

**REACTIONARY PROJECTS IN THE FIELD OF EDUCATION: A THREAT TO
EDUCATION AND THE BUILDING OF A DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY**

**PROJETOS REACIONÁRIOS NO CAMPO DA EDUCAÇÃO: UMA AMEAÇA À
EDUCAÇÃO E À CONSTRUÇÃO DE UMA SOCIEDADE DEMOCRÁTICA**

**PROYECTOS REACCIONARIOS EN EL CAMPO DE LA EDUCACIÓN: UNA
AMENAZA PARA LA EDUCACIÓN Y LA CONSTRUCCIÓN DE UNA SOCIEDAD
DEMOCRÁTICA**



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ABSTRACT: Brazil has been promoting educational proposals in basic education from a conservative and reactionary perspective that threatens public schools and impacts the construction of a pluralistic society and emancipatory education. Contrary to the provisions of the National Guidelines for Human Rights Education (2012), we have the following projects: a) non-partisan schools; b) home schooling promoted by Bill No. 1,388/2022; c) militarization of civil education, projects that run counter to the evolution of human rights education. This work aims to establish a critical analysis of the Non-Partisan School Movement (MESP), home schooling, and the process of militarization of education, disseminated nationally through the National Program for Civic-Military Schools (PECIM). These projects have a negative impact on Brazilian society, as they make it impossible to work with a plurality of ideas aimed at the active participation of people.

KEYWORDS: Non-Partisan School. Homeschooling. Militarization of Education.

RESUMO: *O Brasil tem abrigado propostas formativas, na educação básica, numa perspectiva conservadora e reacionária que vem ameaçando a escola pública e impactando na construção de uma sociedade plural e de uma educação que emancipa. Na contra-mão do que estabelecem as Diretrizes Nacionais da Educação em Direitos Humanos (2012), temos os projetos: a) escola sem partido; b) escola domiciliar veiculada pelo Projeto de Lei nº 1.388/2022; c) militarização da educação civil, projetos contrários à evolução da educação em direitos humanos. O trabalho pretende estabelecer uma análise crítica do Movimento Escola Sem Partido (MESP), do ensino domiciliar e do processo de militarização da educação, disseminado nacionalmente através do Programa Nacional das Escolas Cívico-Militares(PECIM). Esses projetos impactam na sociedade brasileira de forma negativa, pois ocasionam a impossibilidade de se trabalhar a pluralidade de ideias voltadas para a participação ativa das pessoas.*

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: *Escola Sem Partido. Ensino Domiciliar. Militarização da Educação.*

RESUMEN: *Brasil ha acogido propuestas formativas en la educación básica desde una perspectiva conservadora y reaccionaria que amenaza la escuela pública y repercute en la construcción de una sociedad plural y una educación emancipadora. En contra de lo establecido en las Directrices Nacionales de Educación en Derechos Humanos (2012), tenemos los proyectos: a) escuela sin partido; b) escuela en el hogar promovida por el Proyecto de Ley n.º 1.388/2022; c) militarización de la educación civil, proyectos contrarios a la evolución de la educación en derechos humanos. El trabajo pretende establecer un análisis crítico del Movimiento Escuela Sin Partido (MESP), de la educación domiciliar y del proceso de militarización de la educación, difundido a nivel nacional a través del Programa Nacional de Escuelas Cívico-Militares (PECIM). Estos proyectos tienen un impacto negativo en la sociedad brasileña, ya que imposibilitan el trabajo con la pluralidad de ideas orientadas a la participación activa de las personas.*

PALABRAS CLAVE: *Escuela Sin Partido. Educación en el Hogar. Militarización de la Educación.*

Introduction

The strengthening of conservative fronts in Brazil, particularly regarding agendas that serve to legitimize violent discourses against specific groups (such as the LGBT+ community, Black populations, and Indigenous peoples) and the defense of moral issues within the field of education, has resulted in serious harm to the development of a democratic society committed to Human Rights.

