of the moral constitution of society. I argue that the defense of liberal topics such as private property and personal security should be analyzed as a constitutive part of this very image of social order and its class structure (Narita 2008).

For Blanchard, man must be "the master of his reason" to understand "how necessary it is to control the violent passions" (Blanchard 1851, 64). The moral control over sociability thus is based on the "honest man" (*homem de bem*), who offers a form of moral recognition that identifies robbery and urban turbulences as a moral problem. The "scruple of conscience" (Blanchard 1851, 73) constitutes the ideological effort to identify social order with the liberal concerns for private property and personal security.

As expressions of the content of morality, the exterior forms of actions encompass the moral regime of visibility. From this point of view, a book published by Maria Benedita de Oliveira Barbosa in 1853 offers new insights into the relationship between the *house* and the *streets* in Rio de Janeiro. These two poles of sociability in the nineteenth-century Brazilian capital, according to her, suggest that "men must be educated in their home, not only

in public squares, where they are hidden behind the mask of hypocrisy and false exteriorities of moral ornaments” (Barbosa 1853, 62).

At this point, the moral regime of visibility in urban areas moves towards another dimension of sociability. This search for authenticity in urban life points out a dynamic of recognition dealing with the forms of action and their *exteriorities* as *appearances* grounded in moral values. Maria Barbosa (1853, 55) argues that departing from “the sublime basis of religion, the education of man must be necessarily good, and this same man becomes beloved and respected by the whole society.”

If the streets define “by containment and separation interior and exterior” (Holston 1989, 118), this *liminal* space reveals regimes of exhibition that expose, in light of the contrasting domains of modern social life (public/private, interior/exterior, etc.), the ambivalences of public display and moral attention. That is why the *good citizen* is also a *good observer*. The inquiry of *urban* conduct, thus, lies at the heart of this problem.

“To know how to conduct yourselves in society,” Blanchard notes, “observe what the best educated persons do, and imitate those near your own age according to the rank you hold in society” (Blanchard 1851, 200). Besides being guilty of moral faults, the ideal of “good citizen” conduct implies obedience. “The docile child prepares himself for future happiness,” due to the obedience “to his parents, his master, and his superiors” (Blanchard 1851, 181). The exterior conduct and its moral content are entangled in the same image of morality.

This is what Blanchard, properly speaking, calls “urbanity.” If morality encompasses virtues and civility, it also encompasses “urbanity.” This word poses an interesting question to this research: “urbanity” means not merely a mark of urban life, but also a moral interaction based on politeness and civility. “Urbanity” deals not only with the material embodiment in urban areas, but with a kind of *ethos* of living together. In this case, there is an emphasis both on the moral ties among singular individuals and on the gendering of moral rationality in houses and streets.

Jean Baptiste Alban Imbert suggested that, like a germinating seed, the good mother should take care of her “children and their emerging passions” by teaching noble sentiments based on the Christian religion and morality, which obliges individuals to the “social duties as are prescribed by the state of sociability in which we live” (Imbert 1843, 83). It is important to note that the woman is always conceived in moral terms: she is the *good* mother. C. Sergipense argues that “the importance of the woman in the education of children is so remarkable that Rousseau correctly said: men will always be what is pleasing to women” (C. Sergipense 1852).

For him, since the mother guides the child, she educates (*formar*) his heart. “The good or bad inclinations of men,” the author continues, “depend on the first education

he has received from his mother.” This search for the moral origins of actions in society depends on the morality of intentions.

In the measure that morality imposes a set of prescriptions, it articulates the *good* sentiments into affections grounded in social order. Maria Benedita de Oliveira Barbosa (1853, 58–60) believed that “the women should rule the spirit and the heart of children.” In this sense, “the man must be educated (*formado*) since childhood, according to his moral constitution, like the gardener who carefully straightens the stem and branches of flowers and bushes when they want to take a capricious and tortuous direction.”

