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# The neoconservative aspect of the BNCC and "gender ideology": Implications for the strengthening of LGBTQIA+phobia in Brazilian schools

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## ABSTRACT

This article aims to promote theoretical reflections on the influences of the neoconservative ideological current on curricular decisions, and its implications for the increase of LGBTQIA+ in schools. The writing of the text was based on the theoretical bibliographic review as a research methodology. It was concluded that LGBTQIA+ phobia is intensified in school environments from neoconservative and neoliberal influences on school curricula, as in the case of the BNCC, which has caused serious consequences in the experiences of LGBTQIA+ students. In the end, it was understood that neoconservative precepts are aligned with neoliberalism, repressing LGBTQIA+ people by having a univocal model of being and power centered on heterosexual normalization.

**Keywords:** Neoconservatism, Gender Ideology, School, LGBTQIA+Phobia.

## INTRODUCTION

In Education, diversity appears in educational policies under two primaries: absence and discipline. Alcântara (2015) says that, from the perspective of education, the "other" is treated in official provisions "from a generic conception, often only as a matter of the order of law, without contemplating processes of subjectivation and identity". In this sense, talking about diversity in education is opening opportunities for equality among people. On the other hand, "we are immersed in a process of normalization and alienation, which is often masked as progress and development, as

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progress by reason, as if the ultimate end of this process were a better life for all" (Alcântara, 2015, p. 65).

Talking about sexual diversity and education is always a great challenge, due to the false discourse of acceptance of the "other" in school, which has always excluded, marginalized and made these individuals non-existent. On the other hand, social movements fight for the acceptance of sexualities that deviate from the heterosexual model and seek access and permanence in schools, understood in this theoretical framework as an excluding and normalizing environment.

Louro (2000) says that when it comes to sexuality and education, school environments are understood as an institution for the education of bodies. According to the author, regarding these institutions, they have "to do with the ways in which we construct our social identities, especially our gender and sexual identity" (Louro, 2000, p.11). It is through educational processes that power structures are established, because the discourse of normality comes from the inside out of these institutions. Therefore, it is in school that one shapes how bodies should behave, as well as how one learns to be "real men and women" (Louro, 2000).

This type of discourse has been gaining strength in Brazil with the insertion of the extreme right, which, under conservative precepts, values the preservation of heteronormativity, in addition to the withdrawal of discussions about sexualities in formative spaces. In view of this scenario, it can be inferred that diversities are categorized by the colonialist logic, recovered by neoliberal and neoconservative variables in Brazilian education, which arrive in an attempt to perpetuate the exclusion of sexual diversity from educational environments, intensifying the process of LGBTQIA+phobia in the country.

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Discussing sexual diversity and education is always a great challenge due to the false discourse of acceptance of the "other" in school, which often excludes, marginalizes and makes these individuals invisible. On the other hand, social movements fight for the acceptance of sexualities that deviate from the heterosexual model and seek access to and permanence in schools, which are understood, in this theoretical framework, as excluding and normalizing environments.

Louro (2000) argues that, when it comes to sexuality and education, school environments are seen as institutions for the education of bodies. According to the author, these institutions are related to the ways in which we construct our social identities, especially our gender identity and sexuality (Louro, 2000, p. 11). Through educational processes, power structures are established, as the discourse of normality is transmitted from these institutions to society. Thus, it is in school that the behavior of bodies is shaped, in addition to learning to be "real men and women" (Louro, 2000).

This type of discourse has gained strength in Brazil with the rise of the far right, which, under conservative precepts, values the preservation of heteronormativity and the removal of discussions about sexualities from educational spaces. In this scenario, diversities come to be categorized by the colonialist logic, recovered by neoliberal and neoconservative variables in Brazilian education, which seek to perpetuate the exclusion of sexual diversity from educational environments and intensify the process of LGBTQIA+phobia in the country.

Themes related to sexuality, racism and other issues are seen as radical and have escaped from what conservatism values as "the search for a 'return' to a better standard of quality, a revival of the 'Western tradition', patriotism and conservative variants of character education" (Apple, 2003, p. 57). This conservative current tries to implant repression in social discourse, which they call the "guarantee of order", and the functioning of institutions with characteristics based on tradition and constituted authority.