In the educational field, reactionary and conservative projects have been consolidated, undermining the protagonism of the public, secular school founded on the defense of pluralism of ideas. On the national stage, we have witnessed educational agendas that have led to bills and decrees aligned with an educational model grounded in authoritarianism, subservience, uncriticality, and the particularism of ideas. In this context, the present study engages in a theoretical discussion of three major reactionary and conservative projects circulating nationwide: the “Nonpartisan School” movement, homeschooling, and the militarization of public schools—all of which distort the very concept of a secular, public, and democratic school.

The Nonpartisan School Movement (MESP) began to gain broad national support in 2004, with the stated aim of combating so-called “ideological indoctrination” in primary and secondary education. Such a conception produces a negation of pluralism of ideas and of academic freedom, as it imposes particular and homogenizing conceptions that strip education of its political character. These ideas silence teachers and students alike, reducing them to mechanized roles in the teaching–learning process, removing essential topics from the curriculum, and commodifying education—a process that ultimately constrains critical thinking.

Homeschooling advocates an educational perspective detached from the school environment, thereby weakening the premise of a formative process grounded in pluralism of ideas and disregarding the richness of interculturality. It removes the crucial social and protective roles played by schools in the lives of children and adolescents.

The Civic-Military Schools Program (PECIM), established by Decree No. 10,004/2019 under President Jair Bolsonaro’s administration, brought public civilian schools closer to the logic of military institutions by instituting a model of shared management between civil society and the armed forces. This model expanded across nearly all Brazilian states, producing negative effects on the education of children and youth by promoting an authoritarian, subservient, and disciplinary approach that values homogenization over epistemological

curiosity.

Given these introductory discussions, some critical questions arise: What is the impact of conservative programs on education? In the construction of a democratic and plural society, is there room for homeschooling and militarized schools? What political and pedagogical assumptions sustain these conservative proposals currently operating in the educational field?

In light of such questions, this study seeks to undertake a critical analysis of the MESP, homeschooling, and the process of militarization of education disseminated nationwide through PECIM. Its specific objectives are: (a) to discuss the implications of reactionary projects in the field of education with regard to the construction of a democratic and plural society; and (b) to identify the theoretical and political elements underpinning the Nonpartisan School movement, the militarization of education, and homeschooling.

The theoretical–methodological framework of this study is anchored in qualitative research, employing bibliographic review and documentary analysis based on a critical reading of the legislative process of bills and enacted—as well as repealed—legislation, contextualizing the historical and political background of these proposals. Data will be analyzed according to Bardin’s (1977) content analysis approach.

Accordingly, each section of this paper will respectively address the Nonpartisan School Movement, followed by the discussion on homeschooling, then the issues related to the militarization of civilian schools, and finally, the concluding remarks.

This study is of fundamental importance for expanding the national debate, given the impact of these projects on Brazilian society—projects rooted in authoritarianism, intellectual particularism, and the erosion of critical education, ultimately harming the development of a humanistic and civic formation oriented toward the active and responsible participation of individuals.

Nonpartisan School—For Whom?

Beginning in 2004, the Nonpartisan School Movement (MESP) began to spread with the stated goal of combating “ideological indoctrination” in basic education. According to Silva and Silva (2019), the movement was founded and coordinated by Congressman Miguel Nagib, affiliated with the Progressive Party (*Partido Progressista*) since 1988. This party has historically harbored influential figures in Brazilian politics, particularly those associated with political regression, including businessman Paulo Maluf and former President Jair Bolsonaro.

Two bills supported the MESP, namely Bill No. 7180/2014 and Bill No. 2731/2015. Both were introduced in the Chamber of Deputies in 2014 and 2015, subsequently archived in 2018, and later reintroduced in 2019 at the insistence of Congressman Alan Rick (DEM–AC).

Among the issues addressed in these bills was the prohibition of discussions on gender in schools and universities, reflecting a restrictive and prejudiced perspective that sought to eliminate such content from classrooms under the claim that it posed a threat to a society grounded in Christian values. Teachers who violate this rule could face imprisonment, as highlighted by Silva and Silva (2019, p. 271, our translation):

Bill No. 7180/2014, authored by Congressman Erivelton Santana from the State of Bahia and a member of the Social Christian Party (PSC), proposes an amendment to the Law of Guidelines and Bases of National Education (LDB), originally enacted in 1996. The bill seeks to modify item XIII of Article 3, prohibiting the teaching of what it defines as “gender ideology.”