In addition to this perception, a declaration entitled “On my ideas of moral emancipation of women,” first published in 1852 in the *Ladies’ Journal* (a popular genre of publication in the nineteenth century), states that “we hold that religion is the true knowledge of our duties towards God” (“Declaração...” 1852, 27). Woman must be conceived as “daughter, wife and mother, that is, a being created for social progress.” This idea of emancipation, thus, implies a form of moral recognition that reiterates social roles according to the prescriptions of morality.

As this project of emancipation assumes that the moral education of women is meant to liberate them from vices and miseries, this effort of moralization constitutes the asymmetrical recognition of women within the sphere of civil society and their process of socialization in urban areas (Saffioti 2013, 257). The moral content of the emancipation, in this case, deals with what Maria Mies calls “housewife syndrome” (Mies 1998, 53), that is, the image of motherhood as a privatized arena in which the good woman rules the pure sentiments.

In the *streets* (*Außenwelt*) increasingly dominated by instrumental rationality (*Zweckerationalität*) and by the dissolution of personal worth into exchange-value, the maternal vocation (*Beruf*) integrates the structure of morality into a gender-based socialization of value (*Wertvergesellschaftung*) (Scholz 1992) which encompasses moralized *productive activities* (man as the source of value and social labor) and the privatized arena of *reproduction* of moral tasks grounded in the ideology of recognition.

If woman is conceived in moral terms, Sergipense states that “it is not her mission to spend her time reading novels that ruin the spirit instead of instructing and moralizing” (C. Sergipense 1852). For him, she “should not lean out of the window during the night to see who is walking through the streets.” The education of urban life is also the attempt to educate the ways of seeing. That is why the moral example is so important in this urban *ethos*.

A pedagogy of the ways of seeing

Based on mimetic perception of larger circles of sociability, urban life promotes moralized ways of seeing others' conduct. In nineteenth-century Rio de Janeiro, this pedagogy of urban life is inseparable from the problem of imitation of bad conduct (Narita 2017a). C. Junior states that "a well-educated person is beloved by society, while the rude (*mal criado*) is the most despicable of mankind," because "a bad example corrupts society." In short, persons "badly educated not only ruin society but also whole cities" (C. Junior 1851). The education of the ways of seeing urban conduct points to a new position of the observer.

Besides the material elements of urban scenario, I argue that the unity of moral values deals with the perceptual dislocation of the observer operating within "disjunct and defamiliarized urban spaces" (Crary 1992, 11). Jonathan Crary defines modernization as a movement that uproots the stability of traditional forms, which (in Deleuzo-Guattarian terminology) he calls a continual process of deterritorialization based on a new exchangeability of forms and dynamics of circulation. This "continuous shift" of stimuli (Crary 2001, 49) implies new subjectivities and illustrates a challenge that moral perceptions must face (Narita 2017b, 24).

In nineteenth-century Brazil, this modernization of subjectivity (Crary 2001, 17) emerges amid structural rearrangements of morality in urban scenarios. In this sense, the modernity of the observer lies in the very *ambivalence* of social modernization. The structure of morality offers a prescriptive context to regulate the perceptual autonomy: that is why these moral perceptions of urban life are not merely conditioned by a narrow morality.

Rather, these moral perspectives deal with the disjunctions and problematic scenes challenged by the urban observer in light of the circulation of images/perceptions and the spontaneity of street encounters. In other words, from the 1850s onwards, under large refigurations of social space in Brazil, these modernizing moves shed light on the problem of individual autonomy and the routinization of moral values. The modern urban space challenges the observer's perception of morality, because the city opens up a sequence of discontinuous actions that challenge the possibilities of moral interpretations. The unity of moral values, thus, must face the instability of the multitude. I would like to explore this question in two steps.

On the one hand, the urban areas are seen as a moral arena where individuals should perform actions and justify their conduct according to urbanity and politeness. In this sense, Beauzée states that "a man of the people and a simple peasant can be civil, but only a man of the great world can be polite" (Beauzée 1850). He writes "*un homme du monde*" ("a man of the world"), which is translated in the Brazilian publication as "*um homem do grande mundo*." The emphasis in the expression "*grande mundo*" (literally, "great world"), which may sound like

an Enlightened ideal of reasoning (Pagden 2013), evokes a sphere of interactions larger than the family circle, that is, a kind of sociability only possible in urban centers.