Basically, what happens is a denial of the processes of rupture with the basic social institutions that sustain capitalism, hence the inconsequential attachment to the family, the church and the hierarchical social order, for example. From this perspective, those who deviate from these hegemonic social standards and institutions are seen as divergent and, therefore, should be repressed for threatening order, morals and good customs. According to Scruton (1994), everything that deviates from traditional values and tends to generate change must be excluded. For conservatives, "change is a threat to identity, and every change is a symbol of extinction" (Scruton, 1994, p. 18). For this group, what must be maintained are the traditional values that encompass institutions, social hierarchy, family standards and others. In view of this, the following question arises: how do the precepts of conservatism affect curricular decisions, as in the BNCC, and what are the effects on the promotion of LGBTQIA+phobia?

Dinis (2011) points out that the absence of this debate in the curricula strengthens the conception that "the school should only discuss universal themes, with the norm of heterosexuality being conceived as natural" (Dinis, 2011, p. 47). In this sense, this article aims to theoretically analyze the effects of neoconservatism on curricular decisions and its implications for the strengthening of LGBTQIA+phobia in school spaces.

## METHODOLOGY

To analyze the Corpus of this research, we listed bibliographic data (Tozoni Reis, 2009) with the purpose of improving and updating knowledge, through a scientific investigation on issues involving the debate on conservatism and its effects on curricular decisions that imply the strengthening of LGBTQIA+ phobia in school environments.

This theoretical investigation is the result of a master's dissertation funded by CAPES in the Graduate Program in Education at the Federal University of Amapá. The researchers are members of the Decolonial Studies Group chaired by Dr. Alexandre Pereira. It is worth mentioning that the assertions we present in this research do not depend on ethnicity, political position, social pyramid or ideology, we are based on human rights and the defense of human life and equality.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

"GENDER IDEOLOGY" AS A PROCESS OF RECONFIGURATION OF SCHOOLS

Brazilian society is based on ideological currents in which sexual rights are subject to bourgeois regulation after capitalism "began to reshape the whole of society, it incubated new bourgeois norms and modes of regulation, including gender binarism and heteronormativity sanctioned by the State" (Arruza, Bhattacharya, Fraser, 2019, p. 52). In this vein, Biondi (2017) says that the need to regulate the capitalist mode lies in the effort to build a society in its image and likeness, submitting it to its essential conditionings, such as the accumulation of capital, economic mechanism, and others.

In this relationship of ideological duality, the result is the precariousness of social life, especially of LGBTQIA+ groups, which has always been marked by abysses of inequalities, and today in an obscure way has been regulated by sexuality, which is nothing more than an element of production of inequalities at the service of capital. The strengthening of these inequalities has increasingly strengthened moral principles and the exaltation of the traditional family, as "capitalist moral austerity is not compatible with a sexual life that, once disconnected from procreative purposes, is not part of the effort to expand the reproduction of the workforce" (Biondi, 2017, p.146).

Thus, the preservation of traditional families is one of the foundations of this ideological matrix of power, For Biondi (2017):

> It is no wonder that the discourse of praising the traditional family, despite all the social transformations of the twentieth century, enjoys a captive place in the public debate. In addition, in the first opportunities, capital highlights the paradigms of gender, as if reconstituting what would be, for it, the natural order of things. (Biondi, 2017, p.146).

The rescue of values and the natural order of things appears when the articulations are lost in the false idea of sexual freedom, which makes the groups that resisted lose political strength and

naturally accept reforms in society, which increasingly strengthen heterosexual superiority over other sexualities.

In this sense, according to Junqueira (2019), between the mid-1990s and the early 2000s, the expression "gender ideology" emerged, defended by the authors as a Catholic invention to establish heterosexuality as the center of their anthropology and doctrine, producing a theology in which it is based on attacks against cultural relativism, to feminism and sexual freedom, which encompasses sexual diversity in its entirety.