[...]

Similarly, Bill No. 2731/2015, presented by Federal Congressman Eros Biondini from the State of Minas Gerais, affiliated with the Brazilian Labor Party (PTB), proposes amendments to the National Education Plan (PNE) by restricting discussions on gender in schools, with penalties ranging from six months to two years of imprisonment for teachers who fail to comply with such a provision.

In fact, under Bill No. 2731/2015, Congressman Eros Biondini advocated for the inclusion of the following statement in the National Education Plan (PNE), established by Law No. 13,005/2014: “The use of any type of ideology in national education is prohibited, especially the use of gender ideology, sexual orientation, gender identity, and their derivatives, under any pretext” (Brasil, 2014).

What becomes evident in the drafting process of these bills is a clear violation of the principles of diversity and a direct affront to the precepts of Human Rights Education, the National Education Plan (PNE, 2014), and the Law of Guidelines and Bases of National Education (LDB, Law No. 9,394/1996).

In 2015, another bill was introduced—Bill No. 867/2015 (later annexed to Bill No. 7180/2014)—by Federal Congressman Izalci Lucas of the Brazilian Social Democracy Party (PSDB), with the explicit objective of institutionalizing the Nonpartisan School Project. From its initial articles, specifically Article 2, the document already revealed its intent to impose censorship on ideological discussions within the school environment, as illustrated below:

Item I asserts the political, ideological, and religious neutrality of the State, while Item II claims to defend the pluralism of ideas in academic settings. At this point, one can observe the contradiction within the so-called “neutrality”

advocated by its proponents, as it upholds a false notion of political neutrality applied exclusively to left-wing parties. Another relevant point is the pursuit of an illusory pluralism of ideas, given that the norms established by the project condemn discussions of contemporary topics, labeling them as forms of indoctrination (Silva; Silva, 2019, p. 1, our translation).

According to Silva and Silva (2019), the discourses disseminated by these conservative and neoliberal movements surrounding the Nonpartisan School Project can easily be classified as a form of *moral panic*. The project's proponents describe themselves as “students and parents concerned about the degree of political-ideological contamination in Brazilian schools at all levels” (Silva; Silva, 2019, p. 173, our translation) while spreading among the population the myth of an invisible enemy supposedly capable of corrupting children's innocence and undermining the moral and ethical values of families—an enemy that must therefore be fought. In this narrative, teachers are portrayed as part of a network of militants engaged in communist indoctrination, thus reinforcing the alleged urgency to create legal mechanisms to interfere with academic freedom and regulate classroom discussions.

This discourse is closely tied to conservatism and moralist agendas, directly affecting studies on gender and sexuality—in complete opposition to the principles of diversity enshrined in the National Curriculum Guidelines for Human Rights Education (2012) and the National Education Plan (2014–2024). This scenario had tangible effects, most notably the removal of the term “gender” from the PNE in 2014, justified by the shallow and misleading argument that gender and sexuality studies—labeled as “gender ideology”—would corrupt the moral and ethical values of families.

Within this context, critical education faces significant threats, distancing itself from its humanizing mission and from its ethical commitment to respecting others. Such a framework jeopardizes the formation of a society free from prejudice. Education, as a social practice, demands concerted efforts toward building a fairer, more pluralistic, and democratic society that values difference. Therefore, it is essential to form citizens not only through schooling but also as individuals capable of engaging in a plural and humanizing social project. Condemning schools and teachers for upholding respect for diversity contradicts the principles of Human Rights and violates the 1988 Federal Constitution, which enshrines the protection of human dignity.

Thus, the Nonpartisan School Movement promotes agendas produced and reproduced by a social group seeking to control the work of teachers, educators, and students under the guise of defending moral principles allegedly being distorted—particularly within public

education. It represents an attempt to suppress socially relevant and necessary topics that foster understanding of diversity, respect, and the dignity of vulnerable groups who are routinely subjected to violations of their rights.

In light of this, it can be affirmed that Human Rights Education has been obstructed by a small sector of society. Consequently, fundamental issues concerning rights and duties, freedom and respect, diversity and empathy have been marginalized in favor of a societal project that disregards the dignity of others and prioritizes homogenization.