An anonymous series of newspaper articles called “Precepts of education” evokes the visibility and the ways of seeing the good conduct in the “saloons of society” as a pedagogical perception of “the rule over the passions”: in this sense, to “know how to be happy and how to live in society” the individual should know how to justify his actions towards the “great society” (“Preceitos... (II),” September 13, 1850). If “the customs were born from education” (“Preceitos... (III),” September 17, 1850), public reason constitutes processes of education grounded in a social effort to overcome both the turbulence of the streets and the localisms to establish public order within the framework of morality (Mattos 2011, 272).

On the other hand, Joaquim Manoel de Macedo, a prolific Brazilian writer of the period, provides a moral framing on the multitude in his chronicles of urban life in Rio de Janeiro during the 1860s. For him, the problem of the multitude suggests another approach to the problem of the unity of the values of morality. Macedo is far from the prototype of the *flâneur* (which in late nineteenth-century Brazil was illustrated by street chroniclers like João Chagas and João do Rio) and the classical image of *flânerie*, that is, the nineteenth-century stroller on the city streets whose object of inquiry was the crowd and its transitoriness (Buck-Morss 1989, 304).

Macedo was more concerned with sketching a *moral cartography* of urban modernity in the period. His two major works dealing with street chronicles of Rio de Janeiro, *A stroll in the city of Rio de Janeiro* (1863) and *Memories of the Ouvidor Street* (1878), represent an attempt at observing urban life through the lens of a modern moralist.

He was interested in publishing his moral perceptions of modernity to educate social life. The transformations that took place in Passeio Público (a large public park built by the end of the eighteenth century), for example, are presented by Macedo as a moral reorientation of the multitude. In old times, writes the author, “in moonlight nights many families, gallant ladies and young men went happily to Passeio Público; after strolling in the fresh streets and in the elegant terrace, they walked divided in groups of friends.” In short, for him, “the veil of the night did not favor vice, but instead facilitated the holy enjoyments of virtue” (Macedo 2005, 114).

By the 1850s, however, the figure of the multitude implied public disorder that should be faced by the police “to keep order.” The rioters replaced “the old customs of the people” to the extent that they disturbed the urban *ethos* and its substance of morality (Macedo 2005, 115). As a scene for visible signs of modernity in nineteenth-century Rio de Janeiro, this moral cartography offered the very values to be corrected by the processes of education.

“Before the trams, the French *département* at Ouvidor street had already been electrified by the *Alcazar*”, an “unwanted weed which came from France” (Macedo 1878, 183–184): the spectacles at Alcazar Lyrique were promoted by a French group that became the target of Macedo’s moral criticism, because “the *Alcazar*, a theater based on obscene puns and can-can, has corrupted the customs and fanned immorality with the exhibition of scantily clad women” (Macedo 1878, 183).

Macedo’s judgment of moral conduct lies in his very conception of the theater as a moralizing effort to educate the people (a preoccupation shared by many Brazilian writers in the period, like José de Alencar, João Caetano, Antonio Castro Lopes, Machado de Assis, etc.) (Narita 2017b, 24-25). Macedo (1878, 186) states the following:

In theater, we can see the civilization and the moral capacity of the people of a country. Theater is a very serious thing. It is the largest and the most disputed public school of good or bad education of the people.

In newspapers, we can find this same atmosphere of denunciation regarding the problems of morality in night-life: an article signed by Carlos (1860, 124) says that “public opinion has spoken loudly against certain misfortunes that require drastic means for the sake of public morality and families’ honor.” The author argues that the gambling houses are “temples of vice” where “probity disappears among the *lansquenets* and other card games alongside the precepts of education.”