As a result, discussions of gender equality, feminism, and sexuality are eliminated because they are seen as "a single, indistinct threat of subversion of family arrangements that are seen, at the same time, as natural, of divine origin, and indispensable to the reproduction of social life" (Miguel, 2016, p.597). Also for the author, these groups gained strength in Brazil from 1990 onwards due to the high effort of evangelical churches in favor of the election of their pastors and religious leaders who began to compose the "evangelical bench" which, especially when it was strengthened, began to become great opponents of issues that encompass diversity in general, such as:

> Inclusive understandings of the family entity and policies to combat homophobia, among other topics, fundamentalist parliamentarians ally themselves with different conservative forces in Congress, such as landowners and gun advocates, in a joint action that strengthens everyone. (Miguel, 2016, p.593)

These political alliances began to generate a huge common agenda of self-strengthening and that insert "some of their spokespersons in the universities, the front created with the other sectors of the right leads to such issues being left aside or accepted in their most conservative register in the public debate" (Miguel, 2016, p.594). In view of this, the conservative discourse gained visibility and parliamentary expression, accusing schools of what was commonly disseminated as "ideological indoctrination", and with it, the emergence of a large articulated movement, among the various religious groups in the most diverse institutions, aiming to propose measures to prevent teachers, during teaching, from talking about topics related to gender and sexuality.

From this perspective, teachers began to be labeled as "enemies of the family" who "would seek to confuse children, forcing, for example, boys to wear skirts and play with dolls, while girls would be instigated to get rid of their natural propensity to take care of others" (Junqueira, 2019, p.168). These constant attacks against education have been spreading in social discourse through fundamentalist and conservative religious groups. Among the statements is that teachers were responsible for "usurping parents' protagonism in the moral education of their children to indoctrinate them with ideas contrary to the convictions and values of the family" (Junqueira, 2019, p.168). As a result, teachers are attacked in the exercise of teaching, taxed as encouraging the

"eroticization of children", through advertisements in the media and in government programs of neoconservative and neoliberal politicians.

As a result, the invention of gender ideology gained strength and parliamentary representativeness, which directly contributes to the exclusion of sexual and gender diversity in training curricula, in which students, especially children, fail to understand social problems such as LGBTQIA+ phobia and gender violence, and as a consequence of this, the naturalization of compulsory heterosexuality fostered, Often through the discourses of the parents themselves, it has potentiated processes of subordination, due to the withdrawal of discussions of gender and sexuality from schools.

## THE PLAN FOR THE STANDARDIZATION OF TEACHING BY THE BNCC AND THE EXCLUSION OF THE THEME OF SEXUAL DIVERSITY IN EDUCATION

In Brazil, the implementation of the National Common Curriculum Base (BNCC) was a source of great joy on the part of the business community. To the detriment of this, Cassio (2019), in his text entitled There is life outside the BNCC, reports that the slogan "Education is the Base" was used. In this discussion, the author also states that, in the press, consultants linked to foundations and business institutes began to predict the future of education in the country through the BNCC. This future of education, in which there was great celebration by the business community, is pointed out by Fortes (2022, p. 6) as a range of "advantages from a neoliberal point of view", due to its foundation being linked to competencies and skills that must be awakened in students.

Thus, Fortes (2022) continues the debate by pointing to the BNCC as a strategy in which "the school creates subjects able to compete globally, to adapt to demands that are constantly changing, who are always motivated to learn new techniques, behaviors, skills" (Fortes, 2022, p. 6). It is understood that this "new education" aims at all costs to train individuals for the global market, within the logic of competitiveness, combining economic and educational objectives.

Laval (2004, p. 116) states that:

> [...] The great trend of the period is to put national educational systems in more direct competition, in a global market. This development encourages the application of the dogmas of free trade to the educational domain and stimulates the utopia of a vast global cross-border and post-national educational network.

In this sense, it is understood that the idea of common national curricular bases brings several advantages due to the ease of control of education throughout the country. To support this idea, Fortes (2022) points out that one of the main advantages for the Brazilian neoconservative and neoliberal system is the "opportunity to govern, from a distance, classrooms throughout the country, limiting teacher autonomy and enabling large-scale assessments" (Fortes, 2022, p. 6).

From this perspective, Luiz Carlos de Freitas points out that this "common national base" has in its essence ideologies that carry interests based on the "worldview that each of the disputing sides has about the formative role of the school" (Freitas, 2014, p. 1.104). In the face of this ideological dispute over the formative role of the school, the right to education comes to be seen as the "right to learn", which brings in its main characteristic the reduction of broad education.

In this way, the formation given by these reformulations is based on the needs of the productive processes, in which the capitalist system needs to remain intact. Cassio (2019) reveals that, for the implementation of this plan, these ideologies destroy the rights conquered under years of struggles that link the word education to terms such as public, free, quality, socially differentiated, secular, plural, inclusive and for all, which are no longer put into practice.