Even under the administration of the recently elected progressive government of Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva (2022), bills that legitimize violent discourses and restrict the autonomy of educational agents—namely, teachers and students—continue to circulate freely, threatening the very foundations of a public and democratic education system.

According to the full record published on the official website of the Brazilian Chamber of Deputies, Bill No. 7180/2014, proposed by Congressman Erivelton Santana (PSC–BA), is currently awaiting the rapporteur’s opinion in the Commission on Social Security, Welfare, Childhood, Adolescence, and Family. The bill establishes the precedence of family values over school education in matters related to moral, sexual, and religious education, effectively serving as an extension of the MESP.

The Gag Law: A Present Past

The educator Paulo Freire offered profound insights into emancipatory education and freedom within the school context, among other contributions. In his words:

The education of the masses thus becomes something absolutely fundamental for us. Education which, stripped of its alienated and alienating form, becomes a force for change and liberation. The choice, therefore, must be between education for domestication, for alienation, and education for freedom. Education for the object-man or education for the subject-man (Freire, 1980, p. 36).

The commitment to education cannot lie in alienation or domestication. The act of teaching must be imbued with dialogicity between teacher and student, nurtured through a process of active, critical, historical, and political construction—one that leads to the subject’s emancipation, and therefore, a practice free from censorship.

The 1988 Brazilian Constitution is fundamentally composed of provisions and principles that guarantee basic rights to individuals. Among these rights is education—not just

any education, but one capable of developing human beings for the future, preparing citizens, and equipping them for professional and civic life.

Contrary to this constitutional spirit, beginning in 2004, the MESP gained traction, gradually dismantling the constitutional guarantees established in the Federal Charter through its distorted notions of “ideology” and its prescriptions for how teachers and students should behave in the classroom. This movement ignited a conservative wave across the country, initially led by politicians and religious groups, which then spread through various sectors of civil society—including some state governments that embraced its proposals. Education, both basic and higher, became a contested space and, ultimately, a central stage for the dissemination of this conservative mindset.

State Law No. 7,800/2016—also known as the Free School Law—enacted in the State of Alagoas, was the first law to internalize the ideas of the MESP in Brazil. The Brazilian Supreme Federal Court (STF) has since declared this law unconstitutional. It is expected that this ruling will serve as a precedent, establishing the Court’s stance toward similar legislation in other jurisdictions. Thus, should analogous laws be challenged before the STF in the future, they are likely to meet the same outcome—a declaration of unconstitutionality or invalidity.

When a law is declared unconstitutional, the decision produces *binding effects* across the entire judiciary, meaning it applies to all federative entities. Moreover, such a ruling has *ex tunc* effects, implying that the law is deemed invalid from the moment of its creation, nullifying any effects it may have produced. Consequently, no law can legitimately uphold the principles of the MESP—at least not formally—especially in light of the STF’s position. Nonetheless, these conservative discourses continue to persist in society, constituting not only an act of violence against diversity but also a direct affront to the academic freedom of teachers.

One year after the STF’s declaration of unconstitutionality of Alagoas’ Law No. 7,800/2016, the City Council of Salvador approved a bill proposed by Councilman Aleluia Junior, which sought to implement the *Nonpartisan School* initiative at the municipal level. According to Marcelo Cerqueira (2017), President of the Gay Group of Bahia:

The original bill was authored by Congressman Erivelton Santana from Bahia, formerly of the Social Christian Party (PSC) and later of the National Ecological Party (PEN-BA), registered as Bill No. 7180/2014. The bill attempts to illegally amend the Law of Guidelines and Bases of Education (LDB – Law No. 9,394/96), compelling schools to prohibit historical, sociological, and philosophical discussions that promote democracy, freedom of thought, and respect for diversity—whether ethnic-racial, religious, or related to sexual orientation—under the false pretense of respecting the convictions of students, their parents, or guardians.