“The lousy fascination with a playing card,” Carlos (1860, 125) continues, is based on “a frenzy and a strange vertigo in which everything perishes.” This moral complaint against money gambling is part of the recognition of labor as a social virtue that could correct urban vices. This point underlies another dimension of the social processes and their pedagogy in urban life: the organization of social labor and its moralization. This resulting structure leads my research to another dimension of the urban experience in nineteenth-century Rio de Janeiro.

Political economy of morality

Before I proceed, it might be helpful to recapitulate an argument about the polarity between the *house* and the *streets* (*citizen*). In Imperial Brazil, this problem extends back to the 1830s and 1840s, with the foundational works on political economy written by Pedro Autran da Matta Albuquerque, José de Silva Lisboa, and Silvestre Pinheiro Ferreira. Albuquerque, an enthusiast of Ferguson and Adam Smith, recognizes that cities were spaces where “many important facts on the moral nature of man” take place (Albuquerque 1844, 98).

For him, cities offer larger spheres of sociability based on the associations of private individuals who debate “subjects concerning the whole society.” In this sense, the processes of education play an important role in the “conservation of tranquility and good order” (Albuquerque 1844, 101), because only the moral control over the social division of labor can provide a common ground of values for urban interactions.

During the 1850s and 1860s, many texts extended this moral perception to emphasize labor and its morality. Joaquim de Paula Souza, for one, defines this perception as a need “to spread knowledge” among individuals “by moralizing them and favoring the production of wealth instead of launching the proletarians into inactivity and laziness” (Souza 1869).

For him, “the people is the dominant idea of the present and the king of the future,” and this condition of civil society (based on the generic “the people”) constitutes the very form of certain actions towards society’s needs through the prism of charity (“the development of civilization increases the principle of charity”). In this sense, Guilherme Bellegarde (1862, 54) proposed a plan to rescue “the workers who had not been touched by the great achievements of modern civilization”, that is, “the losers dragged by the car of progress.”

“The charity that is left only to the generous impulses of heart, despite the sanctity of its intention, can be converted into an incentive to vice and begging.” According to Bellegarde (1862, 55), this situation “affects dignity, because man became accustomed to laziness” and that is why morality and instruction are seen as means to “ennoble these classes” (Bellegarde 1862, 56).

As a condition of civil society in nineteenth-century Brazil, the very emergence of the problem of *the people* marks an important rationality concerning morality in urban spaces. In this case, besides wealth and its management, political economy deals with the urban population and its inner proactivity towards morality. Foucault, in his *genealogy* of modern governmentality (Agamben 2011, 125; Agamben 2009, 83), emphasizes a dynamic articulation of three elements: (1) a normative code grounded in the territorial state (dealing with the problem of the seat of government), (2) a diffuse set of disciplinary techniques (hierarchical and functional distribution of elements), and (3) security apparatuses (*dispositifs*) that manage the circulation within the social space (*milieu*) (Foucault 2004, 22).

Instead of an institution-centered perspective, this Foucauldian insight highlights a set of social practices and techniques. The problematic realm of modernity in Rio de Janeiro is not merely an issue concerning the state and its bureaucracy, but rather a problem of governmentality and its apparatuses of security. This is what Foucault (2004, 44-46) calls the *caesura* in the principle of population. With the emergence of the modern problem of *the people*, a division (*partage*) takes place in the social space: on the one hand, population

is understood chiefly as a normative/regulative principle of government and urban management;¹ on the other hand, the idea of *the people* constitutes the problematic core of moral government.

Strictly speaking, *the people*, this singular subject, illustrates a political determination of social space in modernity. If *the people* is one, this undifferentiated unity (Hardt and Negri 2004, 99) becomes the very object of moral management. In 1863, Quintino Bocaiuva (1863, 67) stated that “the poor will be always poor, the ignorant will be always ignorant, the unbeliever will be always an atheist, and the masses will have no work if we do not get rid of these clandestine societies like the communists, the *carbonari*, and the *comuneros*.”