In view of the expansion of these ideologies, curricular decisions were designed to maintain political control of the school apparatus, which began to be configured similarly to a "company" that was strengthened through a common national curricular base (BNCC) and by the action of movements such as the "school movement without party" and "gender ideology", which are defended by politicians who are part of the junction of neoconservative values, neoliberals. To reinforce this statement, Cara (2019, p. 89) points out that the BNCC is "the first educational document that submits to the pressures of the School without Party movement".

It is understood that the strengthening of conservative discourses regulated by neoliberal policies on education has removed agendas on sexual diversity from schools, and as a consequence, the number of actions that generate "the affirmation of heterosexuality through the repudiation of homosexuality, attributing to this experience an unhealthy character or, at least, a condition of development inferior to heterosexuality" (Rios, 2011, p. 37).

In this sense, schools become an instrument for the reproduction of neoconservative discourses, which try to dehumanize bodies that do not align with the heterosexual standard. Through these practices, the "school is configured as a place of oppression, discrimination and prejudice, which has in itself and in its surroundings a worrying picture of violence to which LGBT young people and adults are subjected" (Junqueira, 2009, p. 15).

Apple (2003) and Freitas (2018) explain that this movement reflects directly on school environments, as a result of decisions that are made and regulated by educational reforms and executed through common national bases that exclude themes on gender, sexualities, race and ethnicity, through competencies and skills that provide greater political control, in conjunction with the action of movements such as the "School without Party". In the words of Freitas (2018):

> Education is being hijacked by the business community to meet its objectives of ideological dispute. Education, seen as a "service" that is acquired, and no longer as a right, must be removed from the State, which justifies its privatization. From an ideological point of view,

privatization also provides greater political control of the school apparatus, now seen as a "company", combined with the standardization promoted by the common national curricular bases and the action of the "school without party" movement, the latter, a political arm of the "new" right in the school (FREITAS, 2018, p. 29).

In this sense, the school ceases to be democratic and becomes an environment of political and ideological control. With this, rescuing Miguel's (2016) conceptions, schools stop discussing issues such as sexuality, as this is understood as a communist theme that wants to transform students into homosexuals. For this reason, the new right, based on moral values and political powers, regulates a standardizing curriculum that leads the subject not to think critically about social problems.

In this logic, Louro (1997) draws attention to these reconfigurations in schools and to the fact that the school is one of the environments that most controls sexuality and bodies, to the extent that the school body and the curricula are given as legitimizing the subjects. Therefore, in this social conjuncture, schools begin to legitimize who should be framed in the norm and who should be on the sidelines, due to the removal of criticality and discussions about sexual diversity, which has pointed to increasing numbers of attacks against LGBTs, giving a focus to school environments, which should be deepened in the next topic of this discussion.

LGBTQIA+PHOBIA EXPRESSED IN SCHOOL ENVIRONMENTS

Contemporary Brazilian education has experienced major transformations through which the rights for an education based on diversity lose their debates in school spaces, causing a diversity of violence against students who flee from the norms of religion, sexuality, gender, race and ethnicity, which the dominant groups self-declare as normative. From this perspective, several types of prejudice arise, such as religious intolerance, racism, xenophobia and LGBTQIA+phobia, which is the main focus of this discussion.

In this sense, Ventimiglia and Menezes (2020) analyze the aversion to LGBTQIA+ people as a violence that has at its core the existence of a univocal and normative sexuality, which presents with it ways of being and power that are linked to patriarchy. This standardization of what is understood as "normal" creates the binarisms that mark the roles defined for gender and sexuality.

Therefore, it is perceived that in this search for a return to the past based on moral values based on the "revival" of a past in which people knew their places and social roles were closely linked to patriarchy, sexism and binarism, LGBTQIA+ subjects are persecuted for being deviant from the standards established in society over the centuries. Also for the author, he states that LGBTQIA+ phobia "is legitimized by a culture that condemns any non-heterosexual practices or behaviors" (Ventimiglia; Menezes, 2020, p. 47). In this way, within a culture marked by machismo,

binarism and sexism, all sexual orientations and gender identities different from this context represent an affront to masculinity and family standards, subsidized by neoconservative moralism.

Ventimiglia and Menezes (2020) draw attention to the fact that, in Brazil, the violation of the human rights of the LGBTQIA+ population is characterized as a pattern that encompasses an immensity of abuses, discrimination, and other violence. In this sense, he explains that the violence suffered by LGBTQIA+ people is carried out in various instances of these people's lives, from the lack of employment and education opportunities to the denial of their citizenship.

