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Richard Miskolci and Pedro Paulo Gomes Pereira's article highlights important points in the fields of both education and health when considering Brazil's current political scenario. The categories that the text discusses help us to understand today's difficult environment in which political struggles demand ever more complex elements for reflection.

The authors' perceptions regarding the political regressions of recent years around what they call "anti-egalitarian agendas" not only improves our analytical lexicon; it allows us to follow the steps through which the complex landscape defined by attacks against the rights secured by feminist, LGBTI+, Black, and indigenous rights movements form part of an intricate network of elements that threaten the social relations involved in health and education.

The article presents a trajectory that brings a sequence of events to the discussion relating to so-called "gender ideology," the problematics of abortion, egalitarian civil unions, and ethnic-racial relations, within the context of the defense of neoliberal, market-based agendas. Although the authors do not use this final element as an explicit analytical key, we

can see, throughout the text, a skillful presentation of the ambience that demands an articulated analysis among diverse axes of oppression brought into play by the actions of anti-egalitarian groups, and that favors the use of intersectional tools of interpretation and analysis<sup>1</sup>.

The article's analyses draw a portrait showing that anti-egalitarian movements – even as they act on a number of different fronts – circulate around a common moral grammar, promoting actions and discourses that weaken the precarious but important conquests of social rights for populations that have suffered and continue to suffer histories of violence and discrimination for not “adjusting” to norms founded on hegemonic ideas of societal projects. Thus, the article presents the issue of the power to determine who has rights as something to be considered through intersectional keys, leading to the discovery of the fragile maintenance of the universality of these rights.

Therefore, we can observe the construction of a moral agenda serving a political orientation that is inserted, first and foremost, into the political dispute for the power of deciding the existence and extension of rights that have a powerful impact on the functioning of health and education policies.

In consonance with the article, I will note that this moral grammar inserts itself within the intensive movement of global sectors of right-wing thought and policy. These sectors, which have radical tendencies, unite diverse political issues against a common virtual enemy: namely, “communists.” Much of the moral panic that these sectors produce derives from the premise that countless ills of contemporary social experiences are provoked by communism or by Marxism, and that these ideologies must be combated on economic, political, and moral fronts<sup>2</sup>.

Though analysts of this theoretical stripe consider “cultural Marxism” to be, effectively, a conspiracy theory, both it and one of its consequences – namely, accusations of ideological indoctrination – are important parts of the political strategies of this radical right wing which, in recent years, has gained strength in spaces of political power.

One important dimension of these political strategies is the attack on science as a product of ideology, supposedly used to defend vulnerable parts of the population, such as women, LGBTI+, Black, and indigenous people. If science itself is understood to be an ideological weapon used by a left wing that installs itself in universities, it, too, must be fought. Within this combat, we see studies of racial relations converted into an intellectual racism that separates the population along racial lines, just as we see studies of gender converted into gender ideology. And all public policy based on these studies becomes suspect and, usually, rejected.

The defense of a neutral science on which public policies can be based obscures the fact that neutrality itself is the affirmation of a political position that normally favors the status quo. Thus, instead of science without ideology, what we see in these cases is the affirmation of an ideology that hides behind the pretext of radical neutrality or objectivity. This also occurs in the context of education, in which *Escola sem Partido* (Schools Without [Political] Parties) – discussed in the article – is inserted.

Brazil's current Minister of Education, Ricardo Vélez Rodríguez, recently proclaimed that “universities ought to be reserved for an intellectual elite, which is not the same as [the country's] economic elite<sup>3</sup>,” in the same context in which critiques of “gender ideology” make clear the relationship between what this sector of the right



wing understands as elite universities and confronting this brand of cultural Marxism that it identifies as gender ideology. The ideals of the heteronormative family (confused with and generalized as any and all forms of heterosexual families), Christian values, and an exacerbated nationalism are also among this same movement's "brands." One curious contradiction is that these nationalist models always invoke the experiences of other countries – especially the United States, the United Kingdom, and Germany – as parameters for their affirmations. Nevertheless, these ideologies hold that even the most precarious advances of human rights in these countries ought not serve as examples to be followed.

Although I am not sure that “these groups have our sexual and reproduction rights as their most visible targets” (p. 5), I see these rights as having been among those most under attack within a complex plot that articulates this moral grammar. It does so in such a way that people who are not white, heterosexual, or Christian; who do not belong to middle or upper economic classes; who are women (both trans\* and cisgender); or who are not residents of major urban centers have had their lives filled with hate, violence, and difficult access to goods and to fundamental rights.

Following bell hooks' arguments<sup>4</sup>, we can perceive this anti-egalitarian agenda as a response of the structure that she calls “the capitalist patriarchy of white supremacy”<sup>4</sup> (p. 7) – which, we would add, is also heterosexist, cisgenderist, ableist, colonialist, and Christian-centric – when faced with the supposed threat that this organized dimension of Brazilian society (which also forms part of the international context) perceives as advances of human rights agendas. It forms a sort of counter-resistance to the contexts of strengthening social movements that push for equality along the lines of gender, sexuality, race, and class.

Curiously, anti-egalitarian movements claim a universality that they contrast to the universality of human rights. Discourses like that of meritocracy appeal to a universality of abilities, obscuring social obstacles caused by unequal opportunities for subjects who find themselves outside a given hegemonic social norm, whether based on race, gender, sexuality, or another factor.

Another dimension that enters into tension with the universality claimed by anti-egalitarian movements is linked to a sort of universal morality that forms the basis for discourses of neutrality, especially in the context of schools. Many of the people who support projects like *Escola sem Partido* also defend a return to Brazil's dictatorship-era Moral and Civil Education program (EMC) without fully explaining what morals they intend to impart. Once again, they evoke an ideal of the family to sustain their arguments.

One example of this proximity between moral education in schools and *Escola sem Partido* – based on the ideal of a family – is the proposal set forth by Dayane Pimentel, a federal congresswoman from the state of Bahia who represents Brazil's ruling far-right Liberal Social Party (PSL). Pimentel, an activist for *Escola sem Partido*<sup>(b)</sup>, proposed, as her first legal act before Brazil's congress, a project to make EMC a part of elementary school curricula throughout Brazil<sup>(c)</sup>.

Anti-egalitarian agendas seem to form part of a necropolitical project in relation to parts of society that experience racism, sexism, discrimination against LGBTI+ people, and classism, especially on an institutional level. This politics of death<sup>5</sup>, which exposes people to risks and increases their vulnerability, crosses through those people who

<sup>(b)</sup> To see the congresswoman's speech regarding the project, go to <https://youtu.be/F3foxQq49wk>.

<sup>(c)</sup> Verify the legal Project at <https://www.camara.leg.br/proposicoesWeb/fichadetramitacao?idProposicao=2191278>.

are subject to these destructive social forces. Education and health are fundamental platforms for the actions of the forces of necropolitics. Public policies serve as tools for executing necro-power, which, even when it does not exterminate physical bodies, creates possibilities by which people may be “[...] subject to living conditions that confers upon them the status of the ‘living dead’”<sup>5</sup> (p. 40).

It is preeminently necessary that we have tools to understand this complex phenomenon of the ascension of radical right-wing forces, forces that unite their economic agenda with moral and political demands that are extremely harmful to human rights. This is an important step so that humanities and social sciences may be attentive to recent transformations across the political spectrum, and so that they might use the most precise categories possible so as to understand and search for strategies to intervene in this process.

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