For him, education, once it was based on religion and its morality, was “the strongest column of this temple called *the people*” (Bocaiuva 1863, 66). *The people* and its problematic core, the poor masses of urban areas in Imperial Brazil, became an object of inquiry and a public order issue due to their ideological ties to the inner asymmetries of imperial society and to the images of the political turbulence in Western Europe.

On the one hand, in the wake of a rich tradition of books on public hygiene since the early 19th century (in Luso-Brazilian thought) with the works of Francisco de Mello Franco, the efforts at regulating public hygiene in urban areas encompass an “ideology of hygiene,” that is, a technical intervention on the social space (against diseases and “immoral” conditions of life within the urban masses) that would become more emphatic from the 1870s onwards (with the works of Luiz Raphael Vieira Souto, Antonio Augusto Ferreira da Silva, João da Matta Machado, etc.), but already in the 1850s and 1860s can be perceived as a technique of governmentality concerning both the risk of a “decrepit population,” as Francisco de Paula Candido (1859) writes, and the social control over the people and poverty (Chalhoub 1996; Narita 2017a; Pimenta 2003; Eugênio 2008).

On the other hand, with the events of 1848 in Paris and the diffusion of modern utopias such as Fourier’s *phalanstères*, for instance, the “imaginary harmony” they proposed was based on a “violent criticism against our civilization” (“Economia política” 1860, 242). In this sense, indolence (*ocio*) and lack of education were the “preliminary of all vices” in relation to the individuals who “have no utility for themselves and for society” (Gabaglia 1859, 10). According to an expression used by senator Antonio Francisco Hollanda Cavalcanti de Albuquerque in a speech to Congress in 1854, “it is in the big cities that there is an alluvium of individuals with no jobs (*officio*) nor utility (*beneficio*)” (Senate 1978, 421).

With *useful* citizens, the principle of utility, in this context, encompasses a double perception. On the one hand, the emergence of political economy in nineteenth-century

¹ In the case of Imperial Brazil, it is worth noting that the emergence of statistic data in official documents by the 1850s illustrates, much more than a refined way of dealing with public management, new apparatuses of modern governmentality.

Brazil illustrates that morality is not only an issue concerning individual conduct, but an attempt at regulating social exchange – which is to say, a form of rule over *people* and *things* within the context of national society (I will return to this point later). In this sense, the very preoccupation with useful citizens points to a *social force* that, with the bourgeois revolutions of the eighteenth century and the capitalist expansion of the nineteenth century, amalgamated capital, state and nation into an interrelated structure (Karatani 2003, 278).

On the other hand, this new idol (*the people*), “one of the great achievements of modernity” (Wallerstein 2011, 11), once it represents the problematic *partage* in the principle of population, reflects both the *grande peur* of the urban mob and the problem of the erratic multitude in a “slave city” like Rio de Janeiro. In the Brazilian Empire, the problem of slavery and the precariousness of freedom in relation to free and freed people (freed blacks) in urban areas can also be analyzed in light of this instability in the principle of population (and its management), since the unpredictability of urban order also denotes the potential network of political strategies concerning riots, rebellions and slave flight (Chalhoub 2012, 156; Campbell 2015; Holloway 1993; Brown 2000; Read 2012). As for the problem of the irrational mob, this new kind of collective consciousness deals not only with the phantasmagoria of the potential spread of public disorders and their images coming from Western Europe, but rather with the very phenomenon of urban circulation.

At this point, the instability of the multitude and the unity of moral values in urban life touch the very dialectical core of modernization. If modernity, in its autonomization, produces what Perry Anderson (1984, 98) calls “cultural and customary debris across the globe”, the very image of a narrow morality is sublated by the inner dynamism of social modernization and is reintegrated into social formation as a problematic realm dealing with capitalist modernity and the management of social space.

As Marshall Berman (1988, 229) puts it, to the extent that the movements and personal encounters in the street emerge as political event (it is not fortuitous the circulation of the fear of 1848 in Brazil), the very instability of the multitude can be conceived according to different positions in the processes of capitalist modernization. If Parisian multitude is situated among the boulevards, *interieurs*, and the dynamic bourgeois modernization under Hausmann, in a peripheral area the modernizing moves demonstrates another condition.