Bill No. 7180/2014 currently awaits the establishment of a Temporary Commission by the Board of the Chamber of Deputies. The Supreme Federal Court has not yet reviewed this particular bill, as it remains under legislative deliberation in the National Congress. However, the STF has consistently positioned itself against initiatives that seek to undermine education and curtail the autonomy of its key agents—teachers and students. The most concrete evidence of this stance is the Court’s declaration of unconstitutionality regarding Alagoas’ State Law No. 7,800/2016, which was directly inspired by the national Bill No. 7180/2014.

It is therefore possible to observe that this neoliberal and conservative seed, sown within contemporary society—particularly in Brazil—is germinating in favor of regression, violence, disrespect, and hatred. It is necessary to move forward in defending education in its emancipatory sense. The pedagogical act is inherently political; thus, it is imperative not to imprison or control the work of teachers in the classroom.

The Homeschooling Movement in Brazil

Historically understood as a privilege of the elite, homeschooling—practiced in Brazil since the colonial period—was gradually replaced over time by the mandatory attendance of children in schools. Currently, according to Article 227 of the 1988 Federal Constitution (Brazil, 1988), “it is the duty of the family to ensure children and adolescents the right to education, professional training, culture, and family and community life, among others.” Along these lines, Article 55 of Law No. 8,069 of 1990—the Statute of the Child and Adolescent (ECA)—(Brasil, 1990) establishes that parents and/or legal guardians are obliged to enroll their children in the regular education system.

Furthermore, Law No. 9,394 of 1996—LDB—(Brasil, 1996), states that formal education takes place primarily within institutional settings, develops social practices, and “encompasses formative processes that occur within family life, human interaction, work, educational and research institutions, social movements, civil society organizations, and cultural manifestations.”

Current educational legislation, therefore, stipulates that the schooling process must occur within educational institutions, guided by the directives of the Ministry of Education (MEC). However, in recent years, certain conservative movements in Brazil have argued that schools are harmful to the moral development of boys and girls, under the weak pretext of promoting gender ideology, partisan indoctrination, or immoral customs.

Within this national context, a political and social movement advocating for homeschooling has emerged, leading to the drafting of Bills No. 3,261/2015 (Brasil, 2015), No. 10,185/2018 (Brasil, 2018) and No. 2,401/2019 (Brasil, 2019), all of which were consolidated under Bill No. 3,179/2012 (Brasil, 2012). This bill was approved by the Chamber of Deputies on May 19, 2022, during the administration of President Jair Messias Bolsonaro, and remains pending review by the Federal Senate as Bill No. 1,338/2022 (Brasil, 2022). It proposes amendments to the LDB and the ECA to permit homeschooling within basic education, subject to several requirements, including: 1) Formal registration of homeschooling and enrollment of the student in a regular educational institution; 2) Proof of higher education or technical-professional qualification by the child's legal guardians; 3) Presentation of a criminal record clearance certificate; 4) C Compliance with the official curriculum content for the student's grade level; 5) Maintenance of periodic records of pedagogical activities; 6) Implementation of educational activities promoting intellectual, emotional, physical, social, and cultural development; 7) Monitoring of the student by a tutor-teacher from the affiliated institution; 8) Organization of family meetings by the educational institution; 9) Administration of periodic assessments by the educational institution; 10) Participation in school events ensures family and community interaction.

A simple reading of these requirements reveals an elitist initiative, since, for obvious reasons, underprivileged social classes would be unable to meet such demands due to socioeconomic and cultural constraints. Moreover, it reflects an attempt to control teaching practices, curricular content, and didactic materials, while restricting the social interaction of children and adolescents in the plural and diverse environment of schools.

These bills carry serious implications, as they reject the social role of schools; reduce education to a mere vehicle for content transmission; deprive students of opportunities for cultural exchange; contradict the pluralism of ideas enshrined in the 1988 Federal Constitution (Brasil, 1988); deny students the experience of democratic coexistence by confining them to family life alone; promote the precarization of teaching work; and threaten the development of a democratic society.

The National Association for Homeschooling (ANED), founded in 2010, reports on its official website that approximately 35,000 families currently practice homeschooling in Brazil. It justifies this practice with the argument that “most parents withdraw their children from school in order to provide them with a personalized education that can nurture the potential, gifts, and talents of each child or adolescent” (ANED, 2021, our translation).