Within the social configuration based on conservative discourses, which gained strength in Brazil with the support of neo-Pentecostal churches and representatives in the legislature with common interests, bringing this standardization to schools is like a plan to "protect traditional families". These strategies have caused great contributions to the persecution of LGBT people in schools due to the use of discourses that affirm heterosexual superiority in relation to other sexualities.

Rosa (2016), in her doctoral thesis, presents a process of "schooling" oppressive processes against LGBTs. He states that this process is characterized by:

> [...] means of nicknames, jokes, mockery and profanity that aims at the discriminatory practice of these subjects, and, as the school does little or nothing in relation to these practices, the statements are strengthened and result once again in exclusion, school dropout, suicide and different forms of violence (Rosa, 2016, p. 211).

By analyzing the paths taken in this discussion, it is possible to point out the new political and social configurations that reverberate in society, and through them the school becomes a space for legitimizing what the new right proposes as a doctrinal ideology: the preservation of customs and the annihilation of deviants.

From this perspective, schools begin to reflect norms of contemporary society, which regulate subjects to follow patterns of sexuality control, and this is intrinsically connected to visions of compulsory heterosexuality that transform the school into an environment of surveillance over the deviant bodies of the social configuration allianced between neoconservatives and neoliberals. In this sense, the discussions of the previous topics are reaffirmed, in which it can be understood that LGBTQIA+ phobia in contemporary times is directly linked to values, mechanisms of exclusion, power relations, hierarchical structures, belief systems and standards that naturalize only heterosexuality in the social and school context.

In this sense, in order to maintain a normative discourse around sexuality, there is a need to destabilize LGBT subjects in educational spaces. This destabilization is strengthened in precepts in which LGBT'S present themselves "outside the sexist standards established by society and behave in a way that differs from what is considered typical for the behaviors of girls and boys" (Ventimiglia;

Menezes 2020, p. 50). These actions in educational spaces generate great effects on the lives of LGBTQIA+ students, due to the fact that schools are absent from measures to combat these practices in their environment, thus strengthening the naturalization of LGBTQIA+phobia.

Thus, the process of transformation of Brazilian education, it is understood that the absence of discussion of LGBTQIA+phobia in school spaces has come from neoconservative interests that use morality and religious precepts to attack sexual diversity and, in the same proportion, remove discussions on the themes from schools. In this vein, the gain in political strength and the alignment with neoliberalism were major contributors to the exclusion of students' critical thinking in relation to the acceptance of sexual diversity in the social and school spheres.

Therefore, it is perceived that the ideological alliances around education have standardized the discussions, the evaluation mechanisms and the curricula, as a support for the recovery of control of what is discussed in schools. And as a consequence of this, thousands of LGBT people have been victims of violence every day inside and outside schools, due to the neutrality of these schools in relation to the problems that affect them. Thus, education based on neutrality, free from discussions of sexual diversity and regulated by common national curricular bases, is the perfect scenario for strengthening the dominant ideology that propagates various discriminations, such as LGBTQIA+phobia.

## FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

We understand that for the effectiveness of the principles of these reactionary-conservative ideologies in the educational sphere, the school began to be reconfigured within the business logic that neoliberalism brought, this common agenda began to control the curriculum through ideologies that remove education and schools from the secular process, in which diversities come to be seen as deviant from the hegemonic process. In this sense, these groups seek a "return" to a better standard of quality, a revival of the "Western tradition", patriotism and conservative variants of character education. (Apple, 2003. p.56).

Therefore, we point out that it is in this educational configuration that LGBTQIA+ individuals suffer violence such as LGBTQIA+phobia, which goes through a process of naturalization due to the false sexual freedom that neoliberalism and neoconservatism give to sexual diversity, and on the other hand use terms such as gender ideology to control discussions on the same topic in educational spaces.

In the end, the role of "gender ideology" in a countercurrent with contemporaneity, in the processes of socialization in education, especially of LGBTQIA+ people, is crystal clear. The standardization that permeates the moralistic discourses of politicians and defenders of conservatism

reaches the entire population and gains chorus with neoliberal agendas, and in turn violates and silences sexual diversity and excludes those who do not belong to a modus operandi of Christian heterosexuality.

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