Instead of the Parisian *reine des barricades* (Benjamin 1974, 13) or the deep mystery and enchantment noticed by Cuban writer José Martí (2010, 128-129) in relation to the proletarianized multitude (*turba*) that crosses the Brooklyn Bridge (with towers that look like “elongated Egyptian pyramids”) and crushes the main entrance of the New York station, the multitude in Rio de Janeiro is both a phantasmagoria of the circulation of perceptions of modernity (and the political fear of a Brazilian 1848 in Rio de Janeiro) and a moral

component that must be managed and moralized as *the people*. That is why the structure of morality is also understood as a perception that deals with the specters and the shock of modernization in a peripheral area.

Ambivalence, proactivity, movement: the multitude in motion

The emergence of the urban multitude poses an ambivalence to the problem of the people. If *the people* and its moralization constitute a diffuse set of prescriptions, the image of the multitude implies both an idea of movement (modern dynamism) and a potential disorder in its dynamic. In this section, I would like to discuss the ambivalences in the problem of *the people* understood as a multitude. I argue that there are two interrelated images: (1) the multitude is conceived as an ordered spectacle, that is, a dynamic pole of urban modernity and its circuits; (2) as a social problem, the multitude constitutes the contingency of the people, which is to say, an irrational, unpredictable movement of urban crowds according to what Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri (2004, 140) defined as the “demonic force” that inspires social fear in modernity.

If Berman (1988, 232) is right in stating that peripheral modernity means an effort to nourish itself on “a struggle with mirages and ghosts,” this argument does not imply that peripheral areas are understood as an absence or lack of modernity (as if these mirages had no adherence to social processes). Instead, these very mirages and ghosts reveal both the peripheral condition and the ambivalence of the autonomization of modernization in backward countries.

The very phenomenon of circulation reveals a deep cultural transfer of images and meanings within nineteenth-century capitalist modernity. Alongside the cultural and social impact of the Crystal Palace on Russian writers Dostoyevsky and Chernyshevsky (Berman 1988, 236), the Universal Exposition of 1855 (which took place in Paris), according to one of the most important newspapers in Rio de Janeiro, represents “trust in the future of civilization” due to the “magnificent spectacle offered by fraternal union of nations.” This optimistic openness to the future offers an ordered spectacle of labor and proactivity: the very enchantment with modern movement underlies the image of “the noisy aspect of the multitude that rolls like a human sea and fascinates the spirit.”

In this sense, “the visitor is pushed along by the multitude and is attracted by the noisy admiration” (“Exposição...” 1855). The circulation of these images and perceptions across the public sphere (newspapers, pamphlets, books, etc.) implies that urban infrastructures are not merely a *milieu* for the modern circulation of imaginaries, but rather “embodiments of objective historical forces,” which is to say, they form perceptions on subjects and collective subjectivities (the people, the multitude, the crowd, etc.) “through this

mobilization of affect and the senses of desire, pride, and frustration, feelings which can be deeply political” (Larkin 2013, 333).

The very determination of *the multitude* and its proactivity (social labor) move the problems of morality and poverty to an ideological realm, since the urban multitude and its poor are analyzed as *unluckiers* (a perception that obliterates the social inequalities and their foundations). In this sense, for example, begging is not conceived as an asymmetry derived from social exchanges, property, and the commodity system (that is, from social structures and the inner dynamics of commodity-form in the nineteenth-century capitalist world-system), but as an issue dealing with an abstract “human nature” and its moral constitution based on “laziness, untidiness, passions, and irregularity of conduct” (“Extinção...” 1859, 92). According to this image, “misery is an unavoidable, inherent evil in modern societies, resulting from the progress of civilization” (“Extinção...” 1859, 93). These words were published by a famous journal in Imperial Brazil (*Revista Popular*) to “prevent and suppress” public disorder promoted by the dangerous urban groups, and this is the core of the argument: “more than once, beggars have been the most active instigators of anarchical propaganda and the most dangerous instruments of popular riots” (“Extinção...” 1859, 95). In this sense, if “religion can sweeten human miseries without diminishing the feelings of resignation and social hierarchy, which are so necessary to contain the germs of revolt and hate, (...) a good moral direction can help them to abandon the lazy, vagrant life by encouraging them to love work, order and temperance” (Serres 1860, 115). The structure of morality requires regular conduct to the extent that structural prescriptions intend to manage contingency and volubility in the multitude.