It so happens that, to date, the MEC does not provide official data to substantiate the figures reported by this association, which, by invoking the notion of a “personalized education,” distorts the pedagogical process and promotes an educational practice surrounded by restrictions within the confines of private households—thus stripping it of a broader and more comprehensive conception of education.

In 2022, the Superior Court of Justice—the highest judicial authority in Brazil, responsible for interpreting infra-constitutional legislation—denied a writ of mandamus seeking recognition of the right to homeschooling. The Court explicitly stated that “children do not belong to their parents, as the petitioners believe. They are individuals with rights and duties whose personalities must be shaped from adolescence onward through interaction with peers, within the social coexistence that fosters citizenship” (Brasil, 2005).

When prompted to address the issue, the Brazilian STF ruled, in 2019, in a decision binding upon all judicial bodies in the country, that neither students nor their families possess a legal right to homeschooling, given that such a modality lacks any legal provision in Brazilian legislation. This is clearly expressed in the following excerpt from the ruling’s syllabus:

Summary: Constitutional Law. Education. Fundamental right related to human dignity and the effectiveness of citizenship. Shared duty of the State and the family in providing elementary education. Necessity of a formal law enacted by the National Congress to regulate homeschooling. Appeal denied. 1. Education is a fundamental right intrinsically linked to human dignity and citizenship itself, as it fulfills a dual function: on one hand, it qualifies the community as a whole, making it informed, politically aware, and developed (citizenship); on the other hand, it dignifies the individual, who is the true holder of this fundamental subjective right (human dignity). [...] The Federal Constitution enshrined the duty of solidarity between the family and the State as the core foundation of educational formation for children, adolescents, and youth, with the dual purpose of ensuring the full protection of their rights and fostering their citizenship, so that Brazil may overcome the great challenge of providing better education for new generations—an essential condition for nations that aspire to development. [...] (RE 888815, Rapporteur: Roberto Barroso, Opinion by: Alexandre de Moraes, Full Court, decided on 09/12/2018, Electronic Process, *General Repercussion – Merits, DJe-055, published on 03/21/2019*) (Brasil, 2019, our translation).

In summary, current legislation establishes that education is not confined to the acquisition of technical knowledge but also encompasses opportunities for community engagement and the development of social practice. This understanding was reinforced by the binding interpretation of the Brazilian Supreme Court, leaving no interpretative margin to

justify the non-enrollment of children in school for the exclusive purpose of receiving homeschooling.

As Carvalho (2020, p. 6, our translation) clarifies:

There is a supposedly liberal attempt by families to choose the type of education to be provided to their children, opting for it to be conducted at home and thereby removing them from interaction with differences within the public space of the school. These movements and projects stand in opposition to the conception of education for citizenship as the primary function of public education and the professional commitment of teaching.

This movement, therefore, aligned with the MESP initiative and the massive expansion of militarized civil schools, rejects the need for plurality of ideas, cultural diversity, and ideological pluralism—directly opposing the principles of human rights education, as endorsed by the *National Guidelines for Human Rights Education* (2012).

An education oriented toward citizenship stands in contrast to an educational model that values a culture of fear and intimidation—one that is confined to a domestic setting, devoid of interaction with other cultures and social experiences. Such a perspective undermines the teaching-learning process, subordinates political and social dimensions to a logic of uncritical obedience, and obscures human awareness in the name of an alleged devotion to civility and rules. This logic—marked by the personalization of studies, ideological indoctrination, and authoritarianism—deviates sharply from the principles of freedom and plurality that underpin a truly democratic and civic education.

The Militarization of Education in Brazil

With the election of Jair Messias Bolsonaro (2019–2022), the PECIM was established—one of his main campaign promises. The program introduced public civil schools managed under a hybrid administrative model, shared between the Ministries of Education and Public Security. Under this arrangement, the former was responsible for pedagogical management, while the latter oversaw administrative management, led by military personnel.

In other words, these schools belong to state and municipal public education systems and should not be confused with traditional military schools. They are maintained and managed by the State Secretariats of Education and/or the Ministry of Education (MEC), and they represent the institutionalization of militarization within Brazil's civil basic education system.