Popular riots, beggars, and anarchical propaganda point to the problem of circulation in urban areas. As Foucault (2004, 23) puts it, since the social space (*milieu*) produces overall effects (*effets de masse*) in urban areas, this very *milieu*, as a mediating structure of modern interactions, poses the problem of circulation. And the conceptual figure of the multitude emerges in this context.

In nineteenth-century Rio de Janeiro, for instance, the multitude could evoke the social memories of the urban rebellion that took place in the São Pedro de Alcantara Theater in 1831 (Basile 2007). According to Manuel Duarte Moreira de Azevedo (1873, 350-352) in his pioneer study on the urban riot of the 1830s, in a “time of agitation”, whereas *the people* was inclined towards order and labor, the multitude mobilized its “burning passions.” This contrast between *the people* and the multitude tries to capture the movement suggested by the idea of multitude and its irrational circulation in modernity.

However, this very perception of movement can produce moral imagery of labor based on an ordered production of modernity. This ethics of labor play an important role in the structure of morality in this scenario. As Channing (1839, 16) puts it in a well-known

book of the period (a work widely read by the Brazilian elite), “the exaltation of talent, as it is called, above virtue and religion, is the curse of the age.” Intellectual culture, in this sense, consists not only in accumulating technical skills, but in connecting the mechanical tasks with the moral foundations of society.

The mimetic dynamics of seeing public conduct imply a moral exercise based on the imitation of the conduct that is “sanctioned by our own deliberate judgment” to “keep the level of those we live with, to repeat their words, and dress our minds as well as bodies after their fashion” (Channing 1839, 31). The conceptual figure of the multitude and its urban scenario represents a danger for public order since the “great danger is not from the grossly wicked around us, but from the worldly, unreflecting multitude, who are borne along as a stream by foreign impulse” (Channing 1839, 32). The problem of the multitude is understood in a moral framework that encompasses certain conditions for the moral management of both the production and the reproduction of society.

So, it comes as no surprise that these perceptions, widespread in urban areas of the Brazilian Empire, connect the moral valorization of labor to the aims of an ordered society. In 1860, the editor Candido Batista de Oliveira and the Universal Typography of Laemmert, a publishing house in Rio de Janeiro, published an anonymous article which stated that “the producer can only develop his activities and obtain forces through instruction and education.”

“To the extent that education modifies and rules the affections and the feelings,” the main purpose of the processes of education consists in the cultivation of “good moral habits, which are so necessary to economic life”: in this sense, “education is the school of the will” (“Economia política...” 1860, 226). The intimate relationship between morality and wealth (“Economia política...” 1860, 232) points to an important dimension of urban proactivity. In a broader sense, this idea touches the very perception of the *economy* understood not only as a form of commodity exchange and wealth management, but also as a form of rule over *people* and *things*.

This argument can be understood as a double structure: (1) in the moral determination of labor power, education (*Bildung/Erziehung*) and instruction, besides providing technical skills in a given branch of social labor (Marx 2008, 186), constitute important mechanisms required for production and reproduction of social labor; (2) social rationalization, once it is grounded in *useful* citizens, deals with urban proactivity through the moral lenses of political economy understood as a *regular* exchange of *human* activity (*Tätigkeit*) (Marx 1968, 451). Social normativity deals not only with the structural prescriptions over social conduct, but rather with the production of urban subjectivities.