To understand the emergence of militarization in Brazilian civil schools, it is essential to revisit the trajectory of former president Jair Messias Bolsonaro, a former member of the Brazilian Army who was discharged from the armed forces in 1987, holding the rank of captain, due to acts of indiscipline and disloyalty toward his superiors, as reported by *Folha de São Paulo* in an interview published in *Veja* magazine. His personal and ideological formation was thus deeply rooted in military traditions, centered on discipline and hierarchy.

Once in office as head of the federal executive, Bolsonaro began his political maneuvers to implement his agenda. In the field of education, his primary initiative materialized through a school model aligned with military principles, institutionalized through the following decrees: Decree No. 9,665/2019 and Decree No. 10,004/2019, the latter of which formally established PECIM.

Decree No. 9,665/2019 created the Subsecretariat for the Promotion of Civic-Military Schools, linked to the MEC's Department of Basic Education. This decree was later revoked by Decree No. 11,342/2023. Decree No. 10,004/2019, in turn, officially established the Civic-Military Schools Program (PECIM).

These two decrees were pivotal in enabling the federal government under Bolsonaro to allocate resources from the MEC to PECIM, primarily to fund the salaries of armed forces and auxiliary military personnel assigned to shared management, as well as to support the infrastructure of schools that joined the program.

Conceptually, there remains significant confusion when discussing militarization in education, largely due to the lack of clarity in the terminology used to describe these institutions. It is therefore important to clarify the distinctions as follows: a) Federal military colleges are administered by the Ministry of Defense, not by the MEC, and may be affiliated with the Army, Air Force, or Navy; b) State military schools are established by state governments and are linked to the Military Police and/or Fire Departments; and c) Militarized schools, by contrast, are civilian public schools that either adhered to Decree No. 10,004/2019 or entered into cooperation agreements between state departments of education and public security, operating within state or municipal education networks.

In the present case, the focus is on civil public schools that, through shared management with the Military Police, Fire Department, or Armed Forces, adopt an organizational model incorporating personnel from these corporations into their pedagogical and financial management structures.

Given these distinctions, it is important to stress that military educational institutions

associated with the police, fire departments, or armed forces are long-established realities in Brazil. They serve legitimate institutional purposes and operate within their respective legal and regulatory frameworks, as stipulated in Article 81 of the Law of Guidelines and Bases of National Education (LDB), Law No. 9,394/1996.

Nevertheless, the rapid expansion of militarization within civilian schools following the implementation of PECIM raises serious concerns. This process has advanced nationally through three primary mechanisms: a) public calls for participation under Decree No. 10,004/2019 (later revoked by President Lula); b) cooperation agreements between states and municipalities, established directly with public security secretariats to promote militarization; and c) state-level legislation, as seen in Paraná.

Eduardo Santos (2020) notes that concern with the militarization of public schools is relatively recent in academic discourse, particularly regarding its specific features and distinctions from the educational institutions traditionally created by military corporations. Data collected by the researcher, affiliated with the National Research Network on the Militarization of Education, indicate that by 2019, the militarization of public basic education schools was present in 14 of Brazil's 27 federative units—namely, Acre, Amapá, Amazonas, Bahia, the Federal District, Goiás, Maranhão, Mato Grosso, Pará, Paraná, Piauí, Rondônia, Roraima, and Tocantins. As of that year, no state in Brazil's Southeast Region had adopted this model. In total, 240 public schools had undergone militarization between 1990 and December 2019—a figure that illustrates the growing institutional reach of this phenomenon within Brazil's educational landscape.

In the state of Paraná, the process of militarizing 200 schools within the state education network took place. This militarization was implemented through State Law No. 20,338 of October 6, 2020, which established the regulatory framework for the civic-military school management model. In this context, when combined with the data from Santos' (2020) research, Brazil currently has more than 500 militarized schools.

According to researcher Mascarenhas (2020), these militarized schools introduce procedures that establish a new organizational structure through military interference in management. They operate on rigid foundations of hierarchy and unquestionable obedience, with pedagogical processes centered on authoritarianism. Consequently, this *modus operandi* disregards diversity as an essential element in the composition of a democratic society, demonstrating a strong inclination toward homogenization.