Morality, in this sense, constitutes a diffuse set of prescriptions that provides a moral grammar for material exchange in civil society: if the modern “social revolutions” show a

“deep perturbation in spirits,” the public disorder is due to the “odious passions” that stain “the dignity of individuals” (“Economia política...” 1860, 227). This form of moral recognition connects two sides of the structure of morality: the moral value of labor and the structural elements of production and reproduction of a moralized urban life.

Especially in the education of children, this structure of morality converts the processes of education into a question of public order through the achievement of political attempts at creating primary and secondary school legislation in the Empire, which came into being with the reform initiated by Minister Couto Ferraz in public instruction in Rio de Janeiro (Ferraz 1854, 55).

From the 1850s and the 1860s onwards, in Rio de Janeiro, institutions devoted to instruction and to the introduction of poor children into the world of labor flourished alongside the regulation of public instruction with the establishment of asylums, charitable institutions, and technical and agricultural schools, which provided new conditions for the process of proletarianization of urban workers (Hardman 2005; Narita 2017a).

These efforts have been studied for their role in organizing a school-based curriculum (grounded in morality, religion, letters, arithmetic, etc.) and in promoting organizational trends in relation to public instruction in Brazil (chiefly, in Rio de Janeiro). Instead of this institutional analysis, I would like to propose a slightly different view: I argue that reform represents not only an institutionally-based action, but a decisive turning point in the preoccupation of cultural elites to manage public order in urban life through the social problem of poor children and the moralization of social labor. As a form of governmentality, in this sense, the structure of morality underlies the material production/reproduction of urban interactions and the institutional dissemination of urban practices.

In the wake of Couto Ferraz’s reform, the new infrastructure and its institutions devoted to the pedagogy of urban life were composed by a set of regulatory parameters (technical skills, statistical data, bureaucratic procedures, etc.) and agents (inspectors, school managers, etc.) dealing with diffuse mechanisms that articulated the imperial state into the structuration of national society (Gondra and Schueler 2008). Regarding the exhibition of conduct and its moralization in urban space, the reform was also concerned with hygienic prescriptions (clothing, social appearance, vaccines, etc.) in relation to the moralized childhood in the streets. The governmentality of population, as a rationality concerning techniques over people and things in urban areas, implies a network of urban infrastructure (companies, asylums, arsenal, workshop, schools for machine operators, etc.) devoted both to regulate manual labor and to educate poor children *through* labor (Ferraz 1854, 57).

The Imperial Institute for Blind Children created by Minister Couto Ferraz in 1854, whose main objective was to offer moral education, instruction and professional skills to blind children (especially poor children), was an important element in this institutional

scenario. By the end of the 1860s, in the same spirit, the Imperial Institute of Agriculture and its asylum were concerned with instruction and education of poor children to provide moralization through labor (mainly expertise to fix machines and manual activities – *offícios mechanicos*, in Portuguese) and religion (Ferraz 1870, 21-22).

This regulation of material life (Otter 2007), as a *moral economy* of modernity, interlaces the system of objects and things with the moralization of the people. In this sense, morality, charity, philanthropy, labor and public order are interwoven to moralize the people and the division of labor in social activities (Cunha 2005). Rufino Augusto de Almeida (1875) summarizes this long experience in Rio de Janeiro with poor children who were forced to beg or wander the city's streets with these words: “in big cities there is many children that, once devoted to a life of misery, are thrown into vice and depravation; they become malicious men, that is, dangerous beings for society.” Only education could give back to society “moralized men” and *citizens* devoted to “honest labor.”

In light of this image, the ideological twist exposed by Eusébio de Queirós Mattoso Camara (1859) at the beginning of this article makes sense: the crusade for civilization and progress, this optimistic openness to the future, should be understood as an emancipation project ruled by the structure of morality as a managed form of modernity in urban areas. Besides the *kitsch* and the commonplace suggested by political expressions such as *progress* and *civilization* in the nineteenth century, this very belief, once it was grounded in the moral realization of *man* and *citizen*, constituted the problematic core of modernity in Imperial Brazil — a kind of *naïf* humanism, as it were.

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