It is a fact that conservative conceptions of education lead to a formal, traditional,

“banking,” and methodical model of teaching, which stands in stark contrast to the Freirean approach. Paulo Freire’s constructivist pedagogy emphasized that education should value the learner’s culture, recognizing that every student—literate or not—brings to school their own cultural background, which is neither inferior nor superior to that of the teacher. Therefore, learning should be understood as a mutual process.

This school model upholds the practice of *Ordem Unida* (Unified Order), which involves the rapid and coordinated execution of synchronized movements under military instruction. Such practice demonstrates military discipline, promoting not only leadership capacity among those in command but also loyalty among those who follow orders. Punishments are imposed on students depending on the infractions committed, which are recorded in official reports and, in some institutions, publicly displayed on the school’s bulletin board.

Therefore:

What is at stake is the consolidation of a school project that carries within its core elements of training, the emptying of human consciousness, social control, and the political, historical, and cultural depletion of education (Mascarenhas; Monteiro; Moreira, 2022, p. 66, our translation).

Bringing this discussion closer to the field of democracy and constitutional law, several critical elements emerge for analysis.

As an educational public policy, the Ministry of Education’s proposal can be analyzed and criticized from various angles that reveal its exclusionary and unlawful character: 1) From a democratic and constitutional perspective, it violates students’ rights to access and remain in school; 2) It infringes upon the principle of democratic management in educational institutions; 3) It also violates the pluralism of ideas; and 4) From an administrative law standpoint, it breaches the 1988 Federal Constitution, as there is no legal provision allowing military personnel to manage civilian public schools (Ximenes; Stuchi; Moreira, 2019).

Based on these arguments, this educational policy seriously undermines the formation of children and adolescents, as it promotes an uncritical model of education—detached from epistemological curiosity, favoring standardization, and aligned with military logic—directly opposing the principles enshrined in Article 206 of the 1988 Federal Constitution.

With the election of President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva in 2022, progressive agendas across various sectors of society began to be reestablished. In the educational field, teachers and researchers welcomed with enthusiasm the repeal of Decree No. 10,004/2019. This measure was formally enacted and published in the *Diário Oficial da União* (Official Gazette of the

Union) through Decree No. 11,611/2023, which officially terminated the PECIM program and eliminated the federal government's obligation to fund this school model.

Nevertheless, some states and municipalities continue to sustain this militarized school model through their own funding, completely contradicting the federal government's position.

Despite this, such a school model represents a clear regression in the education of children and youth. By prioritizing uncritical obedience, it tends to produce conditioned students—trained not to think but merely to comply with orders—rather than critical and autonomous individuals. This orientation stands in sharp contrast to the true professional commitment expected from educators and undermines educational priorities that were neglected under the previous administration, obscuring significant issues and diverting from the advances achieved by a plural and diverse society like ours.

The persistence of this school model in certain states and municipalities, even after the repeal of PECIM, reveals an attachment to these institutions as supposed “saviors” of social and educational problems—based on the mistaken belief that discipline and authoritarianism are essential to “academic success.” It is urgent to demilitarize public schools, for schools are not barracks!

Final Considerations

The documentary analysis of the *Escola Sem Partido* project, homeschooling initiatives, and the decree on civic-military schools directs our attention to the inconsistency and conflict of these projects with the perspective of a pluralistic, critical, and emancipatory education. In this regard, we align with the premise that these projects—focused on public schools in Brazil—effectively constitute an affront to a set of foundational principles of national education, establishing: a) an educational perspective characterized by an authoritarian and homogenizing view of cultural processes; b) the existence of (de)formative principles that conceive of the school merely as a space for content transmission; c) a process of cultural invasion through the standardization of individuals; and d) the incompatibility between the National Education Guidelines and Framework Law (Law No. 9,394/96) and these educational models.

It is urgent to confront these conservative and reactionary projects within the educational sphere. In this sense, it is essential to mobilize organized civil society to foster resistance movements and to denounce the violations of the 1988 Federal Constitution and the National Education Guidelines and Framework Law (Law No. 9,394/96). Defending public

education and its emancipatory project is vital in promoting the formation of conscious citizens and a citizenship that transcends formal dimensions—toward a democratic and active citizenship.

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